

Deadline to submit articles for "The Epistle" is the 15th of each month.

Vestry Meeting July 21

*Treasurer's Report May 31, 2020*

*36% of Pledges Received*

<i>Total Revenue</i>	<i>\$195,818.05</i>
<i>Total Expenses</i>	<i>\$187,081.78</i>
<i>Net Total</i>	<i>\$8,736.27</i>

## News from Your Vestry

The vestry met June 22 in person with masks and 6-feet of social distancing. Fr. Austin opened the meeting by sharing a portion of a sermon The Rev. Duncan Gray Jr. gave in 1969. His words are very apropos for the world today. *"In a very real sense, God has chosen us, you and me, to live in this difficult, but very significant time. True, it is a time of crisis; but times of crisis are times for greatness; and we in Meridian, MS, have had the opportunity for greatness thrust upon us. We may not like it, and, certainly, we did not ask for it. But here it is... We have the talents and the human resources, the patience and the wisdom, and the grace and power of Almighty God. What we need is the commitment and the will, the faith and the confidence; and it is for these that we pray today."*

It was strange but good to see each other for the first time in months! Melissa Calcote presented information for eGiving at St. Paul's. We are grateful to Melissa and Joane Makey for their work in getting this application up and running. It is now possible to give directly online

and designate your offering. Please go to our website to take advantage of this new service.

Our beautiful front doors are 50-plus years old and have deteriorated to the point that a hard blow could put a hole in the wood. Our Jr. Warden received a bid from a recommended finish carpenter to recreate the doors and match them to the former doors. This also includes replacing the interior framing and wood. The total bid was \$23,630.95 and we will use The Graham Family Fund to pay for the project.

The church audits for 2019 and 2020 were completed by Jerome Kittrell and received and approved. We owe a debt of gratitude to Jerome for completing six years of audits and bringing us up-to-date with the diocese reporting requirements.

We received the resignation of Page Sikes from the Vestry with regret. Her term will be up in January so her place will not be filled at this time.

—Lynne Taleff

### St. Paul's Seeks to Hire Children's Director

St. Paul's is excited to announce that we are in the search process for a Children's Director. This is a part-time job (20-25 hours weekly) for a lay staff member who will report directly to the Rector and will lead the children's ministry of the parish, for preschool through 5th graders. This person should have the skills to encourage, support and develop programs that provide a place for our children to deepen their relationship with God.



*Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!  
Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!  
Lo, your king comes to you;  
triumphant and victorious is he,  
humble and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.  
He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim  
and the war horse from Jerusalem;  
and the battle bow shall be cut off,  
and he shall command peace to the nations;  
his dominion shall be from sea to sea,  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.  
As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,  
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.  
Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;  
today I declare that I will restore to you double.*

Zechariah 9:11-12

Imagine many of you share my feelings of expecting the world to change around every 12 hours or so. We can't gather in the ways we are used to and, about the time we get into one routine, something changes and makes that routine obsolete. What does hope look like when we are disappointed again and again? On many days, it feels like we are prisoners to this pandemic and our way of life.

Zachariah lived in a similar world. The prophet speaks to an imprisoned people, living in a foreign land. They are cut off from the promise of God and cut off from one another. They are all hoping and waiting for their Messiah to come; the one who will bring military might and restore the people of Israel.

Though there is irony in this story, the one that we all know too well. It is a story that we were not able to hear corporately together this year in our memorial garden waving palms and singing "All Glory Laud and Honor." The one who will come to deliver God's people won't be what they expect. This Davidic king will not enter

Jerusalem on a "war horse," but humbly riding on the foal of a donkey. This will be the one who will "cut off the battle bow." They won't win through military conquest but in a way of love the world has never seen or will ever see again.

Next comes this crazy phrase. "I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit." In the desert climate, a pit would be dug down in a dry place. "Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope." What does that mean? What a way to describe our current situation. It changes the identity of the people. Zachariah reminds the people that they are prisoners, yes, but not prisoners of the Babylonian Empire. It is like the irony of the Messiah entering Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey. The people are prisoners of hope.

Sister Joan D. Chittister, who writes *Scarred by Struggle, Transformed by Hope* says it this way.

*"Hope is not a matter of waiting for things outside us to get better. It is about getting better inside... it is about allowing ourselves to believe in the future we cannot see... about trusting in God... then we can hope because we have no reason to hope. Hope is what sits by a window and waits for one more dawn, despite the fact that there isn't an ounce of proof in tonight's black, black sky that it can possibly come... Hope is the last great gift to rise out of the grave of despair."*

Friends, whatever happens this July or even this year, we will get through it because we are not held by all the many ways that the world tries to imprison us. We are **prisoners of hope**. We need each other. Everything we do, or do not as prisoners of hope is for self-giving love and for the common good. The world is watching to see how we cope with the state of things. And long after this pandemic is over, we know that our Messiah has come for all the nations and has conquered the last great enemy, death. We are free to spend our lives of faith held by this hope and being proponents of this reality for a despairing world.

You are so loved,  
Austin+





Hello St. Paul's fam! Guess what? July is VBS month! We can't have traditional VBS, but we can still have fun! The theme is "Peace" and you can pick up your VBS kit at the Mediator during office hours. VBS-in-a-Box contains all the supplies your kiddo needs to complete the 5 Bible lessons, activities, and crafts. The bright side is that your fam can work through the lessons at your own pace! There is also a video posted on the Mediator's YouTube channel that complements each lesson. VBS kits are ready for pick up, get 'em while they are hot! Questions? Call or text Claire Hasselle. Peace!

Olivia and Caroline Lewis are having a great time working through their VBS-in-a-Box activities!



## Donate Online to St. Paul's

You can donate to St. Paul's Episcopal Church online via Online Giving through Abundant, which offers laptop, mobile and text options for giving.

Via our online giving, you can set up your monthly pledge as a recurring donation; and make donations to other areas, including plate offerings, mission and music, our Memorial Fund, the Organ Restoration Fund or the Building Fund. To find the link, please go to our website homepage at [StPaulsMeridian.org](http://StPaulsMeridian.org).

Once you go to the webpage, it directs you through the process of setting up an account or giving as a guest. You can also download the Abundant mobile app, which is available in Google Play® and the Apple® App Store.

For a direct, quick way to give to St. Paul's, you can text "stpaulsmdn" to 73256.

As with any online donation platform, there are some fees associated with giving. To avoid fees, you can set up your donation via direct electronic transfer by adding your bank account and routing number to your account.

If you choose to pay by credit card, there is a fee. For example, if you give \$100, the fee is \$3 and St. Paul's will receive \$97. However, you have the option to donate your total chosen amount by increasing the donation to cover the fee. You will see this "offset fee" option on the site.

## We Remember in our Prayers

**Our Parish family:** DJ Wells, Edgar Morrison, Holly Morgan, Jerry Greene, Jo Van Devender, Ivy Jane Sutton, Milo Joseph Sutton, Joe White, Margaret Van Dyke, Mike Reich, Norma Veach, Patty Vinson, Peggy Carrico, Robin Hall, Scott Carmichael, Terry Rush and William Godwin.

**In our senior living communities:** Dixie Pigford, Elise Leach, Joyce Welsh, Linda James, Lora Jones, Mary Scott and Nita Neville.

**Extended family and friends:** Alice Miller, Ally Gressett, Allyson Furr, Amanda Lockey, Amanda Rainey, Anita Sumrall, Anna Meyers, Barbara Hopper, Barbara Robinson, Baston Geiger, Beverly Bryson, Bill Selman, Bob Hill, Bobby Dale, Brian Keating, Brooke, Brooks Moore, Charlie Smith, Charmin Edwards, Chelsie Abston, Christina Harris, Clay Hamilton, Cory Gaylord, Diane Dunn, Delroy Ming, Edesser "Dess" Reid Ward, Rob & Aislinn Ward, Doris Lewis, Donald Lewis, Elise Higbe, Frank Baker, Frank Barrett, Freddie Bea Watson, Gary Dawkins, George Farr, George Ferguson, Helen Valentine, J.T. Lee, Jada Dooley, James, Jim Bateman, John, Ken Fisher, Kim Lovette, Kylie Temple, Lee Davis Thames, Leigh Ann Key, Lillie Alford, Lou Dubose, Marilyn Mohr, Martha Mazingo, Mary Hallwell, Mary Ann Howell, Michelle Nelson, Mike Lundy, Mike Stanton, Noah White, Norman, Patty Fishburn, Rick, Sandra Nicholas, Ronald Carozza, Sandy Carrier, Sallie Gercens, Hannah Thompson, Seth Thompson, Theodore, Tom Schram, Tony Sansone, Wanda Farr, Wanda Scott, Wilfe Manning and Zack Martin.

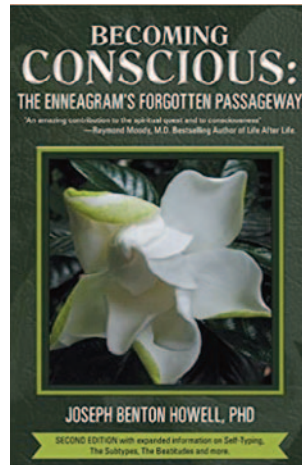
**We pray for those who have died especially.** Deanie Carmichael, mother of Scott Carmichael; and Jimmy Landrum, stepfather of Adrian Page.

**We pray for those serving in the Armed Forces,** for all who serve overseas and their families, especially Andrew Behm, Shum Benson, Connor Covert, Graham Ford, T. J. Melton, Nick Mullen and Zack Thomas.

**We pray for our Bishop Brian,** our Rector Austin and his family and our Deacon Betty.

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

July 1 .....Brandon Dunn, Avery Harwell, Lauretta Hamilton	July 18 .....Larry & Lisa Love, Isabell Martin
July 2 .....Lloyd Gray, Joy Greer, Chuck Rea, Susan Nowak	July 19 .....Patrick & Michelle Lewis
July 10 .....Joanne Entrekin	July 22 .....Eugene & Melinda Perry, Beth Wuestefeld
July 13 .....Sonya Carrier, Michael Crowe, Michael Kerekes, Will & Edie Simmons	July 24 .....David & Jo Benson, Franklin Davis, Kim Gianakos
July 14 .....Payton Hanschke, Kay Reich	July 25 .....Sabina Ivy
July 15 .....Christopher Collis, Stacey Harwell	July 27 .....Ducky McCormick
July 16 .....Shelby & Steve Slade, Reese Stump	July 28 .....Alyce Cunningham, John Michael & Juliet McDonald
July 17 .....Eugene Perry	July 29 .....Perrin Burchfield
	July 30 .....Sue Farr



## Adult Formation for Fall

Beginning Sunday, August 2, the adult formation class will read *Becoming Conscious: The Enneagram's Forgotten Passageway*, by Dr. Joseph Benton Howell. It is a great option for self-exploration, especially when we don't know whether we will be able to have formation in person or not.

"Beneath your outer layers of self is an authentic, beautiful being exactly as it came from heaven... Reach your full potential as Dr. Howell explains the powerful and deeply spiritual Enneagram and relates it to your life."

## Confirmation Classes for Youth

*"Strengthen, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit; empower them for your service; and sustain them all the days of their life. Amen." (BCP p. 418)*

In preparation for the Bishop's visit this fall, Confirmation Classes will be offered for St. Paul's EYC'ers and are open to 6th- through 12th-grade youth. All EYC'ers are invited to participate in the classes. Not only is there so much cool stuff to learn about Episcopal traditions, participants will also be having a great time strengthening community bonds.

The sacrament of Confirmation is intended to be a "mature commitment to Christ." Confirmands are making a public confession and commitment of Christian faith and are strengthened by the Holy Spirit for service to Christ and his church. Most youth had their parents and parish family make this commitment — or vows — or them at baptism. Confirmation is an opportunity for the youth to affirm those baptismal vows for themselves.

It is through participation in classes, discussion with family, and personal discernment, that the decision to be confirmed is made. Not everyone who participates in the classes will decide to be confirmed, and that is just fine. Some EYC'ers may just participate to learn more about why we do what we do and what it means to be an Episcopalian. So much can be gained spiritually by just participating.

It is my hope and prayer that we will have most of our EYC'ers take advantage of this opportunity. Topics explored include the following: Baptism and Confirmation: New Beginnings; The Bible Stories, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow; Knowing Our History; Faith: What Do We Believe?; Worship: Responding to God's Blessings; and Navigating the Church: From Local to Worldwide Church.

If your EYC'er is interested in participating in confirmation classes, please contact me to sign them up.

—Claire Hasselle