

THE MISSISSIPPI EPISCOPALIAN

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All God's critters

Across the Diocese, parishes honor the
Feast of St. Francis with Blessing of the
Animals services



On the cover: The Rev. Carol Mead, rector of St. Peter's-by-the-Lake in Brandon, blesses a shaggy pooch at the parish's Blessing of the Animals service in honor of the Feast of St. Francis. This month, parishes across the diocese held similar services. Check out a handful of photos on page 5.

Beloved Community in Water Valley

Sunday September 22, The Rev. Andy Andrews, Diocesan Missioner for Becoming Beloved Communities and Congregational Vitality, along with his wife Ann and son Will, visited the Church of the Nativity in Water Valley.

Andrews led a discussion with Nativity's adult Sunday School then preached the 10:30 service.

Top: Lay Eucharistic Minister Jenni Campbell, the Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray, III, Vicar of Nativity, Water Valley, and the Rev. Andy Andrews.

Bottom: Kathy Gray, the Rt. Rev. Duncan Gray, the Rev. Ann Whitaker, the Rev. Andy Andrews.



A weekend of un-forgetting

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A weekend of un-forgetting

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by **Ellen Morris Prewitt and Ray Hume**

The labyrinth of Becoming Beloved Community teaches us our journey into love starts with Telling the Truth. Truth-telling provides the foundation that enables us to circle toward Proclaiming the Dream, Practicing Jesus' Way of Healing Love, and Repairing the Breach. With our eyes fixed on this model, the Racial Reconciliation Task Force will co-host this December a commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Vicksburg Massacres.

Members of the Beloved Community have been working with Diocesan Missioner for Becoming Beloved Communities the Rev. Andy Andrews on the commemoration, including Ray Hume, the Rev. Deacon Josie Williams, Theo Williams, and Ellen Morris Prewitt. Even though Ray is a life-long educator and native of Vicksburg, he was unfamiliar with the massacres before his involvement in the commemoration. Unfortunately, Ellen was aware of the massacres because her ancestor was involved.


The massacres were not unknown at the time. A Congressional investigation was held on the 1874-1875 Reconstruction-era killings. When white mobs attacked Warren County's duly-elected African American Sheriff, Peter Crosby, a fight ensued between those defending Crosby and the attackers. Afterwards, white militias rampaged through the county for weeks, killing many Black citizens. In the time since the massacres, effort was made to bury and forget the events. Today, if you mention the massacres, many will respond, "The Vicksburg what?" The commemoration weekend will continue to grow the remembering happening in Vicksburg, beginning with truth-telling on the massacres.

The truth-telling will be led by Dr. Beth Kruse, the Andrew Mellon Fellow partnering in research with the National Park Service, and Dr. Albert Dorsey, Jr., Assistant Professor of History at Jackson State University and

author of the upcoming book, *Vicksburg's Massacre: The Complexities and Consequences of Black Participation in the Body Politic and Land Ownership in the Age of Redeemer Violence*. Drs. Dorsey and Kruse will offer a deeper understanding of why these events occurred and the impact they had for years to come. On Saturday, the National Park Service will lead a wreath-laying at the Shirley House in Vicksburg National Park near the sites of much of the violence.

A time of lamentation is being created for the weekend under the leadership of St. Mary's Episcopal Church communicant Robyn Gordon and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church communicant Tosin Sekoni. Guided by Rev. Williams, the Rev. Beth Palmer, and Rev. Andrews, the lamentation will acknowledge the pain and suffering and death from the massacres and remembering those killed, as well as those whom violence forced to flee Vicksburg. The weekend will also offer an opportunity to turn toward the future in recognizing successful efforts to erect a Mississippi Historical Marker at the Warren County Courthouse honoring Sheriff Peter Crosby.

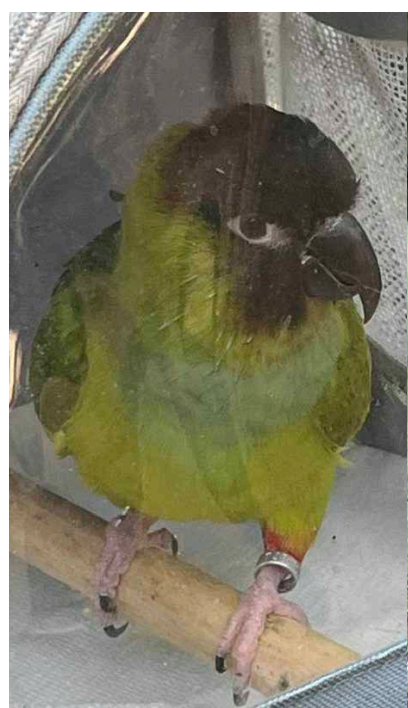
The weekend events are part of larger offerings commemorating Sheriff Peter Crosby that will continue to grow the remembering in Vicksburg through its 2025 Bicentennial Celebration.

Please join us for the weekend as we work to bring into the light that which has been buried in much forgetting. Together, we can tell the truth and move into proclaiming the dream, practicing Jesus' way of healing love and, ultimately, repairing the breach. 





Christ Church, Vicksburg



Epiphany, Tunica

All God's critters

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parishes honor the
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**St. Thomas,
Diamondhead**



**St. Pierre's,
Gautier**



**St. Christopher's,
Jackson**

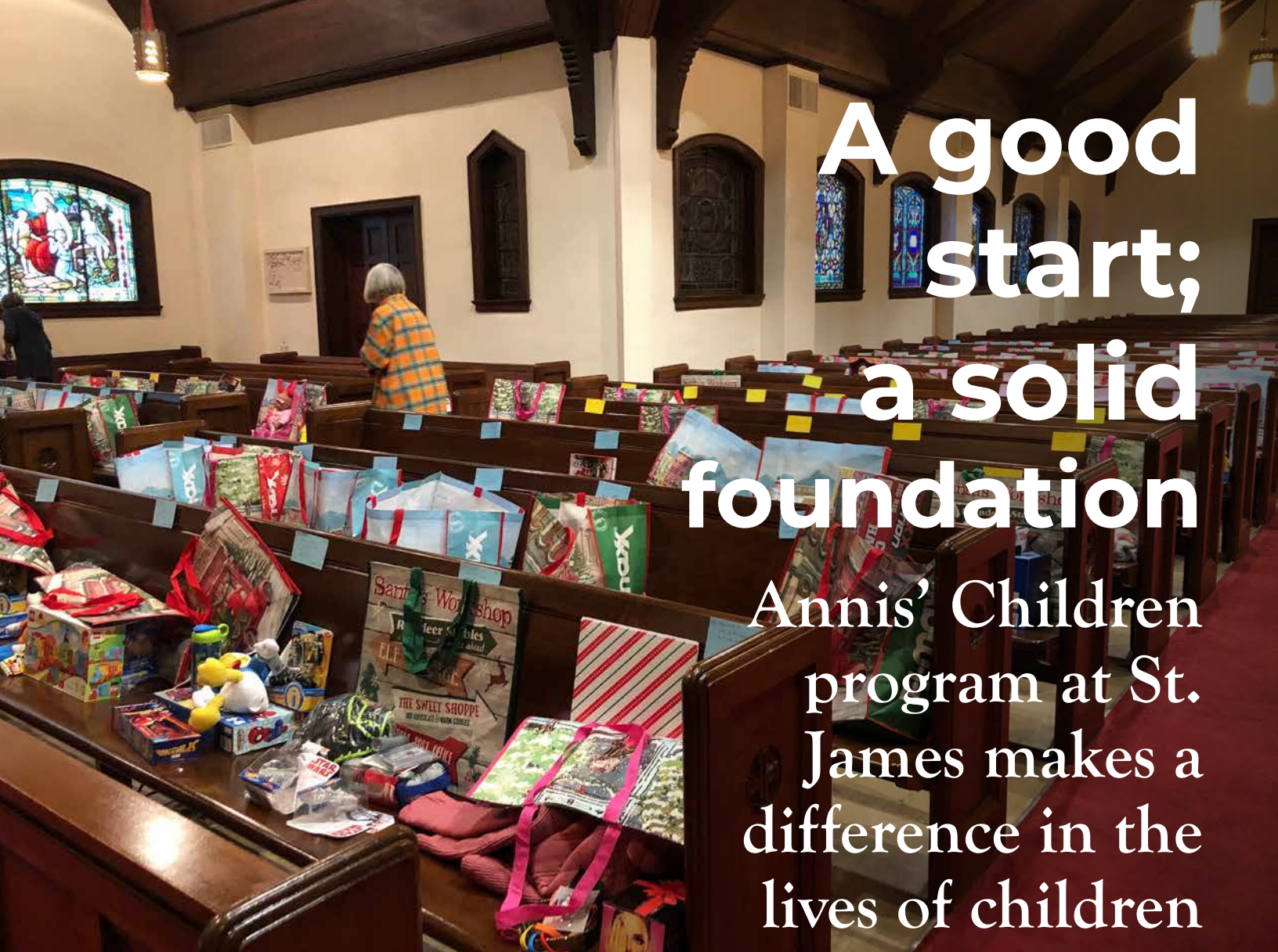




All Saints', Grenada







A good start; a solid foundation

Annis' Children program at St. James makes a difference in the lives of children

by The Rt. Rev. Dorothy Sanders Wells

When Annis Wolcott, a beloved parishioner of St. James Church, Greenville, left a bequest to the church, specifically for the church to invest in new community ministry, parishioners prayerfully got to work. They realized a need to truly survey the community around them, and to assess needs. More importantly, they realized that they wanted to create opportunity for hands-on ministry that would allow many in the parish family to grow in relationship with neighbors.

They didn't need to look far: Greenville is the county seat of Washington County, the home to many children in foster care. Parishioners approached the local Child Protective Services office to inquire about how they might be of support. It happened that the site of that year's Christmas party for children in foster care had

cancelled, and CPS social workers were searching for a place to hold a Christmas party.

What began as hosting a Christmas party became a thriving ministry – Annis' Children – that brought many hands together to make a difference in the lives of children in the county.

Parishioners came together that year to purchase Christmas gifts for the children, make a meal, and host a festive evening for the children, families and social workers, alike. But parishioners stayed in touch with the local CPS office, inquiring about ongoing needs. They quickly realized that the overburdened social workers could use some care, too, and began delivering breakfast and snacks; they also refurbished the CPS visitation room. Soon, the social workers shared that there were many other needs, including school uniforms and supplies, coats and food boxes. St. James parishioners

responded readily. A bit later, social workers shared that often, support was needed to keep children out of the foster care system: If a family member could take in a child who could no longer live in the parental household, that result was far preferred, but family members might not have immediate access to everything needed to give the children a home. St. James parishioners again prayed and responded, with one parishioner, George Baird, building beds and designing a kit that could be used by others to help keep beds ready for an urgent placement. A well-stocked storage area is filled with toys, clothing, bedding and other necessities, allowing parishioners to respond immediately to social workers' requests.

Now with the Junior Auxiliary of Greenville and the Italian Ladies Auxiliary partnering in support, the ministry continues to thrive and serve neighbors in Washington County. The ministry is particularly meaningful to the Rev. Brandt Dick, rector, and his wife, Erica. The couple adopted their older daughter and were trained as foster parents while Brandt was in seminary. After moving to Mississippi, they were retrained, and provided a home for two foster children they later adopted.

Brandt notes that the ministry "keeps evolving as we find better ways to do what we're doing."

And the ministry of Annis' Children has become a model: When Brandt shared with the Rev. Don Chancellor, rector of Church of the Nativity, Greenwood, the on-going work of the ministry, Don was moved and suggested that the Nativity parish family prayerfully contemplate learning whether a similar ministry might be helpful in Leflore County. Now, the Episcopal Church Women of Church of the Nativity are beginning to prayerfully explore needs and build relationships in Greenwood, hoping to emulate St. James' work supporting children in another county.

The work of caring for children in our communities is urgent and important; children need a good start, and a solid foundation. More than anything, children need to know how much they are loved. The ministry of Annis' Children reminds us all that there are so very many ways to share our love, in a world sorely in need of that message. 🙏



Little Coracles sets sail for Ireland



by **The Rev. Jenny Newman** and **The Rev. Jennifer Deaton**

Ever since Abraham and Sarah answered God's call to set out on a journey of faith, pilgrimage has been a spiritual practice of seeking what one pilgrim-poet called a glimpse of the underglimmer of the holy. Such glimmer can be experienced anywhere, but it is especially restorative to travel to those thin places where the holy breaks through with abandon.

Since 2016, the Rev. Jennifer Deaton has been leading folks to explore the beauty and wonder of Iona, Scotland while also traversing their inner landscapes to strengthen their faith journeys. The (now) Rev. Jenny Newman joined Jennifer on that first trip not only as a pilgrim, but as an aspirant for the priesthood. Neither imagined that just seven years (and one ordination) later, they would join together as Little Coracles, a pilgrimage ministry that aims to teach the spiritual practice of wonder.

In case you're curious, a coracle is a small boat traditionally made of wicker and leather in which Christian saints once set out to sea in search of

Mississippi pilgrimage ministry provides travel and spiritual exploration

opportunities to know and serve God in Christ. Though they travel today by plane, bus, and ferry, it is no less a journey of faith seeking restorative encounters with God. Their pilgrims have come mostly from the Diocese of Mississippi, but have included Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, and even a Quaker from up and down the east coast.


Another group will travel to Iona in June of 2026. Before returning to Iona, however, Jennifer and Jenny are leading a pilgrimage they have been dreaming about for years. From June 21 - July 1, 2025 they will travel to an even older, more storied shore, exploring the breathtaking landscapes from one edge to another of the northern Wild Atlantic Way of County Donegal (in the Republic of Ireland) and Northern Ireland.

County Donegal's edges are almost all coastal and launched many faithful people across the wilderness of

the sea to take light of the Gospel and the Celtic Christian tradition to new lands. On one of its beaches, John Newton composed the beloved hymn Amazing Grace. Above another, rises Sliabh Liag - the highest coastal cliffs in Europe and three times higher than the Cliffs of Moher in County Clare. The land is dotted with holy wells, sacred ruins, and natural beauty. Northern Ireland tells the story of reconciliation and healing, bridging painful political and religious rifts of society, and is home to another bridge - The Giant's Causeway - that passes under the sea to the Isle of Staffa, a much loved visit on the Iona pilgrimage. In these places and more, they will walk in the footsteps of saints and pilgrims through a landscape filled with wonders and wild edges, ancient and yet ever-changing, contemporary, and yet transcending time and place.

The pilgrimage will begin and end in Belfast. For most of the pilgrimage, their home will be at the Ards Friary on the north coast of County Donegal. From there, they will travel by coach each day to sacred sites and natural wonders in County Donegal as well as neighboring Derry and the Antrim Coast in Northern Ireland. Additional

accommodations will be at hotels in Belfast, Killybegs, and Derry, with delicious meals in local restaurants. There will be a significant amount of walking - sometimes on paved surfaces, sometimes on footpaths, and sometimes, in the words of poet Antonio Machado, on paths we simply make by walking.

In addition to Ireland in 2025 and Iona in 2026, they will lead a group to Portugal and Spain in 2027 for a walk along the Camino. If you would like to learn more about upcoming pilgrimages, you can find them on FaceBook and Instagram as @LittleCoracles, or you may simply email them at LittleCoracles@gmail.com. 

The Rev. Jennifer Deaton serves St. Stephen's, Indianola and St. John's, Leland. The Rev Jenny Newman serves Ascension, Hattiesburg and Canterbury USM. With the support of Bishop Seage, and now Bishop Wells, they formed Little Coracles so as not to burden their local parishes with organizing and managing the financial details of the work. Little Coracles enriches the ministry of their communities, our diocese, and the church as a whole and does not personally profit either priest.

Rev. Jennifer Deaton and Rev. Jenny Newman



The Young and the Faithful



Young Adult Commission holds its first retreat

by Kristin Tompkins


Last March, young adults aged 18 to 30 from around the Diocese enjoyed an inaugural retreat led by the newly formed Young Adult Commission. Fitting with the weekend's theme of "Faithful: Work, Play, Life," the retreat focused on spiritual practices and incorporating prayer into daily life as young adults. Sessions were led by our fantastic clergy: The Rev. Katie Sorey, The Rev. Jenny Newman, and The Rev. Deacon Sarah Stripp.

The weekend also included small group activities like creating Anglican prayer beads, taking a hike around the lake, and having a musical jam session. The schedule was topped off with festivities, such as line dancing, bingo, s'mores around the campfire, and plenty of free time for socializing and relaxing.

Throughout the retreat, the group shared moments of worship during Compline, Morning Prayer, and Eucharist. These liturgies were a beautiful way to bring to life the spiritual practices explored during the sessions.

The Young Adult Commission encourages young adults, parish young adult ministries, and college ministries to save the date for our next retreat, March 21-23, 2025, at Gray Center. The theme for the spring retreat is "Vocation: Work, Play, Life."

To sign up for the Young Adult e-newsletter where registration details will be shared as they are finalized, please email dioMSyac@gmail.com.

You may also contact the above email address if you are interested in helping to staff or plan the upcoming retreat. 



THE MISSISSIPPI EPISCOPALIAN

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Faithful Departed

Please submit Faithful Departed notices to your church for submission

Curtis Doty "Sonny" Bowie, 86, communicant of Nativity, Greenwood, died September 11, 2024.

Leesha Faulkner, 69, communicant of All Saints', Tupelo, died September 17, 2024.

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Deployment Report

Churches/Chaplaincies in Transition

Redeemer, Brookhaven

Calvary, Cleveland

Good Shepherd, Columbus

Christ Church, Holly Springs

St. James', Jackson (as of 8/31/2024)

St. Matthew's, Kosciusko

Mediator, Meridian

Trinity, Natchez

St. Peter's, Oxford

Canterbury: Mississippi State University /

Resurrection, Starkville

Incarnation, West Point

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Apply for a 2025 UTO Grant

The 2025 Focus is Water based on Matthew 25:31-46. "I was thirsty and you gave me water."

UTO 2025 Grant Application materials are now available, the submission process will open in November, 2024. **All completed grant applications must be received at our diocesan office by Friday, January 3, 2025.** Only one can be sent from Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi.



UTO Grant Criteria

UTO will fund projects focused on water, including but not limited to projects that:

- Address water issues such as desalinization, access, care of water sources, water rights & education about water resources.
- Increase water awareness (drought tolerance, flood prevention).
- Address health issues directly related to water quality (formula access for babies, aftermath of contaminated water, etc.).
- Address water needs of unhoused people (laundry, showers, bathrooms, drinking water).
- UTO recognizes that many water access issues today stem directly from historic trauma and harm done to marginalized people. Projects that encourage truth-telling, acknowledge historic trauma around water, and establish pathways towards healing also fit this focus.

Downloadable materials can be found at unitedthankoffering.com, including Sample Budgets, Sample Timelines, Focus and Criteria, Helpful Hints, 2025 UTO Grant Application, and Bishop's Signature Form

Funding Range: The UTO Board will accept applications from \$1,000 to \$55,000. Please note we ask you to request only what you need for your project so that we can fund as many grants as possible. Only Episcopal institutions (parishes, dioceses, provinces, schools, seminaries, monastic communities, Episcopal organizations, and other Episcopal affiliated entities) are eligible to receive these funds. Partnerships with non-Episcopal entities are welcome and encouraged, but an Episcopal entity must serve as the recipient of the funds, project leader, active manager, owner of any materials/equipment/land purchased, supervisor of staff paid with UTO funds.

Preparation videos, open hours for speaking to UTO grant committee, all forms are available at episcopalchurch.org/uto.

Brenda Hawkins, UTO Coordinator, Diocese of MS ECW
601-573-6962 | iPhone/text

Celebration of New Ministry at St. Philip's, Jackson

The Rev. Joseph Leslie 'Les' Hegwood, Jr. was welcomed as the new rector of St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Jackson on Septemeber 12. Bishop Wells was on hand for the occasion.



Diocesan Calendar

Diocesan Meetings continue by Zoom unless otherwise noted. Though the Diocesan Staff works in a hybrid model (office and home), the Allin House is staffed daily, M-Th, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Fridays (through Labor Day) 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

October

- 26** AWWY, Middle Area, Chapel of the Cross, Madison
- 27** Bishop Wells visits Trinity, Natchez
- 27** Bishop Wells visits Christ Church, Church Hill

November

- 1** Bishop Wells visits All Saints', Jackson
- 1-3** Happening #97 Staff Training
- 2** Installation of the 28th Presiding Bishop, online
- 3** Daylight Saving Time ends – Fall back!
- 3** Bishop Wells visits All Saints', Tupelo
- 5** Small Churches Collaborative, online
- 7** Racial Reconciliation Task Force Meeting; 12:00 noon
- 8-9** A.C. Marble School, Solomon Center
- 9** Fall ECW Conference, St. Peter's-by-the-Lake, Brandon
- 10** Bishop Wells visits St. James', Greenville
- 16** AWWY - Northern Area, St. Peter's, Oxford
- 17** Bishop Wells visits St. Stephen's, Columbia
- 20** Deadline for Lay Leadership Relicensing
- 20** *The Mississippi Episcopalian* December deadline; 12:00 noon
- 22-24** Happening #97, Chapel of the Cross, Madison
- 27-29** Allin House staff holiday in observance of Thanksgiving
- 28** Thanksgiving Day

December

- 1** Deadline for Submission of Budget Requests/Reports to Annual Council
- 1** VPG % Due
- 3** Small Churches Collaborative, online
- 4** Racial Reconciliation Task Force Meeting; 12:00 noon
- 4** Standing Committee, Allin House
- 4-6** Province IV Bishops and Spouses Conference, Camp McDowell
- 8** Bishop Wells visits Trinity, Hattiesburg
- 12** Finance Committee: 1:00 -4:00 pm
- 14** Advent Retreat with the Rev. Dr. Mark Bozzuti-Jones, Priest and Director of Spiritual Formation, Trinity Retreat Center, St. Christopher's, Jackson
- 15** Bishop Wells visits St. John's, Laurel
- 17** Executive Committee, St. Andrew's Cathedral, 1:00 - 4:00 pm
- 20** *The Mississippi Episcopalian* January deadline; 12:00 noon
- 20-21** A.C. Marble School, online
- 22** Bishop Wells visits Grace, Canton
- 24-26** Allin House closed for Christmas
- 24** Christmas Eve Services at the Cathedral
3:00pm
5:00pm, with Bishop Wells celebrating
11:00pm, midnight service
- 25** Christmas Day Service at the Cathedral, 10:30am
- 27-1** Winter Solstice for High Schoolers at Camp Bratton-Green

we want stories . . .

about your church, your ministry, your school... or whatever is on your Episcopal mind! Send us fully realized stories, photos, or just ideas at msepiscopalian@dioms.org.

Submission deadlines for the next six months (always available at msepiscopalian.com/submissions):

December 2024 issue

November 20th, 2024

January 2025 issue

December 20th, 2024

February 2025 issue

January 21st, 2025

March 2025 issue

February 20th, 2025

April 2025 issue

March 20th, 2025

May 2025 issue

April 21st, 2025



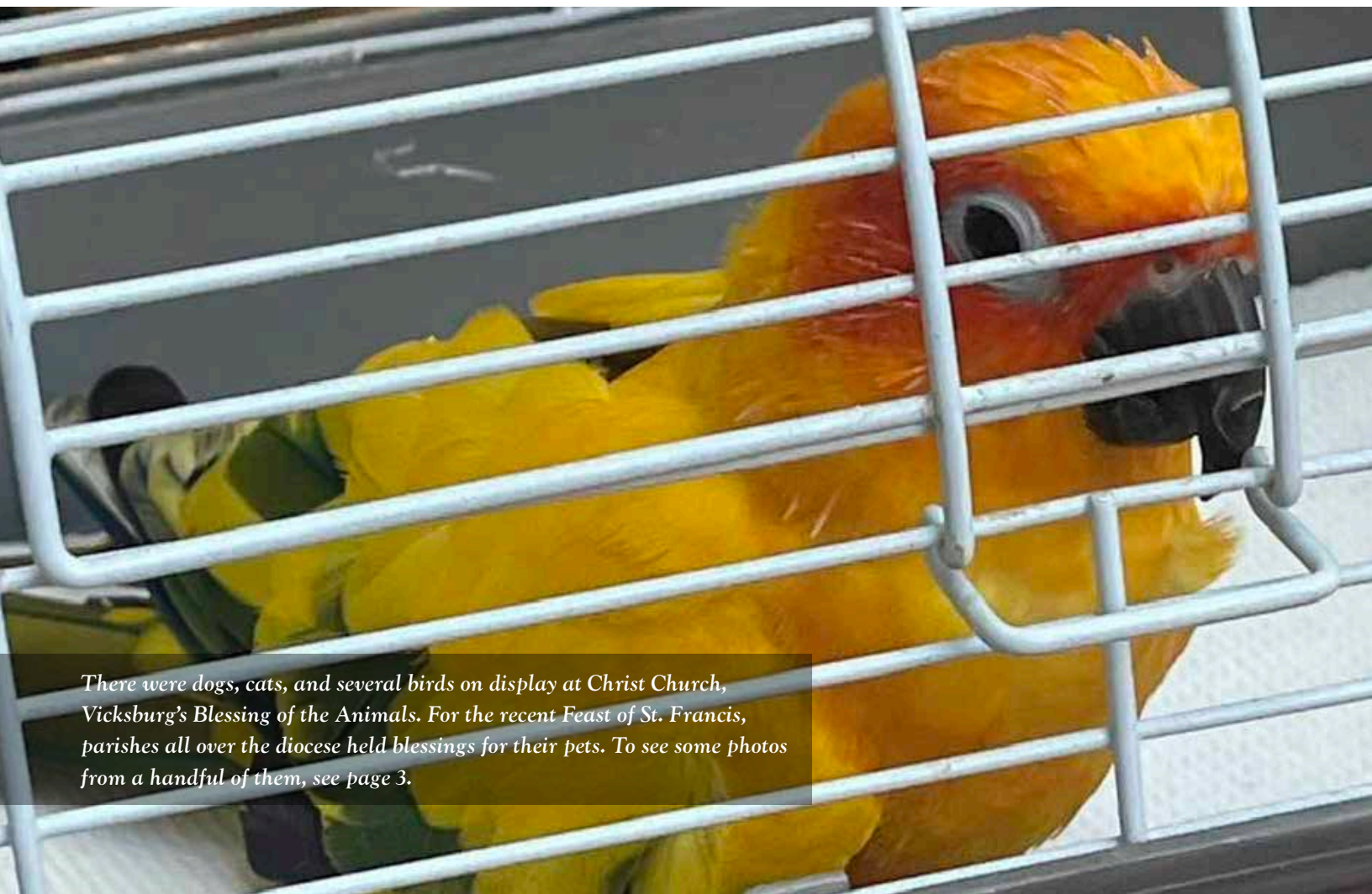
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There were dogs, cats, and several birds on display at Christ Church, Vicksburg's Blessing of the Animals. For the recent Feast of St. Francis, parishes all over the diocese held blessings for their pets. To see some photos from a handful of them, see page 3.