

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHAPEL

MAGNOLIA SPRINGS, ALABAMA

2022 PARISH PROFILE



St Paul's Episcopal Chapel has been a cornerstone of the Magnolia Springs, Alabama community since 1902. The beautiful American Gothic structure is listed on both the Alabama State and the National Registers of Historic Places. It sits at the head of live-oak-canopied Oak Street next to the Magnolia Springs Community Hall, which has been a hub of community life since it was built in 1894.

St. Paul's congregation has a deep appreciation for the chapel's history and Episcopal traditions. Our congregation can be described as a welcoming and supportive group. We are small-enough to know and care for one another and large-enough to be a significant asset to our community through outreach.



Magnolia Springs is located on US Highway 98 between Fairhope (which is 16 miles to the northwest) and Foley (which is 6 miles to the east) at the junction of Baldwin County Road 49. Magnolia Springs was incorporated as a town in 2006, but an organized and relatively affluent community has existed here since the 1800s.

The Magnolia River (part of the Weeks Bay Watershed and named an Outstanding Alabama Water for its purity) flows through the town, with two public access points for fishing and canoe/kayak launching. Residents along the "River Route" receive their USPS mail by boat on the only year-round water delivery route in the USA.

According to the 2020 census, 811 people live within the Magnolia Springs town limits, but around 6000 people live within 3 miles of the chapel.



St Paul's Episcopal Chapel

[Website](#)

Located at 14755 Oak Street,
Magnolia Springs, Alabama 36555

For more information about
Magnolia Springs, visit
townofmagnoliasprings.org

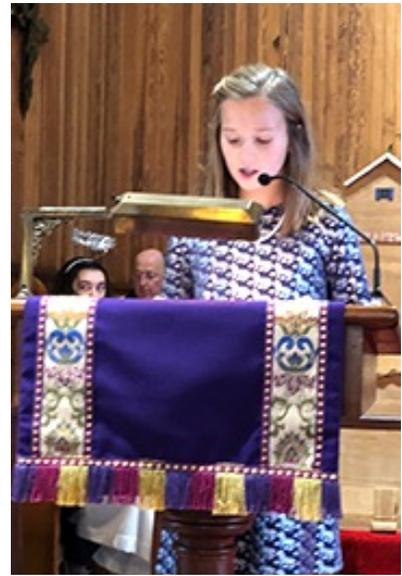
Worship and Service Times

St. Paul's celebrates the Eucharist twice on Sunday and once each Wednesday, typically using Rite II, as well as the traditional program of Holy Week, Easter, Advent, and Christmas services.

Service times are 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. on Sunday and 10 a.m. on Wednesday.

The Sunday 10:30 a.m. service offers a full music program, including a choir. The service at 8:30 a.m. does not include hymns; however, there is organ/piano accompaniment for the processional, communion, and recessional. The 10 a.m. Wednesday Service does not include hymns.

Since the Covid pandemic began, the 10:30 a.m. service has been livestreamed via [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). A link to the sermon is also provided through the weekly *Fishnet* newsletter.



Lay Ministries

Members of the congregation serve as Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEMs) and Lay Readers, with the LEMs also serving as acolyte and crucifer for some services. In March, 2017 an acolyte program began for youth in the church, beginning with two participants. Members also participate through the altar guild, the flower guild, ushering, and the choir.

Music

Music at St. Paul's is traditional, accompanied by organ and piano. Our choir ranges in number from 2 to 8 members. We employ an organist who also directs the choir. The parish also has an acoustic group that supports the music program.

Christian Education

We offer Sunday School classes for both adults and children/youth. Children participate in Godly Play, with older youth helping with the younger. Each year, they work together to present a Christmas pageant.

Adult Sunday School resumed in January 2022, led by two congregants and is well-attended. The current topic is a study of Paul and Galatians. Examples of past studies include *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters* by N. T. Wright (we studied the section on Philippians), *John: The Gospel of Light and Life* by Adam Hamilton, and *The Story*, led by our Deacon on Wednesdays, and by a congregant on Zoom on Thursdays.

For the past three years, St. Paul's has hosted an Education for Ministry class. The group of eight participants and trained mentor, Elizabeth Kennington, meet weekly on Tuesday nights (currently via Zoom).

We have held Vacation Bible School since 2016, attended by approximately 14 children on average.

Staff

In addition to a full-time rector, the paid part-time staff of the Parish includes:

- Organist
- An Administrator, who handles communication and development.
- Grounds keeping and a book keeper are handled by a paid service company.
- A deacon, who assists the Rector with outreach ministry and pastoral care.
- Our Treasurer is a volunteer position.

Physical Facilities

The chapel was completed in 1902. The building was expanded in 2002 with the addition of a large parish hall and office suite. Spaces include a lobby/library, a vesting room, sacristy with storage, a nursery, a Godly Play classroom, two offices, two storage rooms, a conference room, and a commercial grade kitchen adjacent to the parish hall. The chapel recently added a porte cochere at the rear of the chapel for covered, handicapped access. The shared parking lot behind the church and community center contains about 35 parking spaces. There is also a beautiful memorial garden on the west side of the property.

Programs

Outreach is an important part of the ministry at St. Paul's. In addition to worship and education, St. Paul's carries on a number of service and outreach programs, which are listed below in the results of the parish survey. Our after-service meals—both breakfast and a snack/lunch—are an opportunity both to welcome visitors and to get to know one another better. Our annual Speckled Trout Fishing Tournament in the fall is a successful fundraiser that brings together people who might not otherwise come into contact with the chapel to experience the friendliness and fellowship here. St. Paul's plays an active role in assisting the Magnolia Springs Elementary School with needs, from food for snacks, to clothing, to backpacks, to volunteering within classrooms. Joining with the community in the Magnolia Springs Independence Day parade and other community events are other ways we engage in fellowship. Our many other programs reach out in various ways, including Caring Cooks who prepare meals for sick or post-surgical parishioners, giving backpacks filled with school supplies to children, and contributing to the Ecumenical Ministries Food Pantry.



The Parish Survey

Understanding the thoughts and feelings of our members

In January 2022, we administered a survey to congregants on a number of topics;

- their reasons for first coming to and then remaining at St. Paul's
- their participation in parish programs over the past three years
- how well informed they felt about four aspects of parish life
- what qualities they would like to see in our new rector
- some demographic, attendance, distance, and background questions

Currently, St. Paul's has 160 adult communicants and an average Sunday attendance of 70 (in person). We received 72 responses to the survey.

I. Here are the characteristics of the respondents:

- 14% of the respondents do not identify as Episcopalian but attend St. Paul's • 19% have been Episcopalian 5 years or less • 8% for 6-10 years • 3% for 11-20 years • 17% for 21-30 years • 39% for 31+years.
- 38% have been attending St. Paul's for 4 years or less • 39% for 5-9 years • 14% for 10-17 years • 8% for 18-29 years • 1% for 30+ years.
- Regarding age of the respondents, 8% are 40-54 • 46% are 55-69 • 39% are 70-80 • 7% are 81 or older.
- 90% typically attend church in-person • 10 % watch on Facebook.
- 33% of respondents are male • 67% are female.
- 3% of respondents have children/grandchildren 1-5 years old who regularly attend St. Paul's • 12% 6-12 years old • 85% do not have children or grandchildren who regularly attend.
- 56% attend services every Sunday • 36% attend 1-3 times a month • 7% attend intermittently throughout the year • 1% do not attend services at St. Paul's.
- 41% live within 5 miles of the chapel • 19% live between 6 and 10 miles • 19 % live between 11 and 15 miles • 21% live between 16 and 22 miles.
- 94% are residents in the area year-round • 3% reside in the area during certain months of the year • 3% reside here at various times throughout the year.

II. We asked respondents if they would attend different styles of worship if offered, such as contemporary, contemplative prayer, evensong or others?

- 15% extremely likely
- 19% very likely
- 38% somewhat likely
- 24% not very likely
- 4% not at all likely

III. We asked if respondents would alter their attendance patterns to support additional service times such as Sunday afternoons Saturday or Wednesday evenings.

- 17% extremely likely
- 22% very likely
- 33% somewhat likely
- 24% not very likely
- 4% not likely at all

IV. Our respondents selected the following as their reasons for attending to St. Paul's:

- Welcoming environment
- Clergy
- Sermons
- Location
- Liturgy

V. We asked what ministries and activities respondents had been involved in during the last five years. St. Paul's is a very active congregation, with all selecting at least 3 activities.

- 97% Attend worship services
- 68% Magnolia School support
- 57% Contribute to Ecumenical Ministries
- 44% Trout Tournament
- 38% Community events
- 38% Prepare after service meals
- 36% Usher
- 29% Attend Sunday school
- 21% Vacation Bible School
- 19% Choir/Music
- 18% Lector/LEM
- 17% Altar Guild
- 15% Wednesday Bible Study/Healing service
- 14% Caring Cooks
- 11% Christmas Pageant
- 8% Wedding liaison
- 8% Children attend Godly Play
- 3% Lay Eucharist visitor
- 3% Manage prayer list
- 1% Sunday school teacher
- 1% Shawls (prayer and baby)

VI. We asked how well informed they felt about:

a. St. Paul's services, meetings, volunteer opportunities, and activities?

- 82% Informed
- 18% Somewhat informed

b. the parish's financial status and needs?

- 32% Informed
- 39% Somewhat informed
- 28% Not informed
- 1% Not interested

c. policy decisions, such as vestry actions?

- 24% Informed
- 44% Somewhat informed
- 32% Not informed

VII. We asked their opinions about the relative importance of parts of church life.

- 95% of respondents said the Eucharist and the Sacraments were extremely or very important.
- 93% of respondents said communicating the Gospel in sermons was extremely or very important
- 93% of respondents said being active in community outreach was extremely or very important
- 92% of respondents said incorporating new members in to church life was extremely or very important
- 92% of respondents said developing spiritual growth was extremely or very important
- 89% of respondents said pastoral ministry was extremely or very important
- 69% of respondents said Christian adult education was extremely or very important
- 68% of respondents said Christian youth education was extremely or very important

VIII. Respondents ranked the following topics in order of importance to them personally.

Rank	Choices
1* Highest	Worship/spiritual growth
2*	Adult education/activities/fellowship
3*	Financial stability/budget/stewardship
4	Pastoral care
5	Outreach (within the community and dioceses)
6	Aging/declining membership
7	Increasing membership
8	Youth education and activities
9 Lowest	Facility maintenance and administration

IX. We asked what the three most important qualities respondents expect the rector to have.

Rank	Choices
1* Highest	Creates a sense of community within the congregation
2*	Presents inspiring, articulate preaching
3*	Encourages and supports St Paul's ministries
4	Leads others toward spiritual growth
5	Supports lay leadership ministries
6	Provides pastoral care (hospital, elder facilities, home visits)
7	Helps parishioners and family deal with personal crisis
8	Welcomes the diversity and inclusion of all people
9 Lowest	Fosters awareness about community issues, needs, social issues

X. We asked what the 3 most important leadership and administrative qualities would respondents like to see in the new rector.

Rank	Choices
1* Highest	Effectively administers and manages the parish
2*	Recruits and incorporates new members into church life
3*	Takes a lead role in resolving conflicts
4	Focuses on stewardship and financial responsibility
5	Participates in adult enrichment programs
6	Builds and works with Christian adult programs
7	Builds and works with Christian youth programs
8	Participates in community ministerial activities
9	Participates in and supports diocesan activities
10 Lowest	Keeps a regular schedule of office hours each week

XI. Respondents were asked how important having a full-time rector is to them.

- 36% extremely important
- 21% somewhat important
- 31% very important
- 12% not very important

XII. We asked the following open-ended question: In a few words: What is the most important quality or service you want from our rector?

Welcoming and friendly	Caring and compassionate	A good leader
Spiritually inspiring	Knowledgeable	An articulate preacher



In closing, we allowed space for respondents to write their own thoughts, in their own words.

- “Excellent preaching/teaching is a key, as is the likeability factor and administrative skill.”
- “St. Paul’s is part of Magnolia Springs. I feel that the rector needs to become a part of the community to help understand the congregation and their needs.”
- “A long-term relationship with the parish could bring about stability to facilitate congregational growth and to nurture. A real plus would be to find someone who has the leadership ability (charisma) to encourage the church to consider beneficial changes so as to attract a younger audience!”
- “One would hope for sermons that leave the congregation feeling loved and also responsible for sharing unconditional love with other people. I believe effective preaching and teaching is required to get people to show up every Sunday.”
- “I hope for a rector with a passion for living the Gospel. People want to invest time in work that makes a difference in the lives of others, including church family members and others in need.”
- “I think it is important for the rector to understand the congregation as it exists and not expect to make great changes immediately. However, there is a need to focus on leading change to move the congregation into its next generation.”
- “Pastoral care for church members is also part of caring for the flock and this nurturing, is absolutely required of a rector.”
- “Skills in planning and managing church resources is critical; good working relationships with the vestry is really the only way to be successful.”
- “Many of us would like a rector who is a passionate evangelist and teacher, a loving pastor, an inspiring preacher, an effective administrator and a motivational leader.”
- “One of the distinctives (sic) of St. Paul's is its diversity, specifically diversity in denominational background. In addition to "cradle Episcopalians" we have people from Baptist, Methodist, evangelical and catholic backgrounds. The new rector should be aware of and be desirous of celebrating this diversity, capitalizing on it, rather than downplaying it.”

St. Paul's Episcopal Chapel in Magnolia Springs is a vibrant and engaged church. We are seeking a rector to join and lead us as we continue in worship, spiritual growth, community, outreach and service. This position is open to part or full time with a compensation range of \$40k to \$120 k.