

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

April 10-12 • Parish Office closed for Easter respite

April 18 • Vestry Meeting • 5:15 p.m.

Gearing Up for Mission & Music Festival May 6

Save the date for a fun day Saturday, May 6, with fried catfish plates, live music, frozen and baked goods, two raffles and kids' activities! Proceeds again will go to CARE Lodge and L.O.V.E.'S Kitchen.

Missy Bailey and Ann Compton will be available after services Sunday and at Wednesday night suppers from now until the festival to sell fish fry tickets that are \$12 each, or you can purchase them at the church office. Please sell tickets or buy them to give to friends and coworkers.

Jonathan Quigley's band "My Savior Story" will be playing. They provide great contemporary Christian music you will love.

The raffle this year is a three-night stay at The Grand Hotel in Pont Clear, AL, near Fairhope. It includes a \$250 spa package, dinner for two at the hotel restaurant and a golf package or equivalent. Enjoy the beautiful grounds and pool. Tickets are \$25 each

and you can get them from Gloria Chancellor, Edie Simmons or the church office.

Also, Margaret Van Dyke is donating a beautiful, handmade quilt that will be raffled and tickets are only \$10 each.

We need your donations of frozen and baked goods! This has been very popular and we always sell out. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the hall to the parish hall and you can contact Melissa Love (601.604.2163) or Sara Mason (601.604.2162) if you have questions. There will be designated freezers in the parish hall so you can start bringing your frozen foods.

We need everyone's help selling and buying tickets, donating to the bake and frozen foods and helping the day of the event to make this a fabulous day. Look for sign-up sheets in the hallway.

Contact Bobbie Rea (601.917.6610) if you have questions.

How Can We Believe?

If we were asked about Holy Week, hopefully we would say something along the lines of it being a journey with Jesus in the last days of his earthly life, to Calvary hill, and then to the joy of an empty tomb. It is a reminder that our Christian faith is rooted in real history, not just abstract ideas. This Creator of the universe interacts in human history and chose to reveal the divine personhood as a suffering servant.



It was foolishness to the Greeks and a stumbling block to the Jews and is no less an obstacle to overcome, even now.

The theologian Paul Ricouer wrote about the concept of a "First Naiveté." What he meant is that when we are children we have little or no trouble accepting that God created the world, Noah and the flood, the parting of the Red Sea, that Jesus walked on water, and the Holy Spirit touches lives. As we get older, gaining more experience and knowledge, that simple or naive faith fades.

We no longer believe with the same childlike innocence even at times, whether we say it aloud or not, believe God is real. If you stand where I stand on Sunday when it is time to profess the Creeds, there are all kinds of changes in facial expressions when certain parts come up. We know or have experienced too much to believe. Many of us find ourselves having outgrown the "First Naiveté" with not much of substance to replace it.

What Ricouer suggests is a "Second Naiveté." That is, living with the knowledge and experience we have and growing into a mature faith. Simply put, we believe again that the stories are true. Maybe they are not factually accurate in every detail (do they really need to be?), but true in that they matter, that we take them seriously; that they have the possibility to transform our lives and the world. This is a tall order, but with Christ all things are possible.

This is what has happened since the very first disciples.

The ancients may have had a different scientific understanding of the world but they knew that no one comes back from the dead. What made all those Christians of the early church and today's church willing to die for their faith? What caused all those disciples to leave home or security or wealth and follow Christ? What caused those to give their lives in service to others?

They did not give their lives to a

social club with the best donuts with a preferred worship style. Those first Christians gave their lives away for the person of Christ who went to the cross, died, and was resurrected for them and us. For some, this meeting of Christ again, or a second Naiveté, will happen all at once, but for most of us it will be a daily death to self and bearing our own cross. The first step is being open to the possibility of Christ.

The longing for meaning, the longing for the Spirit in the human person is as strong now as it was then. I may not believe in miracles or the cross or even Christ, but can I believe that love is possible and real? Can I believe that every person is worthy of this love and that I can help share it? This is the first step of faith. Can we, Church, be open to the possibility of God? Is it possible that Christ died and rose again for you and me?

For those about to be Baptized or those renewing their baptism (BCP pg. 819):

O God, you prepared your disciples for the coming of the Spirit through the teaching of your Son Jesus Christ: Make the hearts and minds of your servants ready to receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit, that they may be filled with the strength of his presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Austin

Join us for St. Paul's second annual

Agape Meal

Maundy Thursday
following the 5:30 service

Traditional Greek and Mediterranean fare along with wine will be served.

Volunteers needed! Please contact Mallory for more information.
601.513.1775

The word, "agape" is the Greek word used in the New Testament for the highest and broadest kind of self-giving love, the kind of love that is our source, our true life in this life and our eternal reality. We have no word capable of describing the God who is love in any language, but agape calls attention to the limitless and overflowing fullness of Divine Love — love Incarnate, from he who suffered death on a cross.

An Agape Meal, or "Love Feast" as it is also called, is an ancient tradition of table fellowship.

RSVP stpaulsmeridian@gmail.com or call the Parish Office 601.693.2502 if you plan to attend.

Celebrate the Great 50 Days

Great 50 Day's meals will begin on Wednesdays, April 19 and continue through May 17. We have a great lineup of cuisine for the Great 50 Days. Look for Mexican, Greek, All American, Italian and BBQ. Cost will be \$10 per Adult; \$8 for elementary students and younger; and \$30 for a family of four or more.

And we need some cooks...

Calling St Paul's cooks for the Great 50 Days. Talk with your friends, Sunday formation friends, Bible study friends or a group of women or men's group and pick the date and type of food your team would like to prepare for our Great 50 Day's. Contact Lynn Waddle chairperson for Wednesday evening meals or there will be a sign up sheet in the Parish Hall.



Place Some Easter Lilies

St. Paul's has a wonderful tradition of placing Easter lilies in the Nave in honor or memory of Loved ones on Easter Day. Forms will be available in the Sunday bulletin to fill out and place in the offering plate, or you may call the church office. 601.693.2502.

The information must be received by Monday, April 4, for names to be printed in the bulletin insert. Any excess monies collected help ensure the Altar is adorned throughout the year.

SAVE THE DATE FOR

2023 VBS!

JULY 26TH - 29TH AT ST. PAUL'S

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON!



Nerfs & Nachos

Pre-EYC will enjoy "Nerfs & Nachos" Saturday, April 16, in the Parish Hall. Open to grades 3 - 5, begins at 1:30 p.m.



Open Flower Dates

We have the following Sunday's open for Altar Flower dedications and you may select one or both vases. The cost is \$50 per vase. Dates open are: April 16, April 23, May 7, July 23, August 6 (both vases open) and July 2 (one vase open).

We Remember in our Prayers

For our Parish family: Andrea Carver, Cheri Barry, Cliff Odom, Delena Avara, Don Pringle, DJ Wells, Ducky McCormick, Elliott Street, Eve Morrison, Jo Van Devender, Margaret Van Dyke, Marsha Miller, Mary Dunn, Peggy Carrico, Susan Hamilton, Tadley, Wanda Blount and Woodie Abraham.

In our senior living communities: Joyce Welsh, Lora Jones and Nita Neville.

Extended family and friends: Adele Whitlock, Alisa Crowell, Anne Rice Wooley, Ben Avara, Betty Perry, Bill Selman, Brooke, Charlotte Chaney, Clancy, Cory Gaylord, Davey Simmons, David, David & Gina Brown, Dee Dee Peoples, Diane Dunn, Donna Polizzi, Emily Rush, Evie Warden, Francois DuPlessis, Frances, Frank Baker, Frank Barrett, Freddie Bea Watson, George Farr, Hays Monsour, Henry Beard, Jada Dooley, James, Jan, Jeana Bennett, Jo Nell Brown, Jim Thompson, John, Katie Schaffer, Ken Fisher, Ken Williams, Kennedy Grice, Kevin Williams, Kylie Temple, Leland Tew, Lisa Primeaux, Lou Dubose, Martha Hudson, Martha Mazingo, Marr White, Melinda Vinson Northern, Michael, Michelle Nelson, Mike Covert, Mize, Nick, Nell Nichols, Norman, Pat Carver, Patrick Leach, Randy Moore, Richard Graham, Rick, Roger, Sandy Carrier, Stefanie Lynn Roman, Thomas Little, Tom Schram, Tony Sansone, Trent Hartzog, Wanda Farr, Wanda Scott, Willie Spencer, Zack Martin, Sandra Gray and Shirley Hunter Croft.

We pray for those who have died especially: Elizabeth "Poky" Watts Murphy; The Most Rev. Frank Tracey Griswold III, XV Presiding Bishop; and Stella Carew.

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, Nick Mullen, DJ Robinson and Zack Thomas.

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

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Apr. 2David Hamilton, Robert Loeb | Apr. 18.....Jennifer DuPont, Mardi Page |
| Apr. 4Sarah Slade | Apr. 19.....Connie Arline, Cheri Barry, Patsy Moran |
| Apr. 5Rob Calcote, Brooks Holladay,
Randy Pool, Brooke Winstead Sims | Apr. 20.....Terry & Sabina Ivy, Liam Tucker |
| Apr. 6Gloria Chancellor | Apr. 21.....Jean Anderson, Gil Carmichael |
| Apr. 8David Roberts, Scott & Kelly McQuaig | Apr. 22.....Britton Dunn |
| Apr. 9Jon Sanders Holladay | Apr. 23.....Judge Little, Margaret Van Dyke |
| Apr. 10.....Chris Burchfield, Jacqueline Hogan | Apr. 24.....D. Jean Anderson, Nancy Davis |
| Apr. 12Chris & Perrin Burchfield,
Cara Ivy, Steven Ivy | Apr. 25.....Claire Hanschke, Jerome & Lisa Kittrell,
Suzie Pool |
| Apr. 14.....Robin Hall, Rose Hudson | Apr. 26.....Catherine Little |
| Apr.16Janet Chalk, Joane Mackey | Apr. 28.....Libby Davis, Will Simmons, Kelly Watson |
| Apr. 17.....Lindy Deen | Apr. 29.....Sellers Breaux |
| | Apr. 30.....Anne Elise Ray |

Services	APRIL 2	APRIL 9	APRIL 16	APRIL 23
VESTRY COUNTERS	John Compton & Bob Covert			
8 A.M.	EASTER SUNDAY			
CHALICE	John Carrier	Bob Covert	Malcom Gee	John Carrier
READER	John Carrier	Polly Covert	Malcom Gee	John Carrier
USHER	John Carrier	Bob Covert	Malcom Gee	John Carrier
10:30 A.M.				
READER 1	Wayne Wuestefeld	Jerome Kittrell	John Compton	Katie Simmons
READER 2	Rob Calcote	Sally Gray	Lloyd Gray	Rick Entrekin
PRAYERS	Bobbie Rea	Joan Moore	Stacey Harwell	Candy Ward
USHERS	Will Simmons Stephen Wilson	Laura & Clay Holladay Scott & Rose Hudson	Joey Martin Graham Martin	Perrin Burchfield Chris Burchfield
ACOLYTES	Lucy Simmons Sellers Breaux Carlyle Breaux Malcom Gee	Lucy Simmons Olivia Lewis Sellers Breaux Carlyle Breaux Malcom Gee	Annie Martin Jack Martin Maggie Martin	Wyatt Bond Hamp Little Britton Dunn
ALTAR GUILD	All Guild Members Set Up for Easter	All Guild Members Set Up for Easter	Rainey Breaux Leslie Hiatt	Rainey Breaux Leslie Hiatt
CHALICE	Lynn Waddle	Rob Calcote	Gary Jones	Gloria Chancellor

2023 Holy Week Schedule at St. Paul's

Palm Sunday • April 2

8:00 & 10:30 a.m.
(Incense will be used at 10:30 a.m. in the Courtyard)

Maundy Thursday • April 6

5:30 p.m. • *Maundy Thursday Eucharist (nursery provided)*
Washing of the Feet, Stripping of the Altar
After the Service • Agape Meal in Parish Hall (a communal meal of love shared among Christians)

Good Friday • April 7

12:05 p.m. • *Good Friday Service (nursery provided)*
Veneration of the Cross, Communion from the Altar of Repose (reserved Sacrament)

Holy Saturday Easter Eve • April 8

7:30 p.m. • *The Great Vigil of Easter (no nursery)*
(Service begins after sunset and lasts an hour and a half)
Kindling of the Paschal Fire in Memorial Garden,
Sacred Story and Song, Baptism, First Eucharist of Easter
Following the service, hot cross buns and champagne will be served in the Parish Hall.

Easter Day • April 9

8:00 a.m. • *Holy Eucharist (no music or incense)*
9:30 a.m. • *Easter Brunch in Parish Hall (no formation)*
Flowering of the Cross
10:30 a.m. • *Holy Eucharist (with music)*
Incense will be used at this service

The Meaning Behind Our Holy Week Observances

The time from Palm Sunday to Easter is the very heart and soul of the Christian faith. This Sunday-to-Saturday is called “Holy Week,” since it is during those days that we enter the events that accomplished our salvation. Above all others, this is the time when Christians are to be most faithful to God through worship.

These services come to us from the practices of the earliest Christians. The liturgies form a sacred journey, by which we prepare ourselves for the greatest of all celebrations: Easter. These several services are actually one extended liturgy, and for full meaning we are invited to go from start to finish. We cannot truly know the surpassing joy of Easter without taking part in the shattering events that led to Christ's death and burial.

Holy Week can be a real “roller-coaster,” and can be emotionally draining (which is just how it should be!) It is a time when—mystically—we become part of what happened during those last fateful days of Jesus' earthly life. From that, we come to experience more meaningfully our sharing in His Resurrection.

PALM SUNDAY: APRIL 2 • 8:00 & 10:30 A.M.

The Church's preferred name for this day is “The Sunday of the Passion,” yet it is universally called Palm Sunday. Of course, it is both. The liturgy runs the course of those extremes: from the triumphant, clamorous pageantry of the Liturgy of the Palms to the numbing Gospel account of Jesus' Passion and Crucifixion.

For the procession with palms at 10:30 a.m., we open with “intentional chaos,” as noisy and messy as we can make it! This



service will begin in the Columbarium Courtyard. We conclude the liturgy with a silent procession out of the church—pondering what we have heard and what lies before us in the holy days ahead. (Rain location: Parish Hall) Note: The 8:00 a.m. service will begin in the nave as usual.

For our Children and Youth: Our youngest members will assist in the 10:30 processions, by strewing palms and purple-dyed garments as the procession passes and by carrying “Hosanna” banners made especially for the day's service. We'll begin gathering in the Courtyard just before Church begins.

MAUNDY THURSDAY: APRIL 6 • 5:30 P.M.

This is the night when Jesus gave the very first Holy Communion. But our remembrance of that event is not only “historically” oriented; it is essential for the personal Christian experience of the present. Jesus said to “do this” in order to bring Him into our midst.



This is also the night when we celebrate Jesus' giving of the great New Commandment: “Love one another as I have loved you.” The word “Maundy” derives from this Mandatum novum, or new mandate; and we learn this kind of love through the simple, yet moving (and quite stretching for many!) act of washing one another's feet.

The liturgy concludes quite dramatically with the ritual stripping of the altar and sanctuary area—a very graphic reminder of the stark and brutal reality of Jesus' suffering. “Agape Meal” to follow the service (a communal meal of love shared among Christians).

The Meaning Behind Our Holy Week Observances

GOOD FRIDAY: APRIL 7 • 12:05 P.M.

This liturgy focuses on the Crucifixion through Scripture, music, and the prayers of the day. Worshipping in a “bare” church, we are led by the Word into the mystery of Christ's suffering and death. Nonetheless, our focus on the Crucifixion is not to be separated from the Resurrection.



A unique time is realized as a large rough-hewn wooden cross is brought before the altar. We share in corporate devotions. This is a time of focused reverence for what the Cross means, and thanksgiving for what Jesus accomplished on His Cross for us.

Finally, since the Eucharist cannot be celebrated on Good Friday, we make our communion from the reserved Sacrament of the night before. Our next Eucharist will be that of the Great Vigil—the first Eucharist of Easter.

Note: The offering collected on Good Friday supports the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem, the Holy Land and the Middle East. Churches nationwide join together in this offering. Please consider making a designated gift this day.

EASTER EVE • GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER: APRIL 8 • 7:30 P.M.

This truly magnificent service is the very cornerstone of all Christian worship. Moreover, it lays strong claim to being the most beautiful of all liturgies. The Great Vigil is the most



ancient liturgy we have, dating from the early 100s. In its overt mysticism, the Vigil's ancient origin is very evident. It is said to be the only liturgy the Church actually offers, and all other services of worship simply participate (like subsets) in its single reality.

The liturgy is both the watch for and the first celebration of Christ's Resurrection. We are told in Scripture that Jesus was raised between sunset and sunrise Saturday/Sunday. This is why the Vigil should really be held after sundown but before Easter morning's light.

We begin outside in the Columbarium Courtyard, symbolically moving from the place of death to Easter life. A fire is kindled and blessed, from which the Paschal candle is lighted. The congregation processes solemnly and quietly into the dark church, and the people's handheld candles are lit from the Paschal candle. The ancient Easter hymn, the “Exsultet” (a most beautiful chant) is then sung by a clergy person or cantor. Several readings follow, recounting the history of God's saving presence with His people; we respond to each reading with a psalm or canticle. Then we move into Baptism (this is THE principal occasion of the year for baptisms!) Following, the lights of the Church are brought up with the shouts of Easter's resurrection message. The organ plays an extended fanfare and we move most joyfully into the First Eucharist of Easter. The service is an hour and a half and worth every bit!

For Everyone: Bring a handheld bell from home to ring (or keys to rattle) during the fanfare at the first shout of “Alleluia!”

Note: Incense will be used.



CELEBRATING EASTER • APRIL 9

8:00 A.M. • **HOLY EUCHARIST** (no music or incense)

9:30 A.M. • **EASTER BRUNCH & FLOWERING OF THE CROSS**

The Parish Hall will be filled with many crafts and activities. Parents and grandparents are asked to participate in these offerings with their children or grandchildren. Please bring fresh cut flowers with sturdy stems from home to help adorn the Cross. This will provide a wonderful opportunity for family photos on patio or after Church in the Nave. Bring your camera! People of all ages are encouraged to come and enjoy this festive morning.

10:30 A.M. • **FESTIVAL CHORAL HOLY EUCHARIST**
(incense will be used)