

Our Finest Hour

The Apollo 13 space launch in 1970 was one of the most notable moments in the history of NASA. It was a space version of Murphy's Law, where everything that could go wrong actually did. Though not all the parish family was around then (this priest included) we were reminded of the happenings of Apollo 13 mainly through the 1995 Ron Howard movie with the same name.

Two days into space, an oxygen tank in the service module failed. The crew had to endure through limited power, a chilly cabin and a limited oxygen supply. The original mission — to land men on the moon — shifted to “get the astronauts home.”

The original pilot, Ken Mattingly, was kicked off the team because he tested positive for the measles. After the spaceship was damaged, NASA called Ken into the space simulator to figure out how to fly Apollo 13 with the least amount of power possible. Again and again they failed and had to start over. Finally, when they turned on just enough instruments to fly the craft, they gave that same checklist to the astronauts in space and got them home. It was, as quoted in the movie, “NASA's finest hour.”

I cannot help but think that for the church, as well as so many institutions right now, the events of today have a lot in common with the Apollo 13 mission. So much has just not worked out. Regarding this virus and the world's response to it, nothing is fair. Hardworking people are losing jobs, in our parish we are signing up for in-person worship and there isn't an end in sight. We have lost the moon as those astronauts did — that is, we didn't celebrate Easter Day, the Great Fifty Days, Pentecost and fall formation will look as different as it ever has.

It is not fair. Even further, certainly, it is not fair who COVID-19 infects and destroys and who it does not. The Tony Awarding winning musical Hamilton may say it best:

*“[Love, Life, and Death] doesn't discriminate
Between the sinners
And the saints
It takes, and it takes, and it takes
And we keep [loving, living, dying] anyway.
We laugh and we cry, and we break
And we make our mistakes.”*

The world is rarely fair, and Christians certainly are not immune either. Right now, we are called to be the church like a wounded space craft, or perhaps like the places and times in the history of Christendom where it

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Davis Accepts New Position at St. Paul's

Dear Parish family,

My name is Mallory Davis, and I have happily accepted the position of Director of Children's Ministries for St. Paul's.

My husband, Reid, and I recently moved back to Meridian after spending about 18 years away. We have three children — Ann Revere (12), William (11) and Simmons (7). We've all settled in nicely and immediately found our home at St. Paul's. Thank you for being so welcoming!

I have primarily spent my adult years at home with my children and it has been the delight of my life to be able to invest my time and effort into preparing them for the world that they will enter upon leaving our home. My goals as a parent are:

To create happy/thriving/mature adults who are intentional with their actions; who make decisions based on merit with awareness and knowledge; who move through life with kindness and empathy in which their actions speak from the genuine goodness of their soul; who seek forgiveness and understanding; who acknowledge the power of effort and hard work; who live with hope in their hearts of what love can bring to the world.

It is an exciting time at St. Paul's and I cannot wait to be a part of it! I hope to offer whatever that I can in order to better our children and children's programs.

You may reach me at 601.513.1775 or . I welcome the opportunity to meet with you and cannot wait to get started.



Baptized in Christ

Anne Harris Crowe will be baptized Sunday, August 2, in a private family ceremony. Anne Harris was born Tuesday, March 10, at 6:46 p.m. to proud parents Mary Lawrence and Michael Crowe. She is the granddaughter of Lisa and Larry Love (Lovey and Candy) and Tammy and Jimmy Matthews (T and Doc). Anne Harris entered this world exactly one week before the new normal of pandemic craziness began.

Right now, Anne Harris spends her days swinging on the porch, rolling over, laughing and smiling, and playing with her puppy sister, Penny. She recently tried solid foods and is a big fan of black beans. Anne Harris is looking forward to going to church and meeting her St. Paul's family soon!



St. Paul's Steps Up Video Presence

St. Paul's Vestry met via Zoom in July. Jerome Trahan was introduced to the vestry and gave a status report of our live streaming Sunday services and the journey to improving the audio each Sunday. We are so grateful that Jerome, using the equipment from the MAX, has given so much of his time and talent to support St. Paul's to bring worship to those who continue to worship from home. What a gift! Since Covid-19 shows no signs of abating at present, Jerome has offered to provide his expertise to help us develop a plan for continuing digital offerings. Tim Hanschke, chairperson of Administration and Communications, has agreed to assemble a team to develop a plan and a budget that will serve us now and in the long term. This is an important project to provide meaningful worship and connections to each other.

Financial statements were received. It was noted that a line item for Covid-19 Expense has been added. Our revenue, as a percentage of the annual budget used this year, is 41.62%.

Rob Calcote, Jr. Warden reported that the work on the new front doors is progressing; however, it is about a week behind schedule due to the illness of the contractor. Rob has also been attending to some necessary work at the rectory regarding plumbing and appliances.

The vestry approved "The Process for Vestry Administration and Communication," an agreement on the practices the Vestry will employ to accomplish the work of the parish and to give a guide to the rector for transacting day-to-day business concerns.

Each parish committed to support the Diocesan "Seeds You Sow" campaign for improvements to the Gray Center and Camp Bratton-Green. Since the Gray Center is closed, the moneys will be diverted to Camp Bratton-Green, so our pledge will continue. It was an excruciating decision for the Board and the Bishop to make, but necessary to save Camp Bratton-Green.

Wayne Wuestefeld introduced a plan he and his committee have been working on for placing teak furniture in the Memorial Garden. The Vestry approved the plan, which will lead to the purchase the furniture. Funding will come from the Holladay Family Fund, which is earmarked for the Memorial Garden.

A "Resolution of Appreciation" for Jerome Kittrell for his work on our audits was approved. Also, payment for our Sunday Cleaner was approved.



During the July meeting, the Vestry passed a "Resolution of Grateful Appreciation" for Jerome Kittrell's work in bringing the church audits up to date. Jerome will be recorded in our archives as St. Jerome, the patron saint of libraries, archivists, translators, encyclopedists and auditors."

Many thanks, Jerome.

Our Finest Hour

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was unsafe or unhealthy to gather as the body of the faithful. We are running with just enough power... juice... just enough of the Spirit to get us through.

Remember our mission statement has not changed. "We support and encourage one another in living out our baptismal vows." Respecting the dignity of every human being in action right now means we gather and break bread in small groups until the curve is leveled.

And our technology is improving all the time. We have had some setbacks along the way and at times I have felt as though I have been learning a new language, but we are doing it. We have found good people to help and good things are happening. If it has been awhile, allow the initial shock to wear off and give it another look. The spirit is alive and well in the church and at St. Paul's.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians in a time where they were uncertain. They were weary of the times and worried about being arrested and persecuted at any moment.

"To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless, and we grow weary from the work of our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly. We have become like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things, to this very day."

We are continuing to try new things. The vestry is making plans and strategies to feed and form the flock with whatever is ahead. We do have enough to get through this. We can get the lost and the broken home. And we may find, on the other side of the moon, after the darkness, it just might be St. Paul's finest hour.

Austin

We Remember in our Prayers

Our Parish family: 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.

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, Amanda Lockey, Amanda Rainey, Anita Sumrall, Anna Meyers, Barbara Hopper, Barbara Robinson, Baston Geiger, Beverly Bryson, Bill Selman, Bob Hill, Brian Keating, Brooke, Brooks Moore, Charlie Smith, Charmin Edwards, Chelsie Abston, Christina Harris, Cory Gaylord, 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, Jane Wacaster, Jim Bateman, John, Ken Fisher, Kim Lovette, Kylie Temple, Lee Davis Thames, Leigh AnnKey, Lillie Alford, Lou Dubose, Marilyn Mohr, Martha Mazingo, Mary Hallwell, Mary Ann Howell, Michelle Nelson, Mike Covert, Mike Lundy, Mike Stanton, Nancy Ray, Noah White, Norman, Patty Fishburn, Rick, Sandra Nicholas, Sandy Carrier, Sallie Gercens, Hannah Thompson, Seth Thompson, Shirley Cameron, Theodore, Tom Schram, Tony Sansone, Wanda Farr, Wanda Scott, Wilfe Manning, Zack Martin and Diane Dunn.

We pray for those who have died especially: Clay Hamilton, son of Mary Scott; Mamie Johnson, mother of Fannie Johnson; and Dr. William "Bill" Scaggs.

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

Aug. 1.....Eve Morrison,
Sarah Katherine Simmons

Aug. 2.....William Godwin

Aug. 3.....Terry Rush

Aug. 4.....Bob & Kathy Pigford,
Chad Tibbetts

Aug. 6.....Rick & Cheri Barry

Aug. 7..... Adrian & Mardi Page,
Addyson Sims

Aug. 8.....David & Laurretta Hamilton

Aug. 9..... Virginia Brimble,
Gary & Carolyn Jones

Aug. 10.....Lauren Graham,

Aug. 10.....Gordon & Sara Mason,
Rose Mary Stump

Aug. 11.....A.J. Page

Aug. 13.....Susan Coffin, Julie Stump

Aug. 17.....Bev Pringle, Sarah Woods

Aug. 18.....Jim & Amy Cady, Rick & Sue Farr
Kathy Pigford

Aug. 19.....Austin & Tiffany McGehee

Aug. 20.....Billie Jean Drennan, Merry Jo Rea

Aug. 22.....Harold Noe

Aug. 23.....Addie Florey

Aug. 24.....Monica Graham, Mike & Kay Reich

Aug. 25.....Joan Moore

Nothin' Gonna Break My Stride

"Ain't nothin' gonna break-a my stride

Nobody gonna slow me down, oh no

I got to keep on movin'"

—Break My Stride, Matthew Wilder



This is the song that has been running through my head on a loop since April. First, I need to give credit where credit is due. I had forgotten about this song until my daughter re-introduced me to it through one of her many Tic-Tok videos. Sometimes good things can actually come from all this technology and social media!

Since March, all of us have been keeping on, changing the way we do things, adapting to today's world, and trying to keep our collective heads up. This has been an incredible challenge that has affected our homes, churches, schools, work and social lives. On top of all of that, there are infinite opinions on what is really going on, and how best to journey through it. Never in my life have I felt such a tug on my spirit to extend grace, as well as to actively pray I receive grace from others.

The situation we find ourselves in while living through COVID-19 actually holds great opportunity amidst the challenges. For example, live streaming church services has given those unable to physically be present in worship the opportunity to worship together with everyone else. Camp Bratton-Green has been streaming "virtual camp" all summer giving many kids access who have never been able to experience summer camp. Schools have adapted everything from how education looks to feeding the children in our community. Programs have been put in place that will stick around even after all this is over. Community leaders have been able to identify the weak spots and offer support to families that has changed lives. There are so many

areas in our community that were crying for help, but we were so busy, these needs were all but invisible.

I recognize the last several months have been difficult, anxiety filled and sometimes depressing. Each morning though, I wake up with the lyrics to "Break My Stride" playing in my head and do my best to find — and spread — the light of Christ. Of course, some days I fail. However, the days I get it right make my heart sing and I have a renewed hope for our community, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In the absence of our traditional worship and fellowship, I pray we can all keep an open heart and actively search for ways we can support and love our neighbors whether they live next door, or across town. I pray we can use this time to recognize who, and what, needs our support and act on it. The two following Bible verses have been helpful in keeping my head and heart focused in the right place. Be the Light. Don't let anything break your stride!

2 Corinthians 12:9

"...but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.' So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

John 1:5

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

Blessing of the Backpacks

Sunday, August 9, all students, teachers, administrators and support staff are encouraged to attend a "drive-thru" Blessing of the Backpacks at St. Paul's. Father Austin and crew will be standing in St. Paul's driveway between 6 - 7 p.m. on 12th Street (by the playground) to offer blessings and prayer tags. This school year will be like no other and we all could definitely use some blessings and prayer to get it started off right! Bring your backpacks, briefcases and lunch boxes to be blessed for the new school year. We look forward to seeing you there!

Diocesan Youth Activity News

The Diocese of Mississippi has made the difficult decision to discontinue diocesan youth ministry events until there is a treatment or vaccine for the COVID-19 virus. This unfortunately means that DOY and Happening gatherings won't take place this fall. It is everyone's deepest hope that by January there will be a solution and DOY and Happening can take place as planned in the spring.

Information will continue to be gathered and assessed in order to make the best decisions for the health of the youth of this diocese. Families can expect to see an announcement in December as to what the new year will hold regarding youth ministry. Our Diocese Missioner for Children's and Youth Formation, Whitney Robinson, is currently working on creating online events to fill the void of DOY and Happening this fall. Please contact Claire Hasselle if you have further questions or even helpful ideas.

Children's and Youth Sunday School News

St. Paul's is blessed to have a creative and hard-working team of Sunday school teachers preparing a formative experience for our youngest parishioners. The goal of this preparation is to create flexible programming that can be adapted to ongoing changes due to the COVID virus. Current Sunday School programming should be able to quickly adapt to the transition of gathering in person as soon as it is safe to do so. It is helpful to ask questions when coming up with a Christian formation program:

- Are we engaging everyone in a household together that isn't seen as another "thing that has to be done"?
- How are we helping form disciples to learn about and follow Jesus during this time?
- Are we supporting all ages in learning scripture and praying at home?

During the month of August, a dedicated team of teachers will be recording themselves teaching lessons to be posted on the St. Paul's YouTube channel. Teachers will also be packing "kits" that can be picked up at the church. These Sunday school kits will be filled with enough materials for a month of lessons, similar to how VBS looked this summer. New lessons and kits for children, as well as youth, will be available for pick up at the beginning of each month.

Children's and Youth Sunday School will begin officially on Sunday, August 30. The first set of Sunday school kits will be ready for pick up at the church office the last week of August. The first YouTube lesson will be uploaded for viewing on Sunday, August 30. Let's put our faith in action and make this time count!



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.

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.