ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

THE EVANGELIST

VOLUME 67, ISSUE 2 ✠ FEBRUARY 2026 ✠ WWW.STMARKSCATHEDRAL.NET

The Doorway to Reconciliation

Rev. Alston B. Johnson
alston@stmarkscathedral.net

"That person shows themselves worthy – in that they confess themselves unworthy."
—St. Augustine of Hippo

Dear Families and Friends of St. Mark's,

I hope that you are well and finding the familiar rhythms on the other side of the recent icy weather. February 7th and 8th we will welcome the Reverend Robert Childers, recently retired and living in New Orleans, who serves as the Chair of the Community of the Cross of Nails in North America. Robert will be with us Saturday evening for dinner and discussion, as well as preach and lead discussion on Sunday morning. I hope that you will take some time to join us.

When asked why I have kept up a long interest in the Community of the Cross of Nails, I sometimes have to pause. Perhaps it is the compelling story of Coventry Cathedral Dean Richard Howard standing in the bombed ruins of the cathedral church in November 1940, having little to say except, "Father Forgive," which he then wrote on one of remaining walls of the ruins. Some burnt roof timbers were fashioned into a cross and set on the altar. Three medieval nails were fashioned into the first "Cross of Nails." The overtones pointing toward Good Friday were unmistakable.

At that point in the war, outcomes were uncertain and England stood alone; the German Luftwaffe crossed the Channel almost every day and night. And yet Dick Howard remained grounded in the teachings of the Gospel, unsure of what geo-political outcome might lay ahead. His calling upon God was not from a place of power, or perhaps even righteousness, but rather from the unmistakable expectation made of those who follow our Lord.

It may be the witness of someone like Louis Zamperini, the main character of the famous book and movie, *Unbroken*, who following his conversion to Christ discerned a call to extend understanding and forgiveness to the camp commander who tortured him during his Japanese captivity; he later traveled to Japan to forgive the prison guards who held him captive, as well as "The Bird" who was his nemesis. *"I think the hardest thing in life is to forgive. Hate is self-destructive. If you hate somebody, you're not hurting the person you hate, you're hurting yourself. It's a healing, actually, it's a real healing...forgiveness."*

Perhaps it is the words said by Nadine Collier to Dylan Roof, who killed her

(continued on page 2)

Annual Meeting

The Cathedral Annual Meeting was held during the 10:30 am service on Sunday, February 1. Elected to serve four year terms on the Vestry of St. Mark's Cathedral were:

Megan Campbell
Ginny Murphy
Clay Nelson
Dee Peterson
Matthew Smitherman

Outgoing Vestry members Karen Hardtner, Chad Hill, Claire Rebouche, Jason Waltman and Warren West were honored for their service.

Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes

7:00 am	Chapel
8:00 am	Cathedral (School service)
Noon	Cathedral
5:30 pm	Cathedral

Lenten Daily Eucharist

Our 7:00 a.m. daily Monday-Friday Eucharists begin on February 19 and run through April 2. Please join us in the Chapel and make this special service part of your Lenten journey.

SUNDAY WORSHIP
8:00 am, 10:30 am, & 6:00 pm
Sunday Holy Eucharist

FEBRUARY 1, 2026
The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Micah 6 :1-8
Psalm 15

1 Corinthians 1 :18-31
Matthew 5 :1-12

FEBRUARY 8, 2026
The FifthSunday after the Epiphany

Isaiah 58 :1-12
Psalm 112 :1-9

1 Corinthians 2 :1-16
Matthew 5 :13-20

FEBRUARY 15, 2026
The Last Sunday after the Epiphany

Exodus 24 :12-18
Psalm 99

2 Peter 1 :16-21
Matthew 17 :1-9

FEBRUARY 22, 2026
The First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7
Psalm 32

Romans 5:12-19
Matthew 4:1-11

(continued from page 1)

mother, Ethel Lance, and eight other church members of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Charleston. Fighting through her tears Nadine said to the young man, *"You took something very precious away from me. I will never talk to her ever again, I will never be able to hold her again. You hurt me. You hurt a lot of people. But God forgives you, and I forgive you."*

We are Christians for the times in which we live. I am finding that the need for understanding, forgiveness, reconciliation remains a companion with us as disciples; and in an age of instant communication, we may sometimes feel that we carry the collective "weight of the world" upon our consciences as the demand for a "response" is presented moment by moment. For some, we live in an age that is like no other; for others, it is simply the repetition and refrain of what the Bible tells us about life in this world – a confirmation that we indeed are in need of a savior and friend. Regardless of how we understand past or current events, I find direction and hope in the words and witness of the individuals mentioned above, as well as in the words and witness that we share within our worship.

One of the reasons that I keep our Cross of Nails on the altar is so that I can look at it during the Lord's Prayer and be reminded of what is written on it, "Father Forgive." Sometimes I will take it in my hands, placing it next to the consecrated bread and wine as a reminder before breaking the host and joining the congregation in the fraction: "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. *Therefore let us keep the feast."*

It is a reminder for me to pray that others will forgive me for the hurt that I have created in their lives, and that I may pray for those from whom I have experienced harm. Sometimes the words of the prayer follow along behind the intention that I am offering. I take it on faith that God sees the inner chambers of our hearts, and that leaning in the direction of such reconciliation may have consequences beyond our own reckoning. It is also a reminder that I am calling upon God to forgive me of my own sins.

I imagine that for each of us, walking in the path of forgiveness and reconciliation is to walk by faith. I have not met a person whose life is not somehow either overtly or mysteriously being lived within the circumference of the divine and human landscape described in the Lord's Prayer. The need to ask for forgiveness, or offer forgiveness, seems a universal truth; for the Christian it is simply an expectation of faithful discipleship.

During Lent we name, the "unworthiness" that Saint Augustine mentions in the quote above. During Lent we wade into the peculiar and toxic brew of our own sinfulness that is perhaps only known to God and ourselves. Throughout Lent we ask very pointedly that Christ would forgive us our sins; one of which may be our inability to live transparently within Christ's expectation, "Do to others as you would have them do to you." And, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Finding our story of forgiveness within the stories of others might be a doorway for us. Knowing that others have crossed this "sacred ground" is a help when we are asked to cross it ourselves. My hope and prayer for our own cathedral parish is that we might each find that the words that Dick Howard wrote on the back of Coventry Cathedral are both true for us in relationship to God, and are becoming true for us in our relationship with others.

I hope that you will join Father Childers as we explore the path of Christian reconciliation.

Blessings and Godspeed,
Alston Johnson, Dean, St. Mark's

A full-color version of *The Evangelist* is on our website! Go to **https://stmarkscathedral.net/the-evangelist/**

The Fasting Fund – a St. Mark's Lenten Tradition

One of St. Mark's Lenten traditions is the Fasting Fund. The purpose is simple: We ask that you forgo one meal a week, and contribute a few dollars - what you would have spent on that meal - to the fasting fund. (Of course, you can forgo more than one meal a week if you wish.) Baskets are placed at the back of the chapel for the 7:00 a.m. Eucharist services and the base of the steps to the chancel for Sunday services to collect these offerings. Please consider making the Fasting Fund a part of your Lenten observance. A simple fast of one or more meals a week can teach us a lot about the temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness and our own earthly journey. Join us.

The Commission on Racial Reconciliation launches a new film program for 2026

Each month, we will focus on a different community or cultural group — in February with Black History Month, and National Irish American Month, followed by other themes throughout the year that highlight the many races, ethnicities, and traditions that shape our shared life.

Each film will be accompanied by discussion questions designed to help participants engage in open, respectful dialogue about race, identity, and the lived experiences of others. Our goal is to expand our understanding of the diversity present in our nation and local communities, deepening our bonds of empathy and reconciliation. Join us on **February 19, and the 3rd Thursday of every month, at 5:30 pm in the Garden Room**.

Burn Ban Fails to Dampen Epiphany Fun

A parish wide burn ban put an end to the annual burning of the greens this year, but Epiphany still lit up the Parish Hall with food and fun.

After a Eucharist in the Chapel everyone was welcomed to the Parish Hall for the Grilled Cheese Man food truck and King Cake.

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

February 1

The flowers on the High Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Paula Minor Coleman, Rowena Cowan Minor, Ruth Kennemer, Genevieve Davis Younker, Edwin Carroll Minor, Joseph Francis Loftus, Richard Davis McDougall, and Patricia Anne O'Brien.

The flowers on the Chapel Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of The Very Rev. William Patrick Douthitt, J. Michael Douthitt, Mr. & Mrs. John L. Douthitt, Mr. & Mrs. George P. Whitener, and Gayle Shaw.

February 8

The flowers on the High Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Dr. Bill Bickham, MD.

The flowers on the Chapel Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Edwin Earl Jones and Claude Eldred Drumm, Jr., and in celebration of the birthday of Reid Allen Jones.

February 15

The flowers on the High Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of these founders of St. Matthias Episcopal Church: Marie & Emmett Haddad, Demitri & Sandra Haddad, Isabel & Ellis Barkett, Olga & Elias Thomas, Joan Thomas Mack, Marjorie & Charles Bradley, Sr., Charles Bradley, and Gregg Bradley.

The flowers on the Chapel Altar are given to the glory of God and in celebration of the wedding anniversary of Susie & Scott Crichton.

February 22

The flowers on the High Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Ray A. Barlow, Ray Allan Barlow, Jr., John Wallace Lloyd, Pauline & Bill Barlow, and Nelle & Jim Aimer.

DEATHS

Rest Eternal grant to them, O Lord; and let light perpetual shine upon them.

Lottie McGuire, on January 2, 2026.

Susan Strother, on January 3, 2026.

Emilie Anne Ostendorff, mother of **Tom Ostendorff** and aunt of **Dee Peterson**, on February 24, 2026.

Loren McClelland, son of **Kimberly & Jim McClelland**, on January 25, 2026.

May their souls, and the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

ST. MARK'S WORK OUT

Come join a group that rises early to exercise in the mornings with short runs, barbell workouts, and calisthenics.

5:30 - 6:15 am Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday
Above 45 degrees - Workout outside.
Below 45 degrees - Workout in the gym.

Necessary equipment onsite.

Call Dean Johnson in the office for more information.

Community Ministries

"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matt. 25:40)

Did you know that the Vestry of St. Mark's allocates over $50,000 per year to support local agencies and ministries who serve the poor and needy? Your pledges to the St. Mark's budget support over a dozen organizations in Shreveport and Caddo Parish whose missions are to assist those in need. The Community Ministries Committee meets once a month to consider requests from organizations such as Gingerbread House, Jewel House, the MLK Health Center, and the Caddo Council on Aging. The Committee reviews each request for funding and works to ensure that the organizations that St. Mark's supports will faithfully and carefully use the Cathedral's funds to assist the least of our brothers and sisters. Some members of the Community Ministries Committee have served faithfully for many years and have a depth of knowledge about the various agencies and how our parish has supported them. In the coming months, the Community Ministries Committee will share brief descriptions of the various ministries you support through your contributions to St. Mark's.

Adult Christian Formation

9:30 a.m.

9:30 a.m. **The New Testament – N.T. Wright**
Dean Alston Johnson / *Ministry Center Garden Room*

9:30 a.m. **Epiphany: The Season of Glory by Fleming Rutledge**
Fr. Thomas Nsubuga / *Library*

Special Guest Lecturer Coming on February 7-8

Please mark your calendars for **February 7-8** as we will welcome ***The Reverend Robert Childers*** who is the North American head of the Community of the Cross of Nails. Robert will be our guest speaker and preacher, as well as share with us about the work of The Community of the Cross of Nails throughout the world. We are planning to have some time with him on Saturday, February 7, in the Garden Room where we can hear a bit of Robert's journey, and visit about the current and future work of the Community of the Cross of Nails at St. Mark's. We hope that you will plan to join us.

Children's Christian Formation

Nursery (newborn to K3 - 3 years old by September 30th)
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 pm
First floor of Parish building next to Catechesis Atriums

9:30 am Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
First floor of Parish Building – Rooms 105 & 106

Level I Atrium (K-3 – Kindergarten)

Level II Atrium (1st – 3rd grade)

9:30 – 10:30 am Sunday school (4th – 5th grade)
Second floor of Parish building in the old nursery location

9:30 – 10:30 am Sunday school (6th-8th grade)
Ministry Center Youth Lounge

9:30 – 10:30 am Sunday school (9th-12th grade)
Ministry Center Youth Room

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

FEBRUARY 1
Jeffrey Brainard
Stan Hancock
Joy Ratcliff
Taylor Love
Christine Tharpe

2
Lennis Elston
Matt Locke
Brooke Shemwell

3
Bettie Hastings
Laurie Bijou
Benjamin Love

4
Marilyn Kirkland
Scotty Denhollem
Candace Higginbotham
Kyle McInnis
Rose Eldredge

5
Marsha Friedrich
Dalton Bijou
Ashley Jackson
Bryan Gibbs

6
Sandy Dean
Ashley Kisla
Ashley McConnell

7
Watterson Young
K. Michael Kilcline
Kathryn Jackson
David Culver

8
Marion Hernandez

9
Gwenn Coley
Jake Stroud
Jamie Eagles

10
D. Wesley Attaway
Gaines Harris
Morgan Ersoff
Colin Carter
Elizabeth Gore

11
Kim Kayser
Madison Ersoff

12
Lynn Poole
Spencer Hardtner
Lory Tubbs
Caffery Brown
Austin Sullivan
Caitlin FitzGerald

13
Mary Stari
Zach Carter
Michael Paul Ameen
William Stroud
Jennifer McGimsey

14
Lee Smith
Caroline Schoonover
John White
Elizabeth Vanderberg
Reid Jones
Camille Hannigan

15
Reade Linam
Dare Johnson
Anita Berg
Kamarie Childs
David Drummond
Virginia Elberson

16
Alexander Schoonover
Kip Porter
Stella Porter
Robert Walter

17
Catherine Humphrey
Karen Kennedy

18
Twylla Seaman
Abbie McCord
Chelsea Ogoke

19
Mary Jo Kayser
Holli Hennessy
Layne LeBleu
Michael Ameen

20
Dan Herndon
Fran Hewitt

21
Maddie Smith
Carol Anne Caraway
Gaffney Nelson
Mario Villafuerte
Don Huguley
Thomas Nsubuga

22
Denee Locke
Carson Massad
Ella Bylsma
Karla Querbes
Ford Gillen
Benjamin Johnson

23
Pede Adams
Jay Crooms
Melissa Harris
Nicole Cotter
Frances Jenkins

24
Cass Gaiennie
Deanna Kamphius
Anna Sanderson
Catherine Allen
William Guthrie

25
Leigh Ann O'Brien
Suzanne Otto
Henry Hill

26
Hugh Walmsley
Danielle Dean
Mary-Hallie Merckle

27
Jon Q=Petersen
Thompson Berry
Donna Touchstone
Samantha Powers
Corey Smith

28
Caroline Reeks
Rowen Guthikonda
Caroline Pugh

Members of the Vestry of St. Mark's Cathedral

Lisa Love, Senior Warden – Dan Koruna, Junior Warden – Patrick Caraway, Treasurer – John Reeks, Chancellor

2026	2027	2028	2029
David Drummond	Michael Ameen	Lloyd Brown	Megan Campbell
Paul Guidry	Erin Dicharry	Matt Coady	Ginny Murphy
Val Irion	Catherine Evans	Jonathan Davis	Clay Nelson
Reid Jones	Kathryn Gaiennie	Laura Ashley Overdyke	Dee Peterson
John Turnage	Stephen Kneip	Adam West	Matthew Smitherman

The Rt. Rev. Jacob W. Owensby
(Bishop of Western Louisiana)
bishopjake@epiwla.org

The Very Rev. Alston Johnson
(Dean)
abjohnson@stmarkscathedral.net

The Rev. Thomas Nsubuga
(Sub-Dean)
thomas@stmarkscathedral.net

The Rev. Paul Martin (Priest Associate)
paul@stmarkscathedral.net

Jesus Bulnes
(Hispanic Ministry Coordinator)
hispanicministrysmc@gmail.com

Ely Bulnes (School Chaplain)
ebulnes@smc.school

Derrick Meador
(Organist and Choirmaster)
derrick@stmarkscathedral.net

Amy Garsee
(Christian Education and EYC Director)
amy@stmarkscathedral.net

Lisa Bingham (Financial Office Manager)
lisa@stmarkscathedral.net

Bess Maxwell (Administrative Assistant)
bess@stmarkscathedral.net

Priscilla McLean (Calendaring)
priscilla@stmarkscathedral.net

Beth Reeks
(Minister for Pre-K Children's Programs)
preschool.beth@gmail.com

Mark Deverts (Sexton)
mark@stmarkscathedral.net

St. Mark's Cathedral (Episcopal)
908 Rutherford Street
Shreveport, LA 71104

(318) 221-3360
Fax: (318) 424-8427
www.stmarkscathedral.net

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Shreveport, LA
Permit No. 15