

August 2026

*Growing by God's Grace as a
Family of Faith, Fellowship & Ministry*

The Chimes



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About Christ Church

Christ Church is a parish of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Atlanta. We are a vibrant parish in the heart of downtown Macon, Georgia. Founded in 1825, Christ Church is the oldest church in Macon and the Mother Church of the Diocese of Atlanta. Last year, we observed the Bicentennial of our founding in a yearlong celebration. We are grateful for all those from around Macon and Middle Georgia and the Diocese of Atlanta we joined us during our celebration. We are a loving place where all are welcome and we invite anyone interested in becoming part of our family to join us in building the next two hundred years at Christ Church.

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Watch services live and view past services at www.youtube.com/@christchurchmacon/streams



The Rev. Cynthia Knapp
Rector

RECTOR'S MESSAGE

The value of kindness in communication

One of the things I have come to cherish about the South is the way people communicate—especially the wonderfully colorful expressions that are so much a part of Southern colloquialism. One of my particular favorites is, “You catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar.” I believe it’s no coincidence that this uniquely Southern expression comes out of the Bible Belt. It’s a clear reminder to treat people with loving kindness in the way you speak if we want our communication to be effective (assuming our intentions are good!)

The way we communicate is vital not only in our relationships with others but also in the state of our soul. Jesus said, “Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth

speaks.” (Matthew 12:34) If you have bitterness in your heart, your words are likely to be bitter. If your heart is filled with love, your words are likely to be kind and loving. Jesus taught that just as our heart affects the words that come out of our mouths, the words that come out of our mouths impact our hearts. In Mark 7:15 he says, “There is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile; but the things that come out are what defile.” Our words can not only hurt other people, they can also hurt the one who speaks them as much or more.

Tom Holladay, in his book *The Relationship Principles of Jesus*, writes about the importance of communication in our relationships, and the connection between our hearts and what comes out of our mouths. He talks about being mindful of the way we are communicating, and how our communication is impacting our relationships. The following particularly resonated with me, “Communication experts say the words we speak can actually produce six distinct messages:

- What you mean to say.
- What you actually say.
- What the other person hears.
- What the other person thinks he hears.
- What the other person says about what you said.
- What you think the other person said about what you said.”

If that’s not a case for the need for patience, grace and forgiveness in relationships, I don’t know what is! Is it any wonder there are so many relationships torn apart by communication and lack of understanding?

Communication and learning to understand one another are key elements in the marriage course being offered at Christ Church this fall. (See more inside this issue of the Chimes.) But we also learn to be bet-



ter communicators in all our interactions when we become better at loving like Jesus. And we become better at loving like Jesus when we focus on God and on living for Him. In the forward to Tom Holladay’s book, Rick Warren puts it this way, “Learning to love God and others is to be our highest goal, our greatest aim, our first priority, our deepest aspiration, our strongest ambition, our constant focus, our passionate intention, and the dominant life value of our lives. The more we love authentically, the more like Jesus we become.”

Our primary hope at Christ Church is that it would be a place where we are all growing in our love for God and our love for others. We want nothing more than to learn to love like Jesus. Certainly, we are all a work in progress, and we require grace and forgiveness along the way. But it is a wonderful and holy journey to be on, and a joy to travel it together.

Love In Christ,
The Rev. Cynthia Knapp

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Children's Programming

We're so excited to begin the new programming year with the children and young families of Christ Church! I hope that everyone has had a wonderful break for the summer and is ready to get back into a routine of gathering for learning and fellowship. We have lots of fun and meaningful opportunities available, and we hope that you and your children can join us for many of them!

Sunday School resumes Sunday, August 23. We meet every Sunday (except holiday weekends), 9:30-10:20, with 2K-4K in the small downstairs classroom, K-2nd in the large downstairs classroom and 3rd-5th in the upstairs classroom. Like last year, pickup for all kiddos is in the large downstairs K-2nd classroom.

All classes include hands-on lessons, Bible skills, dramatic play, song, art, games, and additional experiences. The teachers love seeing the children grow in the

knowledge and love of God each week while strengthening their sweet friendships with each other. We look forward to loving on and teaching your kiddos this year! Reach out to Rachel if you have questions or would like to serve as a teacher or helper.

Nursery

Our nursery caregivers provide loving care for infants and young children during Sunday School, the 10:30 church service, and special events.

Young Families

We're currently building our Young Family Supper Club calendar. If you're interested in hosting, please reach out to Rachel. (Rachel@ChristChurchMacon.com)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

August 9

- Blessing of the Backpacks & Presentation of Bibles to 3rd Graders (during the 10:30 service)

Bring your backpack or briefcase to have it blessed as we begin the school year. All 3rd graders will receive Bibles from the church to use in Sunday School and at home.

August 16

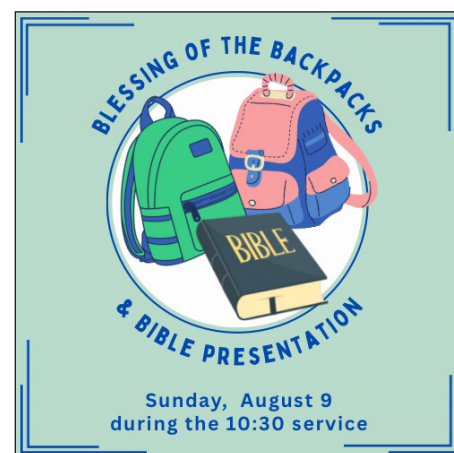
- Drop-in Parish Breakfast & Ministry Fair (9:30-10:20)

August 23

- Sunday School Resumes (9:30am)
- Sunday Evening Programming Begins (5pm)

September 12

- Parish Picnic (4pm)



August



Rachel Horkan
Director of Children's Ministry

YOUTH MINISTRY

Happy August! We are so excited to be back together for our 2026-2027 EYC year so soon! I am thrilled to announce our theme for EYC this year, Creation Care. In our current world, where we are seeing the effects of AI, data centers, global warming, and so much more...how can we become better stewards of the Earth that God created? What does The Bible teach us about caring for "this fragile earth, our island home" (Book of Common Prayer, Eucharistic Prayer C) especially in today's world. We will be using The Bible, especially Genesis and Psalms, to have these discussions and of course it will be paired with fun projects, games, and lively conversation!

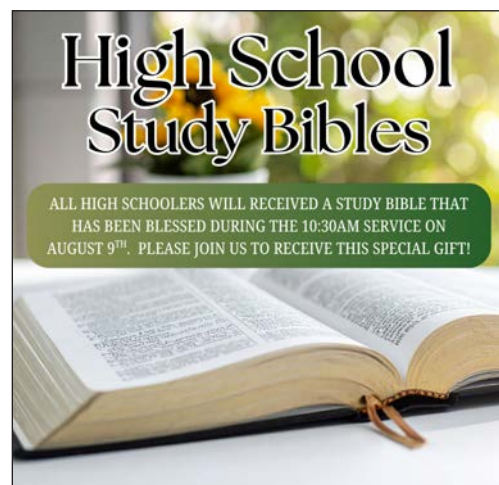
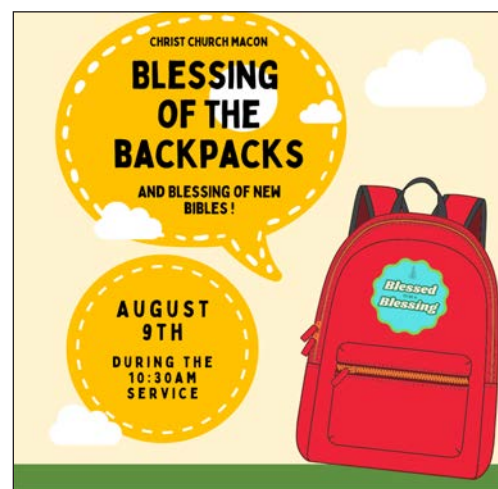
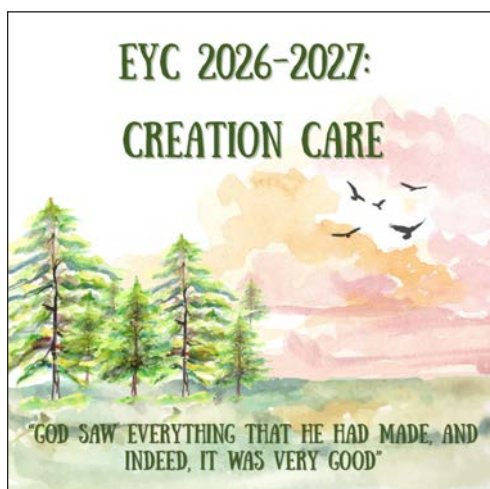
In Sunday School, we will be starting a Bible Study

model where we can dive deeper into the books of the Bible. We will start with a wonderful session about the book of Acts. We hope our high schoolers will be able to use their new Bibles during this time!

Please join us on August 9th for our Backpack Blessing and where all of our high schoolers will receive a brand new Study Bible!

We will all gather on August 16th for our Kick-Off Breakfast and Ministry Fair and then we will officially start back with our regularly scheduled Sunday School and EYC on August 23rd.

Please reach out if you have any questions or suggestions. I can't wait to see everyone so soon!



Hope Westervelt
Director of Youth Ministry

ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Strengthening Your Marriage with the Alpha Marriage Course

We are offering the Alpha Marriage Course for anyone who would like to strengthen their relationship. Facilitated by Jamie and Ben Walden, and taught by a couple who have been married for over 40 years at Holy Trinity Brompton where it was developed, this course is an opportunity for a “date night” while you work together on your marriage. Each couple will have their own table for two where they will be served dinner while they watch the talk. Throughout the talk there are periods for each couple to have private conversations between themselves using their course workbook as a guide. The topics covered are: Building Strong Foundations, The Art of Communication, Resolving Conflict, The Power of Forgiveness, The Impact of Family—Past and Present, Good Sex (about communication not a “how to”), Love in Action, and Coping with Times of Separation. We have been using the premarriage version of this course for several years and couples have loved it!

This course will be on Wednesday evenings beginning on September 9th and going through October 21st. We are arranging for childcare to be available if needed. The evening will take 2 hours and we are planning to begin at 6:00 if that works well for the group. To learn more or to sign up please email Cynthia@christchurchmacon.com.

New Adult Sunday School Class on Sunday Mornings

Sunday mornings during the Sunday School time we are offering an option for adults in addition to the Bible Study on the Scriptures for the day (which will still be in the Cloister Room). In the Parlor (on the first floor across from the children's Sunday School classroom) people are invited to gather to listen to the Bishop's “For Faith” weekly podcast (about 15 minutes) and discuss. This is a self led group by participants but we will have the information there to access the audio podcast on your phone.

FOR PEOPLE

Listen to the podcast at:
<https://forpeople.digital>

Or scan here



GRAB YOUR YARN AND NEEDLES!
Sunday Evenings at Christ Church



JOIN OUR KNITTING GROUP
(Following the Parish Dinner in the Parlor)

All Skill Levels Welcome! (Including Absolute Beginners) | Knitting & Crocheting | Fellowship & Fun



This fall we are remaking Sunday evenings into a community-building time of fellowship, faith formation, and worship for all ages and the whole church family. We hope this will be a special, inviting time that will build on Sunday mornings as a time for strengthening faith and relationships.

Sunday Evenings at Christ Church will begin with a parish dinner in the Great Hall at 5:00. There is no cost for the meal, but there will be a basket if you would like to leave a donation. If you are interested in helping with the dinner, we are organizing teams to prepare, serve, and clean up. Contact the parish office to volunteer.

After eating together, everyone will divide up at 5:20 to go to their separate activities. Then, at 6:30, we will gather back together for worship. On the first Sunday of the month, the choir will lead us in Choral Evensong in either the church or Jones Chapel. On other Sundays, we will have a short Compline service in the Great Hall.

There are a variety of programs being offered on Sunday evening this fall:

- For children, there is the Choir School of Macon. CSM is divided into two groups: St. Cecilia Choir for younger children and the Choristers for older children. Using a curriculum from the Royal School of Church Music, CSM offers children an education in the fundamentals of music and an opportunity to develop their vocal talents. The children will also have several opportunities to perform on Sunday mornings throughout the year.
- Youth will still be meeting in the Youth Suite for EYC on Sunday evenings, only with a new start time of 5:20, to align with the other groups.

- One option for adults is the Alpha Course. Alpha is a group course examining the big questions of life and the Christian faith using a curriculum from Holy Trinity Brompton in the UK and now used all over the world. The course covers topics like “Who is Jesus?”, “Why did he have to die?”, “Why and how do I pray?”, “How does God guide us?”, and “Does God heal today?” It begins each week with a video presentation and then moves into a group discussion.
- Another option for adults will be a discussion group facilitated by Evey and Jonathan Wetherbee. This will be a casual group discussion focusing on the challenged we facing living our faith in our day-to-day lives.
- The Daughters of the King will be offering a knitting class on Sunday evenings in the parlor. The class is open to all knitters and those who want to learn. It is not limited to members of the Daughters of the King. Supplies are provided.

We are so excited about these new opportunities. We hope to see you on Sunday evening for food, fellowship, and faith—for the *whole* church family!

5:00pm—Sunday Evening Supper
 5:20pm—Alpha
 5:20pm—Adult Discussion Group
 5:20pm—DOK Knitting Class
 5:20pm—EYC
 5:20pm—Choir School of Macon
 6:30pm—Compline (Evensong on 1st Sundays)

Christ Church August 202

August

Wednesday, August 5

12pm–Holy Eucharist & Healing Resumes

Saturday, August 8

10:30am–Choir Kick-Off Barbecue

Sunday, August 9

10:30am–Blessing of the Backpacks & Bibles

Thursday, August 13

5:30pm–Choir Rehearsal Resumes

Sunday, August 16

9am–Parish Breakfast & Ministry Fair

12pm–Acolyte Training

Tuesday, August 18

5:15pm–Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, August 19

9am–Women's Bible Study Resumes

10:30am –Wise Women's Bible Study Resumes

Thursday, August 20

10:30am–Holy Eucharist at Carlyle Place

Sunday, August 23

9:30am–Sunday School Resumes

After 10:30am service–Robert Hubbard Appreciation

5pm–Sunday Evening Supper Begins

5:20pm–Choir School of Macon Resumes

5:20pm–EYC Resumes

5:20pm–Alpha Begins

6:30pm–Sunday Evening Worship Begins

September

Monday, September 7

Parish Office Closed for Labor Day

Wednesday, September 9

6pm–Alpha Marriage Course Begins

Thursday, September 10

7:10am–Men's Bible Study Resumes

Sunday, September 12

4pm–Parish Picnic

Tuesday, September 15

5:15pm–Vestry Meeting

Thursday, September 17

10:30am–Holy Eucharist at Carlyle Place

Sunday, September 27

2027 Stewardship Campaign Begins

October

Saturday, October 3

10:30a–Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, October 5

9:30am–Serving with a Saint Service Project

6:30pm–Choral Evensong

Thursday, October 15

10:30am–Holy Eucharist at Carlyle Place

Tuesday, October 20

5:15pm–Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, October 28

5:30pm–All Hallows' Eve Service & Carnival

November

Sunday, November 1

Daylight Savings Time Ends (Pending legislation)

8am & 10:30am–All Saints' Day

6:30pm–All Souls' Evensong

Tuesday, November 3

7:30pm–WSM Presents: Apollo5

Sunday, November 8

12pm–Stewardship Luncheon

November 6 & 7

Diocesan Council

Tuesday, November 17

5:15pm–Vestry Meeting

Thursday, November 20

10:30am–Holy Eucharist at Carlyle Place

Sunday, November 22

8am & 10:30am–Christ the King

November 26 & 27

Parish Office Closed for Thanksgiving

26–January 2027 Calendar

Sunday, November 29

9:30am–Journey into Advent Sunday School

December

Wednesday, December 2

5:30pm–St. Nicholas Service & Celebration

Sunday, December 6

9:30am–Last Sunday School of the Year

5pm–Last Sunday Evening of the Year

6:30pm–Advent Lesson & Carols

Wednesday, December 16

9am–Women's Bible Study Mini-Retreat

Thursday, December 17

10a–Holy Eucharist at Carlyle Place

December 19 & 20

EYC Diocesan Lock-In

Thursday, December 24

4:30pm–Christmas Pageant

9:45pm–Christmas on the Fisk

10pm–Christmas Eve Service

Friday, December 25

10:30am–Christmas Day Service

December 25–January 1

Parish Office Closed for Christmas

Sunday, December 27

10:30am service only

January

Sunday, January 10

9:30am–Sunday School Resumes

5:00pm–Sunday Evening Resumes

6:30pm–Festival of Lights

January 15–January 17

EYC Winter Retreat

Tuesday, January 19

5:15pm–Vestry Meeting

Thursday, January 21

10:30am–Holy Eucharist at Carlyle Place

Sunday, January 24

12pm–Annual Business Meeting

Normal Weekly Schedule

Sunday

8am–Holy Eucharist (Spoken)

9:30am–Children's Sunday School

9:30am–Youth Sunday School

9:30am–Adult Lectionary Study

9:30am–Bishop's Podcast Discussion

9:30am–Christ Church Choir

10:30am–Holy Eucharist (With Music)

11:30am–Weekend Lunch

11:45am–Lemonade on the Lawn

5pm–Sunday Evening Supper

5:20pm–Alpha

5:20pm–Adult Discussion Group

5:20pm–DOK Knitting Class

5:20pm–EYC

5:20pm–Choir School of Macon

6:30pm–Compline (Evensong on 1st Sundays)

Wednesday

9am–Women's Bible Study

10:45am–Wise Women's Bible Study

12pm–Holy Eucharist & Healing

6pm–Alpha Marriage Course (Sept. 9–Oct. 21)

8:45pm–Compline on Facebook

Thursday

7:15am–Men's Bible Study

5:30pm–Christ Church Choir

Saturday

11:30am–Weekend Lunch



MUSIC MINISTRY

APOLLO.5



WSM Presents: Apollo5 in Concert
Tuesday, November 3, 2026 | 7:30 PM

FREE! All are welcome!

If you are interested in learning more about this concert and ways to support them please contact Jonathan Poe (478) 200-1062.

"One-to-a-part performances of repertoire spanning nine centuries no less... an inspired programme, superbly sung throughout... exceptional cohesion and effortless style...faultless."

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

"exceptionally beautiful singing"

CLASSIC FM

"harmonious without the slightest concession to quality... the rapt listener would be hard put to find fault"

YORKSHIRE TIMES

"an unbroken spectrum, [creating] the illusion of larger forces"

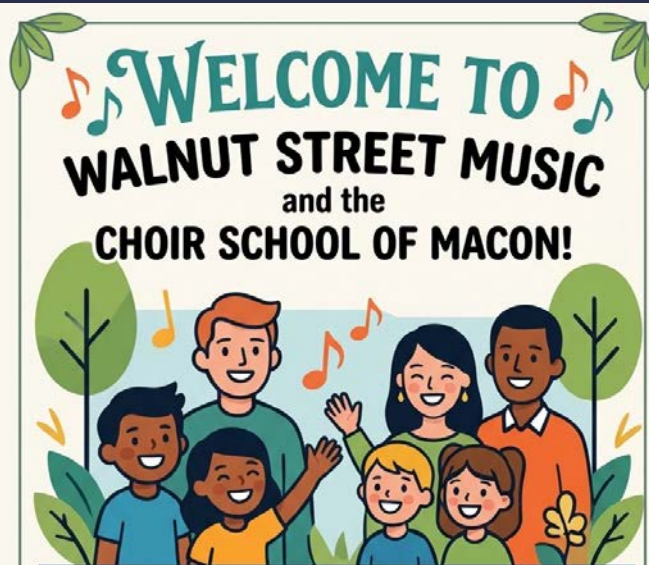
CHOIR & ORGAN

**ANCIENT TRADITION,
A TIMELESS SOUND.**

CHORAL EVENSONG

OCT 4 | 6:30 PM

Nave of Christ Church



Lacey and I are absolutely thrilled that you are considering enrolling your child in this wonderful musical opportunity!

**GET READY FOR AN AMAZING SEASON OF MUSIC,
COMMUNITY, AND FUN!**



WHEN:
SUNDAYS,
starting August 23!

WHERE:
The Parish House
(538 Walnut Street, Macon, GA 31201)

SCHEDULE:
5:00 PM Delicious Meal Together
| 5:25 PM Programming Begins

**SIGN UP TODAY!
SCAN HERE!**



WALNUTSTREETMUSIC.ORG

Mr. Jonathan A. Poe, Director of Music & Liturgy, (478) 200-1062

WE CAN'T WAIT TO MAKE MUSIC WITH YOUR FAMILY!

Mr. Jonathan Alan Poe, M.Mus
Director of Music & Liturgy
<http://www.walnutstreetmusic.org>

WALNUT
STREET
— Music —

WEEKEND LUNCH @



CHRIST CHURCH

In communities across the country, there are individuals and families who struggle to find consistent, nourishing meals. Macon's Weekend Lunch is a ministry dedicated to meeting that need—one plate at a time—while offering something just as essential: connection, dignity, and compassion.



Every Saturday and Sunday morning at 9:00, a group of committed volunteers gathers with a shared purpose. The kitchen comes alive with activity as meals are prepared from scratch, conversations begin, and friendships are strengthened. What starts as simple food preparation quickly becomes something deeper—a time of fellowship rooted in service.

Weekend Lunch is more than a meal program. It is a place where people are welcomed without judgment and treated with respect. Volunteers strive to embody the teachings of Jesus, not only by feeding the hungry but by creating an environment where everyone feels seen, valued, and included. Each meal served is an opportunity to extend kindness, listen to a story, or simply share a moment of human connection.

Guests are invited to come as they are, knowing they will receive a hot meal and a warm welcome.



For many, Weekend Lunch at Christ Church has become a reliable source of both nourishment and community.



The ministry continues to grow through the generosity of volunteers and supporters who believe in its mission. Whether you are looking to lend a helping hand, donate resources, or simply learn more, there is a place for you at Weekend Lunch.

For more information or to get involved, please contact Hal or Jonathan at Director@weekendlunch.org. Together, we can continue to serve, uplift, and make a meaningful difference—one weekend at a time.



Weekend Lunch

Dr. Hal Brickle, *Executive Director*

director@weekendlunch.org (478) 200-1066

For the website, click: www.weekendlunch.org

WEEKLY CALENDAR of EVENTS August 2026

July 26– August 1

Sunday, July 26: The 9th Sunday after Pentecost

8am | Morning Prayer | Church

10:30am | Morning Prayer | Church

After 10:30 Service | Lemonade on the Lawn

11am | Weekend Lunch | Jones Chapel

Wednesday, July 29

8:45pm | Compline | Facebook

Saturday, August 1

11:30am | Weekend Lunch | Jones Chapel

August 2 – August 8

Sunday, August 2: The 10th Sunday after Pentecost

8am | Holy Eucharist | Church

10:30am | Holy Eucharist | Church

After 10:30 Service | Lemonade on the Lawn

11:30am | Weekend Lunch | Jones Chapel

Wednesday, August 5

12pm | Holy Eucharist & Healing | Church

8:45pm | Compline | Facebook

Saturday, August 8

10:30am | Choir Barbecue | Amerson River Park

11:30am | Weekend Lunch | Jones Chapel

August 9 – August 15

Sunday, August 9: The 11th Sunday after Pentecost

8am | Holy Eucharist | Church

10:30am | Holy Eucharist | Church

During 10:30 Service | Backpack & Bible Blessing

After 10:30 Service | Lemonade on the Lawn

11:30am | Weekend Lunch | Jones Chapel

Wednesday, August 12

12pm | Holy Eucharist & Healing | Church

8:45pm | Compline | Facebook

Thursday, August 13

5:30pm | Christ Church Choir | Choir Room

Saturday, August 15

11:30am | Weekend Lunch | Jones Chapel

August 16 – August 22

Sunday, August 16: The 12th Sunday after Pentecost

8am | Holy Eucharist | Church

9am | Parish Breakfast & Ministry Fair | Great Hall

10:30am | Holy Eucharist | Church

After 10:30 Service | Lemonade on the Lawn

12pm | Acolyte Training | Cloister Room & Church

11:30am | Weekend Lunch | Jones Chapel

Monday, August 17

5:30pm | Outreach Committee | Cloister Room

Tuesday, August 18

5:15pm | Vestry Meeting | Cloister Room

Wednesday, August 19

9am | Women's Bible Study | Parlor

10:45am | Wise Women's Bible Study | Cloister Room

12pm | Holy Eucharist & Healing | Church

8:45pm | Compline | Facebook

Thursday, August 20

10:30am | Holy Eucharist | Carlyle Place

5:30pm | Christ Church Choir | Choir Room

Saturday, August 22

11:30am | Weekend Lunch | Jones Chapel

August 23 – August 29

Sunday, August 23: The 13th Sunday after Pentecost

8am | Holy Eucharist | Church

9:30am | Children's Sunday School | Parish House

9:30am | Youth Sunday School | Youth Suite

9:30am | Adult Lectionary Study | Cloister Room

9:30am | Bishop's Podcast Discussion | Parlor

9:30am | Christ Church Choir | Church

10:30am | Holy Eucharist | Church

After 10:30 Service | Robert Hubbard Appreciation

11:30am | Weekend Lunch | Jones Chapel

5:00pm | Parish Supper | Great Hall

5:20pm | Choir School of Macon | Parish House

5:20pm | EYC | Youth Suite

5:20pm | DOK Knitting Class | Parlor

5:20pm | Adult Discussion Group | Youth Classroom

WEEKLY CALENDAR of EVENTS August 2026

5:20pm | Alpha | Cloister Room

6:30pm | Compline | Great Hall

Wednesday, August 26

9am | Women's Bible Study | Parlor

10:45am | Wise Women's Bible Study | Cloister Room

12pm | Holy Eucharist & Healing | Church

8:45pm | Compline | Facebook

Thursday, August 27

5:30pm | Christ Church Choir | Choir Room

Saturday, August 29

11:30am | Weekend Lunch | Jones Chapel

August 30 – September 5

Sunday, August 30: The 14th Sunday after Pentecost

8am | Holy Eucharist | Church

9:30am | Children's Sunday School | Parish House

9:30am | Youth Sunday School | Youth Suite

9:30am | Adult Lectionary Study | Cloister Room

9:30am | Bishop's Podcast Discussion | Parlor

9:30am | Christ Church Choir | Church

10:30am | Holy Eucharist | Church

After 10:30 Service | Lemonade on the Lawn

11:30am | Weekend Lunch | Jones Chapel

5:00pm | Parish Supper | Great Hall

5:20pm | Choir School of Macon | Parish House

5:20pm | EYC | Youth Suite

5:20pm | DOK Knitting Class | Parlor

5:20pm | Adult Discussion Group | Youth Classroom

5:20pm | Alpha | Cloister Room

6:30pm | Compline | Great Hall

Wednesday, September 2

9am | Women's Bible Study | Parlor

10:45am | Wise Women's Bible Study | Cloister Room

12pm | Holy Eucharist & Healing | Church

8:45pm | Compline | Facebook

Thursday, September 3

5:30pm | Christ Church Choir | Choir Room

Saturday, September 5

11:30am | Weekend Lunch | Jones Chapel



PARISH NEWS

Welcome the Newly Baptized!

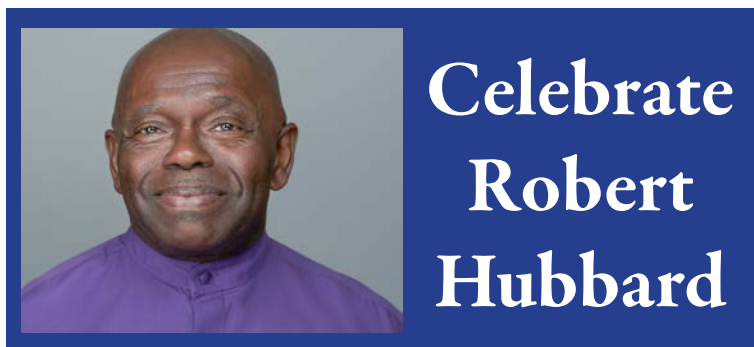


**Daniel Jordan
Ellis Josey III**

**Bridges Malone
Solomon**



Congratulations to our newest members of the Daughters of the King: Lizzie Clark, Christine Hoskins, Kristi Rock, Stephanie Strickland, and Peggy Woodhall!



Our beloved sexton Robert Hubbard recently celebrated 30 years at Christ Church. Once everyone is back from their summer travels, we will be showing our appreciation of him in the Cloister Garden following the 10:30 am service on August 23. Be sure to stop by and tell Robert how much we love him! There will be a basket for cards and letters.

Program Year Kick Off: Parish Breakfast & Ministry Fair

We will kick off our 2026–2027 Program Year on August 16 with a parish-wide breakfast in the Great Hall. Drop by any time between 9 am and 10:15 am. This will be a time of fellowship and reunion as everyone returns from their summer travels. We will also be holding a ministry fair so that everyone has a chance to learn about everything that is going on at Christ Church. There will be representatives from each ministry in the Great Hall to answer any questions and give you information about how to get involved.

Serving Our Neighbors with Peanut Butter and Jelly



We held an impromptu service project in the Great Hall after church on July 12 to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to fill the community refrigerator at Centenary Methodist Church. We made 167 sandwiches to feed the hungry in our community. Thank you to everyone who came out and helped!

MINISTRY *of the* MONTH

Granito de Mostaza Dairy Farm, Los Arabos, Cuba



The Christ Church Outreach Committee has designated the Granito de Mostaza Dairy Farm in Los Arabos, Cuba as the Ministry of the Month for August. Owned by the Episcopal Diocese of Cuba since 2008, Granito de Mostaza (which means “Mustard Seed” in Spanish) is an extremely important ministry of the Episcopal Church there. For the past eight years I have had the pleasure of working with Rev. Juan Carlos Diez Moreira of the Diocese of Cuba, the farm’s administrator. The only entity owned by the Diocese of Cuba that has the legal right to contract with the government to sell agricultural products, Granito de Mostaza is one of the few ways the Diocese has to earn income from commercial activity. Its revenue pays for almost all of the community programming in which the Los Arabos churches engage and for the salaries of the churches’ parish administrators.

Granito de Mostaza played a key role in assisting the local community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to adapt to the subsequent economic crises which have wracked the island. Widespread food shortages have caused the farm to sell off most of its cattle in order to prevent hungry thieves from butchering them, and the farm’s operation has shifted more towards agriculture - crops of sesame, squash, and pineapple now form the majority of production. Pineapple in particular is viewed as the path towards self-sufficiency, as Los Arabos is now one of the leading producers of pineapple in the country. At the same time, Rev. Juan Carlos has invested heavily in cottage industry, creating a system for preserving fruit and producing cooking oil, vinegar, jams, and jellies. Through its efforts and innovations, Granito de Mostaza has saved lives and helped to ease the stress of food shortages among the local population.

This work has only become more important since the oust-

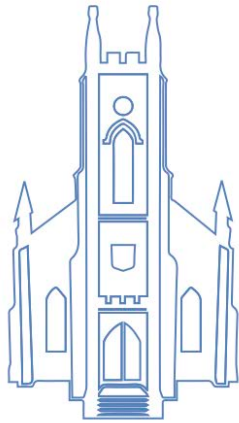
ing of Venezuelan dictator Nicolas Maduro by the United States earlier this year. The loss of Venezuelan oil, needed to keep the island’s electrical grid running, had been compounded by the imposition of an almost total blockade of the island by the United States and further sanctions against its government. A recent report by The Friends of the Episcopal Church in Cuba reveals the dire reality faced by Cubans today. The current government salary (paid to ~80% of the population) is \$16 USD/month, with pensions for retirees \$6/month. Hyper-inflation continues to run rampant, and most goods are un-affordable. The current price of gasoline is \$25 USD/gal, and \$18/gal for diesel. Traffic on the island has become virtually non-existent, though electric vehicles have seen a surge in usage. In some parts of the countryside, hunger has become so bad that horses and even cats are being slaughtered for food. The government has ceased providing the monthly guaranteed rations of food, leaving hundreds of thousands without any guaranteed source of food. Through it all, electricity has become almost non-existent. Blackouts in Havana now last 22-23 hours/day, and some places in the country have no power at all. This means no fans, no AC, and no internet. Tourism, the main source of income for the island, has become almost non-existent due to shortages of jet fuel and the afore-mentioned shortages that affect tourist resorts too.



Cans of preserved pineapple produced by Granito de Mostaza, 2024. Photo courtesy of Rev. Juan Carlos Diez Moreira

as Ministry of the Month. For those interested in learning more about Cuba, the Diocese of Atlanta’s involvement there, and more ways of getting involved, please feel free to contact me.

— Harry Groce



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