



# THE EPISCOPAL MESSENGER

MARCH 2026

SAINT PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## I believe ...

## We believe ...

Every Sunday our corporate worship service contains either the Nicene Creed (Eucharist) or the Apostles' Creed (Baptism and Morning Prayer). Both are a summation of the basic tenets of the Christian faith. Both are trinitarian in nature (i.e. expressing faith in the three persons of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and are seemingly old. The original Nicene Creed dates to 325 AD and the Apostles' Creed to about 390 AD (though a predecessor called the Roman Creed dates to about 340 AD).

While 1,700 years is a long time ago, these creeds were developed approximately 300 years after Jesus. As a result, there are academics that have criticized them saying these creeds incorporate understandings and concepts developed during those three centuries that were not present with the earliest Christians.

However, more recent research has identified some of the earliest creeds (confession of faith) that are imbedded in the books of the New Testament. Dr. Gary Habermas characterizes these as short, easily memorized statements that capture the core of the Christian faith – the

divinity, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Why were these creeds used? There are a number of reasons.

- Literacy. It is estimated the literacy rate in the first century ranged from 10 to 30%. If the Gospel was to spread, it had to be done primarily by word of mouth.
- Cost. Writing materials were expensive and to make a copy of a document meant that a person had to transcribe the document – a time consuming and expensive process. One estimate is that a **single** copy of the Gospel According to Luke/Acts of the Apostles would cost in today's dollars approximately \$200,000.

How old are these creeds? These creeds predate the books of the New Testament which were written between 50 AD and 100 AD. Sometimes they are explicitly called out by the author, sometimes by the wording and sometimes by patterns.

What is widely viewed as earliest of these creeds is found in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. The letter was written sometime between 53 – 55 AD and in Chapter 15 he writes, "I have handed on to you as of first importance what I had in turn received:" Here he clearly states these are not his words, but rather

something he learned. He goes on to say, “...Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures [Old Testament], and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas [Peter/Simon], then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James [brother of Jesus], then to all the apostles.”

Given the dating of Paul’s conversion at about 33-35 AD, this creed, which contains the key elements of the divinity, death and resurrection of Jesus was developed within five years of Jesus’ resurrection.

Paul’s letters contain other creeds. The shortest is the simple statement *Kyrios IESOUS* [Jesus is Lord] which appears in both Romans 10:9 and 1 Corinthians 12:3. In the original Greek, it uses the word for God in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). It also implied allegiance with Jesus rather than Caesar.

In Philippians 2:6-11 there is what is likely the earliest recorded Christian hymn which also contains a creed:

6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,  
7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form,  
8 he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

9 Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,  
10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

By setting the creed as a poem which can be sung, it makes the message easy to remember. Additionally, it may have been used during worship services.

Another creed is found in 1 Timothy 3:16:

Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great:

He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.

Again, this creed captures the essential elements of the faith in a form that is easily memorized and can be passed on to others.

These creeds found imbedded in the earliest books of the New Testament demonstrate that the key elements of the later creeds existed and were believed by the earliest Christians, even before the term “Christian” was coined. The next time you prepare to say either the Nicene or Apostles’ creed, take a moment to consider the many generations of Christians before you who have proclaimed the divinity, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our LORD and Savior. – *Deacon Jim*



*Susie introduces "Alpha," the adult education series that runs until the end of May.*

## Adult Education

The Alpha Course is underway in the Adult Ed classes, and there's still time to join us. In Alpha we are exploring faith through video sessions and open, welcoming conversation.

Up-coming videos:

- Why did Jesus Die?
- How Do I Pray?
- How Does God Guide Us?

You can join us in one of two ways:

**Sundays, 6 p.m., on Zoom**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89009873767>

Meeting ID: 890 0987 3767

**Mondays 10:30 a.m., in-person  
at St. Paul's**

See Susie or Deacon Jim with questions.



## Our annual Thanksgiving for Spring Turkey Dinner

will be held on  
**Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>,**  
with takeouts available  
from 4-5:30 p.m.

Please sign up in the back of the church to  
donate mash potatoes and/or desserts.

# Vestry Report for February

## Deacon Jim's Report

My primary focus remains on worship and pastoral care. I continue to arrange for supply priests, review bulletins and plan worship services. Some of the things planned for Lent:

- Two services on Ash Wednesday (noon and 6:30 PM) and Ashes-to-Go.
- The Great Litany to begin worship services on the First Sunday in Lent.
- Rev. Weedon will be with us for the major services of Holy Week – Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Vigil and Easter Sunday.
- We will also have Tenebrae on Wednesday of Holy Week and two services on Good Friday.

Jim discussed a meeting about the 6261 Project through Lutheran Synods, a yoking project (sharing clergy due to shortage of clergy and smaller congregations.) Christ Church in Berwick is seeking a rector, last filled as 1/4-1/2 time, and St. Luke's Lutheran is also looking for part time clergy. Most of the churches we have looked at for Parish Profile and priest job descriptions through the Search Committee are in "cooperating" situations. The biggest difference between Episcopalian clergy and Lutheran clergy is that in the latter lay ministers and deacons are paid positions.

## Treasurer's Report

- Finance Committee is recommending monies from an estate be put in a separate savings account for special projects,

possibly earmarked for the fire alarm system.

- Monthly Reports
  - Good number in pledges, possibly large because of people paying whole year pledges in January
  - Some numbers in the Budget Report represent errors that we will check on, including carryover amount, administrative expense, Deacon's Discretionary Fund, Church Insurance, Child Fund, and Utilities
  - We will work on closing out accounts that are inactive
- Signatory changes for Journey Bank: Dennis made a motion to update our Resolutions with Journey Bank updating those with financial authority, seconded by Rachel. Motion carried unanimously.
- Dennis is going through an Excel program to better understand the budget distribution spreadsheet.

## Old Business

- Difficulty filling Vestry positions was discussed. Discussed doing away with term limits, which may be something set in the Canons. We will look at Canons and discuss at March meeting
- Backyard fence
  - Information from the Town of Bloomsburg supports our position that AT&T built the fence. Victoria is in contact with American Tower with the new information, including



*Members of Vestry (from left) Dennis, treasurer; Katherine, Senior Warden; Val, Junior Warden; Rachel, Victoria, secretary; and Doug.*

concerns about liability for American Tower.

- Discussed fire alarm system replacement: Rachel and Vicki will work on enlarging the portion of the wall that houses the current alarm panel, since the new one is larger. Need to replace panel box, 28 smoke alarms, 5 pull switches. Not funded in 2026 budget but must be done. Will work on funding
- Contact person for fire alarm calls: Val will be the person called by the monitoring company if the fire alarm goes off.
- Nursery requests: we need to identify the interested parents. Katherine will contact Susie to get meeting set up.
- Technology needs and website update: Ryan Snyder will help Victoria, and there are additional people wanting to train on the live streaming of services.

## New Business

- Including the Newsletter on Facebook puts sensitive information (financial, personal phone numbers)

out to the public. Doug can make a Facebook Version of the newsletter that does not include financial info and individual contact numbers.

- Safe church: We need a Safe Church manager. Vicki will approach congregation to fill position.

## Senior Warden's Message

The Search Committee has made significant progress in updating our Parish Profile and our website. Canon Chappell continues as our point person at the Diocesan office. Thanks to the efforts of Deacon Jim, we have had a supply priest to celebrate Eucharist most Sundays, with Deacon Jim presiding at Morning Prayer in the absence of a priest.

Tuesday evening gatherings have resumed approximately every other week as announced. On March 3<sup>rd</sup> we will enjoy a potluck supper. Stay tuned for details about a traditional corned beef and cabbage supper in celebration of St. Patrick's Day on Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>. Our gatherings are held in the lower parish hall at 6:00 p.m. until such time that we can enjoy warmer weather outdoors. This is a wonderful opportunity to come together and enjoy food and fellowship with one another, and I invite all of you to join us.

As we travel through this time of transition, please know that I am sincerely grateful for all of you and for your support of the ministry within our parish and in the greater community.

– Katherine, Senior Warden

# March Lectionary

3/8 – Third Sunday in Lent

- [Exodus 17:1-7](#)
- [Romans 5:1-11](#)
- [John 4:5-42](#)
- [Psalm 95](#)

3/15 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

- [1 Samuel 16:1-13](#)
- [Ephesians 5:8-14](#)
- [John 9:1-41](#)
- [Psalm 23](#)

3/19 – St. Joseph

- [2 Samuel 7:4,8-16](#)
- [Romans 4:13-18](#)
- [Luke 2:41-52](#)
- [Psalm 89:1-29](#)

3/22 – Fifth Sunday in Lent

- [Ezekiel 37:1-14](#)
- [Romans 8:6-11](#)
- [John 11:1-45](#)
- [Psalm 130](#)

3/25 – The Annunciation

- [Isaiah 7:10-14](#)
- [Psalm 45](#)
- or [Psalm 40:5-10](#)
- or [Canticle 15](#) (or 3)
- [Hebrews 10:4-10](#)
- [Luke 1:26-38](#)

3/29 – Palm Sunday

**The Liturgy of the Palms**

- [Matthew 21:1-11](#)
- [Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29](#)

**The Liturgy of the Word**

- [Isaiah 50:4-9a](#)
- [Philippians 2:5-11](#)
- [Matthew 26:14- 27:66](#)
- or [Matthew 27:11-54](#)
- [Psalm 31:9-16](#)

# In Our Prayers

*O God of all mercy, look with favor on your servants who are in sickness, danger, sorrow or any other kind of trouble, especially:*

Abby \* Aiden \* Alan \* Alexis \* Allison \* Amber \* Andrew \* Angela \* Becky \* Beth \* Bob \* Bryan \* Carol \* Cathy \* Christina \* Cindy \* Connor \* Dan \* Dee \* Devon \* Dorothy \* Ellen and her family \* Epbert \* Ethan \* Evie \* Frankie \* Gene \* Genny \* George \* Greg \* Hailey \* Harrison \* Helena \* Holly \* Jackie \* Jane \* Janet \* Jay \* Jerry \* Jesse \* Jessica \* Jill \* Jim \* Joanne \* Joe \* John \* Jon \* Josh \* Judy \* Julie \* Katie \* Kennedy \* Kiki \* Kim \* Krista \* Laurie \* Leslie \* Linda \* Ling \* Lou \* Luann \* Lynn \* Maria \* Mariann \* Marie \* Mary \* Mary Beth \* Megan \* Michelle \* Mike \* Nate \* Nina \* Pam \* Patty \* Paul \* Rebecca \* Richard \* Rick \* Rosemary \* Russ \* Ruth \* Scott \* Sean \* Simuel \* Steve \* Tasha \* Tim \* Todd \* Van \* Victoria \* Vinny \* Willie \* Faisal and family in Bahrain

*Give them, we pray, courage and hope, and a happy issue from all their afflictions, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

(The complete written prayer list will be printed in the newsletter and in the weekly "Happenings." However, only those names requested on Sunday morning in-person or by Zoom will be read during the service. PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN SOMEONE'S NAME CAN BE REMOVED FROM THE LIST.)

# From the Depths to Green Pastures: Music in the Heart of Lent

March always carries a certain tension. We stand in the deep, searching weeks of Lent, yet we begin to sense subtle signs that something new is stirring. After what has felt like a particularly long and unyielding winter, the promise of spring feels especially welcome this year. The light lingers a little longer. The air softens. Beneath frozen ground, life is quietly preparing to rise.

The music we prepare this month reflects that same spiritual movement.

On the Fourth Sunday in Lent, the choir will sing *"The Lord Is My Shepherd."* These familiar words from Psalm 23 offer reassurance in the midst of uncertainty: *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."* Lent invites us to walk honestly through the valleys of reflection and repentance, but never without hope. The image of green pastures and still waters speaks gently to the season we are beginning to see around us, which serves as a reminder that God's care persists even when the landscape feels barren.

Then, on the Fifth Sunday in Lent, we will offer *"O Lord, From the Depths I Cry,"* drawn from Psalm 130. This is one of the most poignant Lenten texts; a cry from the depths, a prayer born of longing and trust. Yet even here, the psalm turns toward hope: *"My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning."* After a long winter, we understand that waiting.

We understand looking toward the horizon for light.

These two anthems together tell the Lenten story beautifully: we cry out from the depths, yet we are shepherded through; we wait for the morning, and the morning does come.

As we move through these weeks, may our worship, through scripture, prayer, and song, help us embrace both the honesty of Lent and the quiet assurance that resurrection is already taking root.

And perhaps, as the first hints of spring appear around us, we are reminded that faith, too, is a season of patient trust, knowing that beneath even the coldest ground, new life is preparing to emerge.

– Dr Alan, Music Director

## **HOLY WEEK SERVICES**

**March 29<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday**

*Eucharist at 8:00 and 10:30 AM*

**March 31<sup>st</sup> Tuesday**

*Evening Prayer at 7:00 PM*

**April 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday**

*Tenebrae at 7:00 PM*

**April 2<sup>nd</sup> Maundy Thursday**

*Eucharist at 7:00 PM*

**April 3<sup>rd</sup> Good Friday**

*Services at 12:00 and 7:00 PM*

**April 4<sup>th</sup> Holy Saturday**

*Easter Vigil at 7:30 PM*

**April 5<sup>th</sup> Easter –**

*Eucharist at 8:00 and 10:30 AM*

The Reverend Sarah will be with us on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday.

Dear St. Paul's,



Bishop Scanlan has graciously allowed us to send one last newsletter article updating you on how we are doing in North Carolina. Be sure to read until the end because we have a

little surprise!

As an update on how I'm doing, the medical realities are the same, but with a smaller, one-story house, I am able some days to walk without any devices, and other days I need the walker or the scooter. We just take it as it comes.



We want to thank the St Paul's community for the unconditional love you have always shared

with us in our time there. Our going away party honoring Russell and me truly left us deeply touched and humbled. The kind words and the generosity of all of you have meant the world to us.

We have found a church very close to our home, St. Patrick's in Mooresville. Like St. Paul's, they are a vibrant active community. It is much larger than St. Paul's, and we discovered they have six retired priests in the congregation. We met with our new priest, and he asked if I would like to serve in some way. I said I would love to do anything with the children (not surprising to any of you, I'm sure!) The

fact is that there was no pressure to serve in a particular capacity, and I appreciate that freedom.

There are some social opportunities for each of us. Russ attends the "Geezers" Friday morning breakfast group. They are a lot of fun and have begun to tease me about waiting for a sermon whenever I am ready! Three book clubs in the church offer several options. I attended the Gals and Games and met a few more ladies. The ECW is active here, as well as the Daughters of the King, so it feels like we can become as involved and busy as we choose to be.



We have heard that the Gatherings are continuing once a month for now. It is such an

important ministry for connecting St. Paul's members, and we are glad to hear it has become a regular practice within the church. We are glad the relationships of St. Paul's membership remain strong.

If you are traveling down I-77 in the Charlotte NC area, we would love to see you – please reach out. We have not changed our emails or phone numbers.

Bishop Audrey has also granted a rare gift to us. She is allowing Russell and me to attend worship with all of you on May 31<sup>st</sup>. I am not allowed to participate, but just to be surrounded by your love once again will be the best gift we could ask for!

*With love and blessings,*

*Mother Allison and Russell*

# Pancakes!



Deacon Jim offering 'Ashes to Go'





# Panther Packs Challenge XII



It is with overwhelmingly grateful hearts that the Outreach committee reports the results of the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Panther Packs Challenge. We challenged our congregation to give the Panther Packs program 60 actual or virtual bags of kid friendly food. The congregation provided \$1,858 in monetary donations, which equaled 185 virtual bags, PLUS 42 actual bags of kid-friendly food.

From the very first challenge in 2015, the support and generosity St. Paul’s has shown for well-being of the children in our community has been awe-inspiring. And every year it has just grown stronger. Thank you!

## Mini refresher on the history of the Our Orangeville Manor (OOM) Dessert Mission

In April 2020, early in the pandemic, the flowers for an Easter service that would not be held arrived at St. Paul’s. Scott and Jean Atherton delivered the flowers to a variety of locations, including Our Orangeville Manor (OOM). Settings like nursing homes and personal care homes had an enormous responsibility for the well-being of their residents. At OOM the men were in lock-down for the duration. There were no visitors, no walks to the local convenience store, and no outings.

Scott and Jean asked if St. Paul’s could do anything for the residents. What did they want or need? What did they miss having? The answer was homemade desserts. From April – August of 2020, Outreach and Vestry provided baked goods once a week for our friends at OOM. In August we invited the congregation to sign up to provide desserts every two weeks. When the COVID restrictions ended, the residents asked if we would continue “dessert mission,” and we have done that. It is worth mentioning that OOM did not lose any residents during the COVID era.

**Where we are now:** Six years later, we are stilling doing “dessert mission” with OOM. We only have two changes from the original program: the schedule is now two deliveries a month, and the desserts can be store bought (donuts, pies, cupcakes, cookies, ice cream...) If you would like to sign up, or if you have questions, contact Elaine. The schedule is published in both the newsletter and *Happenings*.

## Current Schedule for OOM Dessert Mission

The dates for the 2026 February - June dessert mission schedule:

|            |              |             |               |
|------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| February 8 | Patty Creasy | February 22 | Elaine & Mike |
| March 8    | Scott & Jean | March 22    |               |
| April 12   |              | April 26    |               |
| May 10     |              | May 24      |               |
| June 14    |              | June 28     |               |

*(Continued on next page)*

## Guidelines for Delivering Baked Goods for Our Orangeville Manor (OOM)

- When making a dessert delivery it's a good idea to take the guidelines along.
- Desserts do not have to be homemade, but if they are, please use disposable containers.
- Provide 40 servings.
- Desserts can be delivered any day during the week you signed up for.  
**Please note:** Staff members are busy around mealtimes, so it would be helpful to avoid 12 noon to 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Directions to OOM from Bloomsburg: take 487 to Orangeville. Shortly after you get into the village, take the first left on Broad Street, then turn right on Mill Street. Proceed .2 (2/10) of a mile, and OOM will be on the right. It has an American flag, an awning out front, and a sign. Go past the building and turn into the parking lot on the left side of the building.
- When you arrive, call Our Orangeville Manor and ask for someone to come to the car or kitchen door to get the desserts.
- Thank you for supporting this on-going mission!

## Fundraising/Outreach at Ren Jam on April 25th



**Plan ahead** for Renaissance Jamboree AND St. Paul's homemade strawberry short cake stand! Opportunities and sign-up sheets for volunteers will be available in late March/early April. The week before Ren Jam we will need folks to bake shortcakes and clean/cut strawberries. On Saturday, April 26, we will need volunteers to help set up the stand, several teams to assemble and sell shortcake, and

a few more hearty souls to tear the stand down.

### THE EPISCOPAL MESSENGER

A newsletter for the parish family of

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Bloomsburg