

Bishop nominees announced

Five candidates seek office as 11th Bishop of Mississippi



The Rev. Canon Jason Alexander has served as canon to the ordinary in the Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas since 2009. He is the chief advisor to the

bishop in the general oversight of the diocese and focuses on clergy transitions and congregational development. He travels often among Arkansas's 54 congregations, preaching, teaching, and troubleshooting. As the diocesan transition minister, he has overseen more than 50 clergy leadership transitions and fostered lay leadership in rural and urban congregations alike. He drives creative initiatives around the diocese, including a church plant in the delta town of Wynne and Hike Humbly, a program for adventurous individuals who hike, camp, and worship together in Arkansas's natural places. He initiated the Iona Collaborative in Arkansas, now a successful diocesan school for ministry. He has co-facilitated

regional conferences of the Cooperative College for Congregational Development. Jason's style of leadership is that of an expedition leader, guiding and equipping others for mission and ministry with the tools they need. He is an interpreter for the Holy Cow assessment tool and a long-time practitioner of Bowen Family Systems Theory. He works to resolve conflicts in congregations with compassion and is trained in mediation through the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. He believes successful leadership hinges on the ability to develop and maintain healthy relationships.

Jason spent twelve years of his youth in Alaska, camping with friends in the mountains around Juneau. The outdoors is a key part of his physical and spiritual life. He thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail in 2001 and rode his mountain bike from Canada to Mexico in the Tour Divide Race in 2015. Music is also a life-long love. He has had leading roles in musicals, oratorios, and operas. He was a founding member of Opera to Go, traveling throughout Alaska to bring the arts to remote communities.

Jason is a graduate of Hendrix College in Conway, AR, and received a Master of Divinity from the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, CA. He recently completed a Doctor of Ministry in Christian spirituality at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, VA. His thesis project explored the spiritual challenges of change in the church and hope for its future. He is married and has three teenagers.



The Very Reverend Jennifer Andrews-Weckerly is a native of Atlanta, Georgia, and was raised there and in western North Carolina. She received her undergraduate education at Duke (Political Science cum laude) and holds master's degrees from Virginia Theological Seminary and the University of Alabama's Culverhouse College of Business. She was ordained to

College of Business. She was ordained to the priesthood in 2010.

After serving a curacy at Christ Church Christiana Hundred in Greenville, Delaware, Jennifer was named rector of the Episcopal Church of St. Margaret in Plainview, New York. In her five-year tenure on Long Island, Jennifer guided the congregation through a period of steady growth and became president of Planview's interfaith clergy group. She was elected rector of Hickory Neck Church in 2016, where she began a pre-school partnership with The Kensington School, and served on task forces and groups supporting affordable housing and community leadership. In addition to her responsibilities leading Hickory Neck, Jennifer serves as dean of the diocese's Peninsula Convocation.

In service to the wider church, Jennifer has served on the Diocese of Long Island's Commission on Ministry and social ministries board of trustees; college ministries task force and General Convention deputation in the Diocese of Southern Virginia; and as an officer of the Virginia Seminary Alumni/ae Executive Committee, serving a term as president in 2022-2023, with an ex officio appointment to the seminary's board of trustees.

Jennifer began her professional life as an AmeriCorps VISTA and Habitat for

Humanity affiliate Director of Volunteers. Jennifer is married and met her husband while serving as a U.S. House of Representatives page in high school. Despite that unique and auspicious start, their proudest achievement is the two school-age daughters they share.



The Very Rev. Rob Courtney is a South Louisiana native, born and raised in Crowley. He attended the University of Louisiana at Lafayette

in the early 1990s with a major in music media before beginning a career in radio. Rob worked as an on-air personality and program director for successful rock stations in both Lafayette and New Orleans, LA, before leaving radio in 2002 to become the first Parish Administrator at historic Christ Church Cathedral, New Orleans. While working full-time at the cathedral, Rob completed a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration through the University of Phoenix, graduating with honors, and formally discerned a call to ordained ministry with the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana.

In 2006, he and his family moved to

See **Nominees** on Page 3

BISHOP SEARCH
Diocese of MS

slate of nominees

The Rev. Canon
JASON ALEXANDER

The Very Rev.
JENNIFER ANDREWS-
WECKERLY

The Very Rev.
ROB COURTNEY

The Very Rev.
WALTON JONES

The Rev. Dr.
DOROTHY SANDERS
WELLS

msbishopsearch.com/nominees

ORDINARY CONCERNS

Oct. 1 – I got off to an early start with a drive to Woodville for a visitation at St. Paul's. It was an honor to preach and celebrate in the midst of a packed church celebrating 200 years of history. Unfortunately, the Vicar, Van Windsor, was hospitalized and unable to attend! I was assisted by clergy from St. James'/Port Gibson. After a festive lunch and reception, I drove home.

Oct. 2 – I rose early for a workout at the GRIT pool. Following my workout, I got busy with an array of work-related phone calls. In the evening, I relaxed.

Oct. 3 – A busy day at Allin House included staff meetings, preparation for committee meetings, and numerous calls. In the afternoon, I met, via Zoom, with Bishop Scharfe from the Diocese of Southwest Florida.

Oct. 4 – I worked out in the morning and then made my way to the office. In the afternoon, I drove to Gray Center for a meeting with our executive directors.

Oct. 5 – Before heading to the office, I spent time at home preparing for the executive committee meeting. After the executive committee meeting, I went home to meet my daughter, Betsy, who was coming home for fall break from Birmingham Southern College. In the evening, I drove to St. James'/Jackson for a celebration of the ministry of the Rev. David Elliott. After the celebration, I met both my daughters at Keifer's for a late dinner.

Oct. 6 – I woke up not feeling well and skipped the early work out. After dozing off and still feeling poorly, I tested for Covid. I was positive. I informed the office and stayed in bed. Many thanks to Peggy Jones for canceling my appointments and visitation.

Oct. 7 – I stayed in bed.

Oct. 8 – I started to feel better but still puny!

Oct. 9 – Betsy left in the morning after three days in the "sick ward" with me. I hate that she had to spend her fall break with a sick parent!

Oct. 10 – My last day of quarantine was spent doing laundry and Zoom meetings from home.

Oct. 11 – I started the day with a couple prayers for my mom who would have been 93 years old today. I went to the office and stayed until around noon.

Oct. 12 – I had a variety of meetings including a Zoom with the Office of Government Relations about the war in the Holy Land.

Oct. 13 – Feeling nearly normal, I rose early and went to GRIT for a very short workout. The rest of my day included staff meetings and preparation for a busy weekend. Over lunch, I met with Bishop Kopacz of the Roman Catholic Diocese and Andrew Matisse. In the evening, I drove to Laurel for an organ recital by Derrick Ian Meadors at St. John's. The concert was



offered in thanksgiving for their new organ and in memory of Troy Scott.

Oct. 14 – It was a fairly quiet Saturday. In the evening, Kyle and I celebrated our 28th wedding anniversary by enjoying lunch together during a FaceTime call.

Oct. 15 – I hit the road really early and drove to Tunica for my visitation. It was my pleasure to confirm five and receive one. After the service, we enjoyed a great meal in the parish hall. Many thanks to their new priest, Rufus Van Horn, and the parish family that always make me feel very at home.

Oct. 16 – I woke early and did a full workout. After returning home, I took a couple phone calls before packing and heading to Gulfport for clergy conference. The conference began with an introduction of our guest leadership, Bishop Glenda Curry and the Rev. Kathy Pfister, and was followed by worship and supper. It was my pleasure to preach at the opening service. The focus of our time together was transitions.

Oct. 17 – It was another great day at clergy conference with sessions led by our guests and workshops offered by members of the clergy community. I celebrated the

eucharist that evening with the Rev. Jody Burnett, president of the standing committee, who preached. After the service, we enjoyed brisket and music. I said goodbye and headed home that night. While driving back it was strange to reflect on my last clergy conference after 26 years in this diocese.

Oct. 18 – I left my apartment around midday and drove to Birmingham to meet Kyle. After picking her up at the airport, we met our daughter, Betsy, for an early supper. After our meal, we drove to Sewanee for the meeting of the university trustees and the installation of Rob Pearigen as their new vice chancellor.

Oct. 19 – We spent most of the day meeting with others and attending various events including the installation.

Oct. 20 – Kyle and I drove back to Birmingham where we enjoyed a 50th anniversary celebration for her parents with her sisters and brothers-in-law.

Oct. 21 – I left Birmingham while it was still dark and drove to McComb for a meeting with the Diocese of Mississippi's ECW. The program was offered by the Rev. Becca Walton from All Saints'/Tupelo. I celebrated and preached at the closing eucha-

rist. Lunch was delicious!

Oct. 22 – For a Sunday, I slept a little later than normal, thanks to my visitation being in Brandon at St. Luke's. We celebrated their 175th anniversary. A great meal was enjoyed by all after the service.

Oct. 23 – I had a busy morning with lab work for my annual wellness exam. In addition to my lab work, it was time for Sophie (our dog) to see the vet. After a phone meeting with one of our search consultants, I drove to Natchez for a meeting with the vestry of Trinity.

Oct. 24 – Staff meetings occupied most of my morning. In the afternoon, I left a little early to make up for the busy week that preceded.

Oct. 25 – After my regular Wednesday meeting with our CFO, David Martin, I drove to Madison for my wellness check. Everything was good. After returning from my appointment, I met with the standing committee for our council of advice.

Oct. 26 – I made a pastoral call to one of our clergy recovering from surgery at the Baptist hospital. After returning to the office, I prepared for a meeting with the Trustees of the Diocese. After the Trustees meeting and a short meeting with Canon Ponder, I left for a dinner meeting with a couple of diocesan leaders.

Oct. 27 – Today's responsibilities included staff meetings, trustee follow up and clergy consultations.

Oct. 28 – I drove to Trinity/Hattiesburg to spend the morning at the Spiritual Renewal Quiet Day. After lunch, I drove home and packed for tomorrow's visitation in Corinth. I left in the evening and stayed at the home of Mary Howard and Steven King in Tupelo.

Oct. 29 – It was awesome to be in Corinth and spend the morning with this active congregation. We baptized a small baby and enjoyed incredible fellowship. I picked up Sophie at the Kings' house and drove home in the afternoon.

Oct. 30 – I rose early for a workout. At lunch, I attended Rotary as the guest of Phillip Carpenter and heard a presentation by David Crews, a parishioner at St. Peter's/Oxford. David spoke about the movie he recently made called *Unrivaled: Sewanee 1899*. It's a great movie with lots of football and Sewanee history. I highly recommend it. You can find it streaming on your PBS apps. It was a pleasure to run into a variety of parishioners including Al Underwood, the quintessential eyeglass provider and salesman. The reading glasses that get me through your services are provided by "Shady Al."

Oct. 31 – I spent the morning with staff meetings. My afternoon was taken up with *Mississippi Episcopalian* responsibilities including finishing this journal!



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MEET & GREETs

“Meet and Greet” scheduled for bishop candidates

An update from the bishop transition committee

On November 1, 2023, the Search Committee for a new Episcopal Bishop of Mississippi completed their work and presented a slate of five highly qualified candidates to be the next Bishop. The announcement and information about the candidates can be found in this edition of *The Mississippi Episcopalian* and online at MSbishopsearch.com/nominees.

The standing committee has opened a petition/nomination process. The next step in the search after the conclusion of the petition process is to introduce the candidates to Episcopalians across the diocese.

Candidates for bishop will visit Mississippi the week of January 15-20, 2024. They will travel as a group to selected locations around the diocese for “Meet and Greet” sessions designed to introduce the candidates. Each will have a chance to talk about their background and their interest in leading our diocese. Candidates will also answer questions. Meet and Greet sessions will be held in four convenient locations around the diocese. Locations will be:

- **Wednesday, January 17, 2024** – St. James Episcopal Church/Greenville. Check-in starts at 5:30 p.m. and the Meet and Greet begins at 6:00 p.m.
- **Thursday, January 18, 2023** – All Saints

Episcopal Church/Tupelo. Check-in starts at 5:30 p.m. and the Meet and Greet begins at 6:00 p.m.

- **Friday, January 19, 2023** – Coast Episcopal School/Long Beach. Check-in starts at 5:30 p.m. and the Meet and Greet begins at 6:00 p.m.

- **Saturday, January 20, 2024** – Chapel of the Cross/Madison. Check-in starts at 10:00 a.m. and the Meet and Greet begins at 10:30 a.m.

Candidates will also spend time that week visiting various locations around the state to be introduced to Mississippi and gain personal perspectives on the diocese.

With the presentation of the slate to the standing committee, the search committee completed its work and a transition committee has assumed responsibility for the remainder of the selection process and the introduction of the new bishop. The chair of the transition committee, Katy Pacelli, expressed appreciation for the diligent and excellent work of the Search Committee. Pacelli further said that the transition committee will soon be announcing additional information about the Meet and Greet sessions and other important information about next steps at MSbishopsearch.com.

Nominees

Continued From Page 1

Sewanee, Tennessee, where he attended seminary at the University of the South's School of Theology. He served as student body president during his final year at Sewanee and earned his Master of Divinity with honors. Rob was ordained to the diaconate on December 27, 2008, to the priesthood on June 27, 2009, and was called as rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Morgan City, LA. In Morgan City, Rob led an expansion of the parish's outreach efforts to homeless and at-risk neighbors through a partnership with Episcopal Community Services of Louisiana and other local organizations. During Rob's second year of ministry, Bishop Morris K. Thompson, Jr. appointed him as dean of the Southwest Deanery of the Diocese. Rob also served a term on the diocesan executive board and on the diocesan committee on racial reconciliation during that period. In 2012, Rob was awarded a “Citizen of the Year” award by the Tri-City Helping Hearts Foundation for his work on racial healing in the Morgan City community.

In December 2012, Bishop Thompson appointed Rob as priest-in-charge of St. Paul's Episcopal Church & School in New Orleans, and he was elected as Rector by the Vestry in August 2013. Rob has since served a two-year term as president of the diocesan standing committee. For the past decade, he has also served as chair of the Blessed Frances Joseph Gaudet Fund Committee, which administers grants and scholarships benefitting community organizations and African-American students throughout

the diocese. Bishop Shannon Duckworth appointed Rob as dean of the Downtown New Orleans Deanery in 2023. Rob was recently accepted into the New Orleans Regional Leadership Institute's (NORLI) class of 2024, and is a mentor-coach for other clergy through the Virginia Theological Seminary's “Thriving in Ministry Initiative.” Rob likes to play guitar and read in his spare time. He is married and has three children.



The Very Reverend Walton Jones grew up in Grenada, MS, and was baptized at All Saints' Episcopal Church. While completing his undergraduate degree in

Computer Science from Mississippi State University, he was active in a local parish and assisted with various diocesan youth ministries—two experiences which revealed to him God's call to vocational ministry. This sense of call led him to take a position as a youth minister and enter discernment to the priesthood. He received a Master of Divinity from the University of the South in 2007.

Walton served St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Meridian, MS, from 2007-2010; Trinity Episcopal Church in Natchez, MS, from 2011-2016; and the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Starkville, MS, from 2016 to the present. He has remained active in diocesan work and served as a general convention deputy, standing committee member, Executive Committee

See Nominees on Page 5

INTERESTING READS

The Grammar of God A Journey into the Words and Worlds of the Bible

by Aviya Kushner

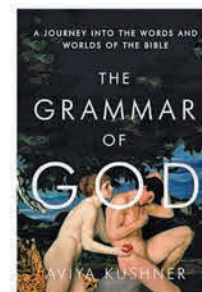
Random House, 2015. 215 pages
(Audible version narrated by Kirsten Potter)

It always makes me uncomfortable to say I have “read” a book when I've listened to a voice-recorded version of it. That said, though, *The Grammar of God* is one of the best books I've ever “read.” My appreciation of the book was heightened by hearing its Hebrew phrases instead of having to struggle with pronunciation or skip over unfamiliar language.

The book is a powerful tool for understanding not only other languages, but also other ways of thinking. The author Aviya Kushner was profoundly influenced by her mother in such revelations. She says, “My mother taught me that language is not simply words; it is an opening into a way of thinking, a view of the world, a naming of its

neighborhoods.” The concept of “neighborhoods”—the ordering of text in addition to word choices—gives a fresh and insightful view of the Hebrew scriptures.

The author often reminds us of the implications of translation. She writes that, “Translation means that a translator has picked one word above all the others: one winner, with all the finalists gone from the page forever. Translation always calls upon the translator to make a judgment call, and what the reader hears, then, is a judgment.” She elaborates on translation's



power, saying, “we should also always acknowledge that we are reading a translation—not the original text—and that there is another voice in the room, another mind at work, as we read.”

The Grammar of God also eloquently explores the author's family history. She writes, “I decide that I will say every single word of the Bible out loud, and I will remember my grandfather. I will look again at what he grew up believing, the faith he left after losing his four siblings and two parents to Hitler...I will honor his faith by

investigating it; I will respect his endurance; and I will let him teach me something—anything—one last time.”

Aviya Kushner opens the Hebrew texts to us, with a particularly moving passage on Isaiah 40, which she says, “moves along the hills like an old man who knows every stone, every weed in his path.” But her observation on the story of Noah opened my eyes to the precious cargo we carry in decisions. She writes, “Noah could not save the entire world; he had to choose.” She adds, “Translators throughout time...could not bring everything over in the great journey from Hebrew to another language—and maybe they didn't want to. Perhaps they can bring a lion, but not a flower; an old woman, but not the precise sound of her laughter. And yet, like the biblical Noah, they chose to save what they could, for us.”

The Grammar of God enlightened me, challenged me, humbled me, and took my breath away. I urge you, if you love scripture and language, read Aviya Kushner's *The Grammar of God*. Even better, listen to it.

The Very Rev. Carol Mead is rector of St. Peter's by-the-Lake/Brandon and serves as dean of the Central Convocation.

AROUND THE DIOCESE



Wil Oakes
incoming editor and designer of
The Mississippi Episcopalian

**New editor
announced**

[TME] Beginning with the December 2023 issue, *The Mississippi Episcopalian* welcomes Wil Oakes as its new editor and designer. Oakes is both the director of communications for St. Andrew's Cathedral/Jackson and the proprietor of Oakes Creative Agency/Oxford and has worked in the creative services industry for nearly 15 years.

A graduate of Sewanee and Florida State University, where he earned his MFA in Creative Writing in 2011, he is also a cradle Episcopalian, having been baptized at All Saints/Tupelo in 1982. He is a dedicated member of the Camp Bratton-Green community. In addition to attending as a camper and counselor throughout his youth, he worked at Gray Center on permanent staff during the summers of 2002 and 2003 and just wrapped up a 15-year run as a volunteer camp director.

"This diocese has been an integral part of my life since before I can even remember," says Oakes. "I'm extremely grateful to Bishop Seage and to the entire diocese for entrusting me with this important task, and I look forward to shaping the future of the paper to serve the people of the diocese even better than it already does."

Oakes welcomes input, ideas, and submissions at MSepiscopalian@dioms.org.

As we welcome him to his new position editing and designing the diocesan newspaper, we also take a moment to honor the service of the Rev. Dr. John Switzer, whose faithful stewardship of this publication as its editor these last two years has served the diocese well. He leaves the paper in solid condition as it enters its next era. He leaves the position as editor to continue his battle with cancer.

"In Wil Oakes we have a talented new editor for the newspaper, and we are blessed to have him," said Switzer. "As Wil becomes not only editor, but designer of the paper, I wish to express my thanks to Jim Fulton with Alareon Media Group of Gulfport for our close collaboration regarding the design and production of the newspaper."



**St. Luke's/Brandon
celebrates 175th anniversary**

St. Luke's Episcopal Church/Brandon recently celebrated its 175th anniversary. A large and festive-looking crowd was in attendance, including Bishop Brian Seage. Photo courtesy of Marcus Bowers/Rankin County News.



**LGBT Day of Spiritual Renewal.
TOOK, BROKE, BLESSED, GAVE
October 28, 2023**

Trinity Episcopal Church, Hattiesburg



LGBT Day of Spiritual Renewal

52 people turned out for the LGBT day of spiritual renewal held on October 28 at Trinity Episcopal Church/Hattiesburg. The day included a celebration of holy eucharist. Organizers wish to thank the supportive clergy who attended the event: the Rev. Carrie Duncan, the Rev. Dr. Susan Hrostowski, the Rt. Rev. Brian Seage, the Rev. Deacon Betty Melton, the Rev. Deacon Linda Healy, the Rev. Brenda McClendon, and the Rev. Katie Sorey.

**2024 United Thank
Offering update**

By Brenda Davis Hawkins

The 2024 UTO grant application materials are now available. Over the next three years, The United Thank Offering, in the spirit of Matthew 25:36, will focus on areas of ministry that serve those whom society has left out and left behind. The UTO grant focus for 2024 will be on "the stranger" Jesus mentions, offering welcome and inclusivity.

All forms necessary for the completion of a UTO grant are included at www.episcopal-church.org/uto. Videos are also provided. Please follow us on social media for updates on the grant process including dates and times for webinars to help applicants.

Completed applications must be submitted to the diocesan office by Friday, January 5, 2024, by 5:00 p.m. The diocese must submit the best application for the diocese and possibly one for a companion diocese. You cannot submit a grant to national without going through the diocese. This deadline is a month earlier this year, so please get prepared.

UTO offerings are due before November 22, 2023, to Brenda Hawkins to be included in the 2023 annual report. Please send a check payable from your parish to UTO to: Brenda Hawkins, UTO Coordinator, Diocese of Mississippi, 330 Lakewood Road, Vicksburg, MS 39180. Please call or text Brenda at (601) 573-6962 if you have questions, including questions about signing up for the UTO newsletter.



Brenda Davis Hawkins is diocesan chair for United Thank Offering.



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NOMINATIONS

Nomination process open for diocesan elected positions

By **The Rev. Canon J. Brian Ponder**

Nominations for diocesan leadership positions are currently open, and qualified candidates are being sought at this time. Every year, the Diocese seeks to elect members whose motivations, interests, and gifts match the needs of the statewide Church. If you are passionate about the Diocese of Mississippi and are looking for a way to nurture and strengthen its witness, you are encouraged to apply or to nominate another well-equipped individual. Elections will be held at the 197th Annual Council of the Diocese of Mississippi when we convene February 2-4, 2024 at St. Andrew's Episcopal School, Middle & Upper School Campus, Ridgeland.

As per the Safe Church Model Policies of The Episcopal Church and as adopted by the Diocese, elected leaders have already completed (or will commit at the outset of their service to complete) the required training in the prevention of sexual misconduct. Anti-racism and other diversity awareness training is also encouraged for diocesan leadership. The listing of open positions follows.

TREASURER

Description: The Treasurer of the Diocese works closely with the Finance and Executive Committees, with the Trustees of the Diocese, and with our diocesan staff on financial and budgetary matters impacting our operations, investments, and diocesan mission and ministry. Financial and budgetary acumen is required; current or previous experience as a treasurer is desired.

Election details: One layperson for a one-year term **Incumbent:** Mrs. Melissa Calcote, St. Paul's, Meridian – eligible for reelection

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, Member

Description: Though an oversimplification, the Executive Committee is the Vestry-like

board of the Diocese and functions as Council-between-Councils. This Committee and its sub-committees focus on mission and ministry opportunities across the Diocese, work with supported churches and chaplaincies, and meet quarterly to review or amend the budget, consider insurance plans, and/or initiate programs and offerings. Once per year, the Executive Committee convenes with the vestry of St. Andrew's Cathedral as the Cathedral Chapter. **Election details:** Two clerics and two laypersons, each for a three-year term; one cleric for a

two-year unexpired term **Incumbents:** The Rev. Annie Elliott, St. Andrew's School, Jackson/Ridgeland (partial-year appointee) – eligible for election; The Rev. Dcn. Courtney Taylor (one-year appointee) – eligible for election; Mrs. Jamie Murrell, St. John's, Leland (one-year appointee) – eligible for election

STANDING COMMITTEE, Member

Description: The Standing Committee focuses on churchwide consents in elections for bishops; considers postulancy, candidacy and ordination for those from our Diocese studying for and seeking Holy Orders; deals with property matters and questions of incumbrance or indebtedness. The Committee serves as a council of advice to the Bishop and, in the case of a vacancy in the office of Bishop Diocesan, acts as the Ecclesiastical Authority. Often-times, productive Committee members have served on a Vestry or Mission Committee, or perhaps a local finance, executive or discernment committee; are knowledgeable of and/or have experience in the workings of the larger Church; are deliberative; and have usually served previously in some other official, diocesan capacity. **Election details:** One presbyter and one layperson,

she has served St. George's Church since 2013.

A native of Mobile, Alabama, Dorothy came to Memphis when she began her undergraduate studies at Rhodes College and she has made Memphis her home since that time. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in vocal performance from Rhodes, her Juris Doctor degree from the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law at the University of Memphis, her Master of Divinity degree from Memphis Theological Seminary, and her Doctor of Ministry degree from Candler School of Theology at Emory University.

Prior to serving St. George's Church, Dorothy served as a curate at the Church of the Holy Apostles (Collierville, Tennessee). Dorothy also served the Episcopal Diocese

each for a four-year term **Incumbents:** None

TRUSTEES OF THE DIOCESE, Trustee

The Trustees of the Diocese is the official diocesan corporation chartered by the State legislature. The Trustees focus on property matters (diocesan and mission church holdings), money and portfolio management. Our catalog of investments includes diocesan funds, endowments, and other monies, as well as those of parishes and missions across the Diocese who invest

alongside the Trustees. Often, constructive members of the Trustees have a background in finance, banking or investments; law, real estate, business or entrepreneurial professions; and have prior experience in serving their local church community and the Diocese in some official capacity. **Election details:** One layperson for a four-year term **Incumbent:** Mrs. Lauren Sulser Benner, St. Columb's, Ridgeland (one-year appointee) – eligible for election

DISCIPLINARY BOARD, Member

The Disciplinary Board, from time-to-time and as necessary, considers matters of clergy conduct and, more specifically, misconduct. Valuable members are frequently deep listeners, discerners, and are consensus- and process-oriented. The Board membership already has a working knowledge of (or a willingness to delve into) Title IV of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church. Members are pastors and persons of sound judgement with skills in mediation, conflict management, reconciliation, discernment, Canon law, civic law, family systems, and/or interpersonal relationships, and the like. **Election details:** One cleric and one layper-

son, each for a three-year term **Incumbent:** Mrs. Jan Gadow, St. Andrew's Cathedral, Jackson – eligible for reelection; Note: Position vacated by the Rev. Katie Bradshaw was not filled upon her departure from the Diocese

TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH (Sewanee), Trustee

As one of the owning dioceses of Sewanee, the Diocese of Mississippi annually elects an individual to serve on its Board of Trustees (one of three elected MS trustees total.) Members of the Board generally have a passion for the University and its well-being and regularly have some ongoing relationship to it (either by way of graduation from the University or some other affinity for it.) Alumni status is not a prerequisite. **Election details:** One layperson for a three-year term **Incumbent:** Mr. Scott Bagley, St. Matthew's, Kosciusko – eligible for reelection

Each person nominated for any of the above listed offices must have given his or her prior consent to serve in the position to which he or she is nominated. The nomination form must be received by the Secretary of the Diocese, P.O. Box 23107, Jackson, MS 39225-3107 no later than December 15, 2023 in order to be printed in the Council edition of The Mississippi Episcopalian and included in packets for Council delegates. The nomination form will be available on the website of the Diocese of Mississippi (<https://annualcouncil.dioms.org/>) or by calling the diocesan office (601-948-5954.) Nominees are asked to submit a high-resolution color headshot photograph for publication through the online nomination form portal or to the Rev. Canon J. Brian Ponder at bponder@dioms.org and by copying Nisey Ward at nward@dioms.org.



The Rev. Canon J. Brian Ponder is canon to the ordinary & chief of staff and serves as secretary of the diocese.

Nominees Continued From Page 3

member, session director at Camp Bratton Green (17 years), and currently serves as dean of the Tombigbee Convocation.

Throughout his life, Walton has been a performing musician, playing piano, organ, guitar, and bass in religious and secular settings. He also enjoys audio and video production, photography, travel, board games, and working on his old Jeep. He is happily married and has two children.



The Rev. Dr. Dorothy Sanders Wells is rector of St. George's Episcopal Church, in Germantown, Tennessee (a suburb of Memphis), and chaplain of the church's preschool;

of West Tennessee as its secretary and has served on the standing committee. She has served as a member of and secretary to the bishop and council, and as chaplain to the Episcopal Church Women.

Dorothy loves the Memphis area and enjoys being involved in community organizations. She currently serves as a member of the boards of directors of Community Alliance for the Homeless and Room in the Inn-Memphis. She is past chair of the board of directors of Metropolitan Interfaith Association (MIFA). Dorothy has previously served as a member of the board of directors of Church Health, a member of the board of trustees of St. Mary's Episcopal School, a member of the alumni executive board of Rhodes College, and a member of the

boards of directors of the Margaret Hyde Council of Rhodes College and Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc.

Dorothy was recognized by Rhodes College as a distinguished alumna in 2011 and received an Algernon Sydney Sullivan service award at Rhodes' commencement in 2015. She is a published author, and her essays can be found in a number of publications and on her blog (<https://dorothysmusings.wordpress.com/>). Dorothy is married and has two daughters.

More information on all the nominees can be found at MSbishopssearch.com/nominees.

BISHOP ELECTION

THE CONSTITUTION ARTICLE XIII Election of a Bishop

SECTION 1. The election of a Bishop, a Bishop Coadjutor or a Suffragan Bishop, shall be made in the following manner:

- (a) After nomination in open Council, the Clergy and Laity shall ballot by Orders, and a majority of each Order on the same ballot shall be necessary to elect, provided that two-thirds of each Order is present.
- (b) If fewer than two-thirds of the members of an Order entitled to vote are present at the Council, the vote of two-thirds of those present in such Order shall be necessary for that purpose.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Committee does hereby adopt the following resolution and refers the same to the 197th Annual Council of the Diocese for consideration and adoption.

Resolution on Procedures for Election of the Eleventh Bishop of Mississippi

BE IT RESOLVED that the following procedures be adopted by the Annual Council, for the nomination and election of a Bishop for the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, at its 197th Annual Council to be held at St. Andrew's Episcopal School, Upper Campus, Ridgeland, Mississippi, on February 3, 2024. If there is no election on February 3, 2024, an additional reconvened Council will be held at St. Andrew's Episcopal Cathedral in Jackson, Mississippi on February 10, 2024.

- A. At the beginning of the Saturday, February 3, 2024, business session of the 197th Council, the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi will place in nomination all candidates selected by the Search Committee and all candidates processed through the Petition Process. No additional nominations for Bishop will be allowed.
- B. Balloting shall be done in the following manner:
 1. The voting members of Council (the clergy and lay delegates, or alternates substituting for delegates), shall sit in a section reserved for them. This will be open seating and not a reserved section for each church.
 2. At the time a ballot is called, a ballot shall be electronically presented onscreen within sight of each voting member of Council; clerical and lay ballots will clearly be identified as such, or as announced by the Chair, a single unified ballot may be presented which can be divided by Order (clerical or lay) by means of the assigned electronic voting device.
 3. The voting member shall mark the nominee of choice electronically as instructed; and remain seated.
 4. Once the presentation of ballots to the voting members of Council begins, no voting member may leave the floor and no change can be made in the certification of lay delegates. At such time as all the ballots have been marked and submitted electronically and the Council awaits the results of the ballot, voting members may leave the floor but will have to present their credentials to re-enter the voting area.
 5. The votes shall be tabulated by the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Mississippi and their appointees, who will report the results of the same to the Chair of Council, with a copy in writing, together with a record of the individual ballots, which shall be filed with the Secretary.
 6. A Nominee may remove his or her name from the ballot at any time during the voting by advising the Secretary in writing, by telephone text or by email message signed by the Nominee. A wet signature (for notification in writing) or unique, electronic signature (for notification via text or email) shall suffice in fulfillment of this requirement. Once a Nominee has withdrawn, his or her name may not be re-entered on the ballot.
- C. At such time as there shall be a declaration of an election according to Article XIII of the Constitution of the Diocese of Mississippi, the Chair shall notify the elected person, obtain the elected person's acceptance of election, and shall make provision to notify the other candidates. All voting members of Council shall sign each of the six blank canonical Testimonials of Election and he or she shall ask that a motion be made from the floor that the Standing Committee of the Diocese be instructed to forward to the House of Bishops and to the Standing Committees of all dioceses in the Episcopal Church the canonical testimonials and certificates required by the Canons of General Convention evidencing the election, and to do all other things necessary to ensure the ordination of the Bishop Diocesan-Elect before Council shall be adjourned.
- D. It is the express intent of the Council that any election of a nominee to be the Bishop Diocesan of the Diocese of Mississippi is made in reliance upon full, truthful and complete disclosures by that Nominee to the Search Committee, Transition Committee, Office of the Chancellor and the Council. If, after the election but prior to consecration, the Council concludes that the Bishop-Elect has failed in any material way to provide full, truthful and complete disclosures, or if the Council concludes that the Bishop-Elect has omitted to disclose material facts, then the Council, acting pursuant to a notice of Council called for such purpose, may take action to rescind such election.
- E. A copy of this resolution shall be published in the November 2023, December 2023, and Council editions of *The Mississippi Episcopalian*.

UPDATES

Diocesan meetings continue by Zoom unless otherwise noted. Though the diocesan staff continues to work in a hybrid model (office and home), the Allin House is staffed daily. Summer hours are Monday-Thur., 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.



NOVEMBER

- 17-19 Happening #95, St. Philip's/Jackson
- 19 Bishop Seage visits St. Matthew's/Kosciusko
- 20 Deadline for Lay Leadership Relicensing
- 23 Thanksgiving Day
- 23-24 Allin House staff holiday in observance of Thanksgiving
- 29-Dec 1 Province IV Bishops & Spouses' Conference/Camp St. Christopher (Diocese of SC)

DECEMBER

- 1 *The Mississippi Episcopalian* deadline; 12:00 noon
Deadline for Submission of Budget Requests/Reports to Annual Council
- 3 Bishop Seage visits Grace Church/Carrollton
- 5 Small Churches Collaborative, 10:00 a.m.
Standing Committee Meeting, location TBA; 10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
- 7 Racial Reconciliation Task Force; 12:00 noon
Finance Committee Meeting, St. Andrew's Cathedral/Jackson, 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
- 8 Petition Candidates for XI Bishop of Mississippi announced, if any (tentative)
- 8-9 A.C. Marble School, Solomon Center
- 10 Bishop Seage visits Mediator/Meridian
- 15 Deadline for Submission of Resolutions/Deadline for Pre-filed Nominations
- 17 Bishop Seage visits All Saints'/Inverness
- 19 Executive Committee Meeting, St. Andrew's Cathedral/Jackson, 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
- 22 - 26 Allin House staff holiday in observance of Christmas
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 25 THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: Christmas Day
- 27-Jan 1 Winter Solstice/Camp Bratton-Green

JANUARY

- 1 New Year's Day
Allin House staff holiday in observance of New Year's Day
- 2 *The Mississippi Episcopalian* deadline; 12:00 noon
- 4 Racial Reconciliation Task Force; 12:00 noon
- 7 Bishop Seage visits St. Mark's/Gulfport
- 8-10 Diocesan Discernment Retreat
- 12-13 A.C. Marble School/online
- 13 A Day of Dialogue for Racial Healing, St. Philip's/Jackson
- 14 Bishop Seage visits St. Alban's/Bovina
Bishop Seage visits St. Mary's/Bolton
- 15 Allin House staff holiday in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 21 Bishop Seage visits Redeemer/Greenville
- 28 Bishop Seage visits St. Paul's/Columbus
Bishop Seage visits Mississippi State/Starkville

FEBRUARY

- 1 *The Mississippi Episcopalian* deadline; 12:00 noon
Racial Reconciliation Task Force; 12:00 noon
- 2-4 197th Annual Council of the Diocese, St. Andrew's Episcopal School, Middle & Upper School Campus/Ridgeland
- 9-10 A.C. Marble School/Solomon Center
- 11 Bishop Seage visits St. Peter's by-the-Lake/Brandon
- 14 ASH WEDNESDAY
Bishop Seage visits St. Andrew's Lower School/Jackson
Bishop Seage visits St. Mark's/Raymond
Bishop Seage visits Holy Trinity/Crystal Springs
Bishop Seage visits St. Luke's/Brandon
- 16-18 Junior High DOY/Camp Bratton-Green
- 18 Bishop Seage visits Nativity/Greenwood
- 25 Bishop Seage visits St. Stephen's/Indianola
- 27-Mar 5 House of Bishops/Camp Allen



Submit Faithful Departed notices to your church for publication

- Anne Pittman Barry, 86**, communicant of Nativity, Greenwood, died September 18, 2023.
- Juanita Harrison Neville, 90**, communicant of St. Paul's, Meridian died October 7, 2023.
- Louis Buford Yerger, Jr., 88**, communicant of St. James', Jackson, died October 11, 2023.
- William Franklin (Bill) Crews, 76**, communicant of Mediator/Redeemer, McComb/Magnolia, died October 15, 2023.
- Betty Betts Conner, 91**, communicant of St. James', Jackson, died October 19, 2023.
- Sharon Loree LaRue, 78**, communicant of All Saints', Tupelo, died October 20, 2023.
- C. A. Dodson, 69**, communicant of St. James', Jackson, died October 31, 2023.



DEPLOYMENT REPORT

OCTOBER, 2023



NEW CALLS AND TRANSITIONS

The Rev. Andrew McLarty has accepted the call to serve as rector of St. Paul's/-Columbus effective November 1. He has been serving as rector (formerly priest-in-charge) of Redeemer, Brookhaven.

The Rev. Chris Schaefer (ret.), formerly of the Diocese of Arkansas, lives in Diamondhead and has become canonically resident in this diocese as of November 1.

The Rev. Dr. George Rambow has accepted the call to serve as rector of All Saints'/Princeton, NJ (Diocese of NJ), effective January 1, 2024. George has been serving as chaplain to Mississippi State University and assistant at Resurrection/Starkville. He has been an adjunct faculty member at MSU, serving in the Philosophy and Religion Department.

CHURCHES / CHAPLAINCIES IN TRANSITION

St. John's, Aberdeen
St. Luke's/Brandon
Good Shepherd/Columbus
Redeemer/Brookhaven
St. Andrew's/Jackson (canon position)

St. Philip's/Jackson – interviewing candidates
Chapel of the Cross/Madison – interviewing candidates
Mediator/Meridian-beginning self-study
St. John's/Pascagoula – completing profile
Canterbury/Mississippi State University – Resurrection/Starkville – initiating consultation

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BELOVED COMMUNITY



Racial healing workshops a success

By Andy Andrews

Over 200 people participated in the diocesan-sponsored racial healing and relationship-building workshops this year. Thanks to St. James/Jackson, St. Peter's by the Sea/Gulfport, Church of the Resurrection/Starkville, the bishop search committee, and the bishop transition committee for sponsoring workshops in 2023.

These day-long, shame-free workshops offer a compelling agenda filled with story-telling and faith-sharing, connections, and deepening understanding mainly about oneself. This spiritual formation is meant to enhance loving speech, compassionate listening, and strengthen skills for healthy conversations about sensitive issues. Sessions

are facilitated by seasoned leaders competent in shaping a prayerful environment. When participants use the same vocabulary, new conversations for racial healing take place.

January 14, 2024 is the next day of dialogue for racial healing. The location is St. Philip's/Jackson. For more information and to register, please email andrews@dioms.org.



The Rev. Andy Andrews is missioner for Beloved Community and congregational vitality for the Diocese of Mississippi, and he serves as vicar of St. Christopher's Church of the Ascension/Jackson.



Next Sacred Ground circle forming

Join the next small group walking prayerfully through chapters of America's history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of family stories, economic class, and political and regional identity. Kathy Woodliff and the Rev. Stephen Kidd will host the live online course which begins in the new year, January 12-March 22 every other Friday from Noon to 1:00 p.m.

The six-session series is built around a powerful online curriculum of documentary films and readings that focus on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American histories.

Sacred Ground is part of Becoming Beloved Community, The Episcopal Church's long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice in our personal lives, our ministries, and our society. This series is open to all, and especially designed to help White people talk with other White people. Participants are invited to peel away the layers that have contributed to the challenges and divisions of the present day – all while grounded in our call to faith, hope, and love. Circles will meet every other week for six sessions via Zoom. For questions and to register, email andrews@dioms.org.



JOIN THE NEXT SMALL GROUP WALKING PRAYERFULLY THROUGH CHAPTERS OF AMERICA'S HISTORY OF RACE AND RACISM, WHILE WEAVING IN THREADS OF FAMILY STORY, ECONOMIC CLASS, POLITICAL AND REGIONAL IDENTITY.

KATHY WOODLIFF AND REV. STEPHEN KIDD WILL HOST THE LIVE ONLINE COURSE WHICH BEGINS THE NEW YEAR ON JANUARY 12-MARCH 22 EVERY OTHER FRIDAY FROM NOON TO 1 PM.

THE 6 SESSION SERIES IS BUILT AROUND A POWERFUL ONLINE CURRICULUM OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS AND READINGS THAT FOCUS ON INDIGENOUS, BLACK, LATINO, AND ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICAN HISTORIES AS THEY INTERSECT WITH EUROPEAN AMERICAN HISTORIES.



Greater love hath no man than this.

JOHN 15:13