May 20, 2026

St. Paul's Blesses Bikes
by Kim Fry

St. Paul's, Sacramento, held its inaugural Blessing of the Bicycles on May 15, 2026. The event in the church's downtown parking lot was one of many happening in the Sacramento region as part of "May is Bike Month."

Twenty cyclists visited St. Paul's for a blessing and the sprinkling of holy water, which were performed by the Revs. Anne Slakey and Nancy Pennekamp. The attendees included downtown residents and workers, several St. Paul's members, and a group of women who rode in from Carmichael on the American River Bike Trail. Everyone who attended received a copy of the blessing, written by Rev. Anne, and a "My bike was blessed by St. Paul's" sticker.

The idea to hold the blessing came from a St. Paul's parishioner who recently endured an accident on her bicycle. She wondered how she could have her new bike blessed for safety and protection.

An online search revealed many such bicycle blessings held by churches and ecumenical groups across the U.S. and in other countries. The Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York has held large bicycle blessings inside the church for 28 years and provides a how-to guide for creating your own.

The St. Paul's vestry and clergywomen wholeheartedly agreed this would be a great event for the church. Flyers and email announcements went out to bike and transportation advocates, as well as coffee, book and bike shops across Sacramento.

Rev. Anne, a former cyclist herself, noted in her blessing a variety of hazards riders must navigate on the road, such as disappearing bike lanes, irritable drivers and wild weather. She called on God and God's angels to protect the bicycles and their riders – above, beneath, beside and all around them.

Rev. Nancy thanked attendees for their presence, for using an eco-friendly form of transportation, and for "just being outside" in nature. She also led the ritual of sprinkling the bicycles and riders with holy water using rosemary branches.

Several riders asked how often St. Paul's plans to offer bike blessings so they can bring friends and family. Brandon Watson of Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA) offered support from his organization for future events. Due to the favorable turnout and accompanying enthusiasm around its first Blessing of the Bicycles, St. Paul's members and clergy are considering how they might offer bike blessings on a continuing basis.

See more photos, a video, and a copy of the Rev. Anne's blessing here: https://tinyurl.com/4x2fwaxj

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Photos attached
01 The Rev. Anne Slakey blesses the bicycles and riders Photo by Kim Fry
02 The Rev. Nancy Pennekamp sprinkles the bicycles and riders with holy water Photo by Matt Weiser