



ST. BENEDICT'S

ST. BENEDICT'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH PARISH PROFILE

"I wanted to find a church where I felt welcomed, where I was loved for who I was...and I found that the first time I came here."

WELCOME TO ST. BENEDICT'S



We are glad that you're here learning about St. Benedict's Episcopal Church. We are a young and thriving twelve-year-old parish located in the Diocese of Atlanta, Georgia, with strong opportunities to deepen our ties with Christ and make a mark on our community.

“I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

Matthew 25:35

With a family-focused and passionate membership, our parish has grown exponentially over the last decade and has physically moved the worship space from a school gym, where we started, into a beautiful church nestled on one of the busiest streets in Smyrna, Georgia.

Our church family continues to welcome a growing collection of curious, self-identified learners, and while we have flourished, due significantly to the impressive energy and involvement of our members, we are aware of the need to expand and improve to further our mission in Christ.

With our next rector, we hope to empower and organize our lay leadership, increase community engagement, attract more families to the church and school, and strengthen membership retention and stewardship. We welcome an opportunity to discern these and other opportunities with you if you are being called to become the second rector of our parish.



“Simply put, I love St. Benedict's. When I say this is my church, I feel a swelling of emotion. I am so proud and excited to be part of this place...I feel the pride that emanates from a deep connection – almost like the pride I feel for my children.”





ST. BENEDICT'S

TWELVE YEARS IN THE MAKING

"Honestly, the time in the gym was my favorite part. It was all new and fun...everyone knew everyone. There was so much work to be done each week that everyone pitched in. No one could say 'they don't need me – someone else will do it.'"

2006:

A small group met with Bishop Neil Alexander and The Rev. Lang Lowrey to discuss the possibility of planting a church in Smyrna. Over the next year, the founding members began adult formation groups, an active youth group, and a children's ministry.

January 13, 2008:

The first Eucharist was celebrated in the Campbell Middle School gymnasium. Devoted members literally transformed the gym into a worship space, featuring a fully set altar, organ with a parish choir, vestments, sound system, and 200 individual chairs. The St. Benedict's Founder's cross, which now is hanging in our Nave, was hoisted high above the altar by a pulley system. Adult, youth, and children's formation classes were held in nearby classrooms and breakfast was served in the concession stand.

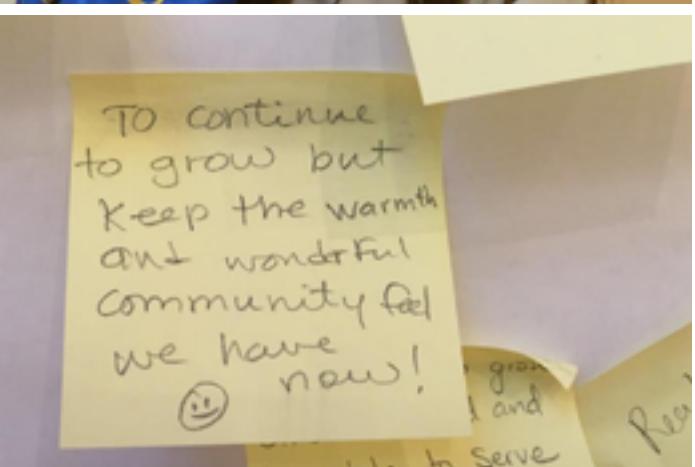
Fall 2008:

The Bishop's Committee settled on the vacant Locust Grove Baptist Church on Cooper Lake Road as the space to continue God's ministry of St. Benedict's. The building was completely renovated along with the adjoining three-story classroom building which would eventually become St. Benedict's Episcopal School.

November 1, 2009:

The first service of the permanent home of St. Benedict's was held on All Saints' Day.

"Now, we look with excitement and anticipation as St. Benedict's begins its journey into 'adulthood' and becomes an influential and vital presence in the community."



October 2010:

The Rev. Brian Sullivan was called to be the first rector of St. Benedict's.

2011:

St. Benedict's opened its doors to a local hispanic congregation in 2011. San Benedicto celebrated and worshiped with us until the diocese called them to a new location at St. Judes, Marietta, in early 2019.

2019:

The Rev. Sullivan transitioned to full-time Headmaster of St. Benedict's Episcopal School. The Rev. Claiborne Jones came to serve as interim rector while we await the completion of the call process.

2020 and beyond:

According to our recent Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) survey, St. Benedict's identified our strongest priorities as:

- Creating more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships
- Developing the spiritual generosity of the people to financially support the ministry of the church
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church

While our vital signs are strong, we feel like we are presently adrift, seeking solid guidance to help us create a vision that will lead the laity of St. Benedict's into the future. Our hope is that our new rector will possess the critical abilities of relevant, inspirational preaching and strategic leadership to help us achieve these priorities.



WORSHIP

“I like that we’re not too high church – it’s the right mix of high and low.”

Centered around the Eucharist, worship is the primary energizing force that has formed us into the Body of Christ at St. Benedict's. We hold two Sunday services, at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Both services use Rite II; the first service is held quietly and without musical accompaniment, thus offering a more contemplative experience. The more populated second service is celebrated with full musical support.

The laity support these services both by their participation as the congregation and also as choir members, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, ushers, acolytes, vergers, and Altar and Flower Guild members.

We hope to continue the trend of increased lay leadership and find ways for members to connect and utilize their talents and interests so they will be motivated to be more active.

SPECIAL SERVICES WE OFFER THROUGHOUT THE LITURGICAL YEAR

- Lessons and Carols in Advent
- Christmas Eve Services, including a service featuring the children's pageant
- The Nativity of Our Lord on Christmas Day
- The Ash Wednesday liturgy with the imposition of ashes
- The Maundy Thursday liturgy with foot washing
- Stations of the Cross before the noon Good Friday liturgy, followed by a second celebration of the liturgy in the evening
- The Easter Vigil on Easter Eve
- Easter services
- Youth Sunday
- Blessing of the Backpacks
- Blessing of the Animals
- Episcopal School Sunday
- A Remembrance of Beloved Deceased in the All Saints' Celebration
- Feast of St. Benedict

“To sing is to pray twice.”

St. Augustine

We are very fortunate to have a vibrant music program led by an accomplished professional musician who acts as both organist and adult choir director. This choir, which is supported by instrumentalists, organ, and piano, helps inspire and lift our 10:30 a.m. Sunday worship service, as well as extra services throughout the liturgical year. Song selections thoughtfully reflect weekly scripture and enable the congregation to connect with Christ's word on a deeper level throughout the service. Under the aegis of “Friends of Music,” the adult choir has begun offering occasional concert/dinner evenings as enrichment for the congregation and community.



We also enjoy three children's choirs, ranging from four years to eighth grade. The children learn to read music and use percussion instruments as they advance through the choir levels, eventually performing with handbells.

In the future, we hope to continue to develop our music program, working closely with talented musicians, and to broaden our musical outreach in the community

MUSIC



CHRISTIAN FORMATION AND EDUCATION

Our congregation views Christian formation and education as the cornerstone in helping us discern God's call for our lives. It is where we come to be fed and to know that each of us is called to grow into the full stature of Christ. Educational opportunities are offered on Sundays and throughout the week for members of all ages.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Helping our children grow in their relationship with God is a strong focus for our young, family-centric community. Educational programming is offered for many age ranges:

Godly Play

A program for children in Kindergarten through second grade, Godly Play invites us to "wonder" together about Bible stories and parables.

Living the Good News

This curriculum allows children in grades 3-5 to participate in a more in-depth study of the Gospel and engage in related arts and crafts activities.

Spirit Week

This week-long summer formation opportunity is for all children in our community ages preschool through 5th grade, and uses crafts, games, outreach projects, storytelling, and music to explore God's love.

EYC/Youth

St. Benedict's 6th - 12th graders meet every Tuesday night to share pizza, fellowship, and spiritual discussion. The EYC regularly plans and participates in mission trips. The Youth also meet on Sunday mornings for Bible study, outreach activities and fun.

"This is our community – where we raise our children. We are family."

Children's Chapel

Every Sunday, Children's Chapel allows all of our children from ages 4-10 to participate in the gospel through a lectionary-based lesson using picture books. Children also sing songs and write down their prayers for the week, which are read aloud as part of the offering after the children have re-joined the congregation.



ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Adult formation is held between the 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Sunday services. These classes explore a variety of new and rotating topics, including Jesus in the News, Creation Stories, and Vocation Stories.

St. Benedict's also offers an Adult Inquirer's Class for those curious about the Episcopal Church, those wishing to be received or confirmed from another tradition, or those simply looking for a refresher. We previously enjoyed an Education For Ministry (EFM) class, which we'd love to revitalize in partnership with our new rector.

Our hope is to find ways to deepen engagement around these programs to ensure that all are benefitting from the spiritual learning and leadership St. Benedict's can provide.

During the week there are a number of adult formation and education opportunities including:

Weekly Men's Bible Study

This men's group convenes to discuss the weekly Gospel reading and how we experience God in our daily lives.

Weekly Women's Bible Study

Under the capable leadership of our deacon, Edith Woodling, the Women's Bible Study group has selected various books of the Bible for in-depth study.

Mom's Bible Study

This group of women meets monthly and provides an opportunity for mothers of young children to socialize and seek God's message for their lives and families.

Daughters of the King

The members undertake a Rule of Life, incorporating the Rule of Prayer and the Rule of Service.

Monthly Book Group

This group chooses and discusses a variety of books, sometimes meeting with a local author to discuss their book.

Seasonal formation opportunities

St. Benedict's offers several seasonal programs, such as Wednesday night Lenten studies.



OUTREACH

We see outreach as our obligation as Christians to follow in Jesus's example to help the poor, minister to the needy and ensure that everyone we meet feels valued and loved. Those who participate in outreach at St. Benedict's serve as the hands and feet of Jesus and in the process are reminded of their own personal blessings and the many gifts that God has made available to them.



“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people.”

Galatians 6:10

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“We have an obligation to share the good news of the church with the greater community.”



Path To Shine®

This mentoring program, connecting adult volunteers with elementary school children, began at St. Benedict's in 2010. These adults spend time listening, tutoring, reading stories, and expanding worldviews while encouraging the children to stay in school until they graduate high school. The program has grown to 18 affiliate locations across Georgia working with more than 190 children. St. Benedict's sponsors two of those locations.

Path To Shine is a Jubilee Ministry of the Episcopal Church and also a self-sustaining ministry of St. Benedict's, which includes fundraising and donation events such as the Back to School Backpack Drive and the Christmas Angel Tree. A highlight of the Parish's year is the Ugly Pants Golf Tournament, which raised over \$34,000 (net), which was shared equally between Path To Shine and other St. Benedict's mission and outreach efforts.

Church of the Common Ground

Once a month, St. Benedict's works with Church of the Common Ground, an Episcopal Church (without walls) in the Atlanta Diocese that serves the city's homeless population. Our parishioners make about 75 sack lunches and take them to downtown Atlanta, participate in the worship service, hand out lunches, and commune with their members.

Holy Comforter

Three times per year, parishioners from St. Benedict's prepare and serve meals for members of the Holy Comforter Episcopal Church, 60% of whom are living with mental illness.

El Refugio

Our parish collects gift cards to help families staying at El Refugio, a place of respite for family members of immigration detainees. Members also travel to Stewart, Georgia to minister to detainees and their families.

Support Groups

Each week St. Benedict's serves as a meeting facility for three anonymous groups including Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous.

Our hope is to educate church members about outreach opportunities and look for new ways to use our collective time, talent, and treasure. There is also an opportunity to expand our outreach in our local Smyrna community. While an Outreach Committee is not something in place at present, such a program would enhance and expand St. Benedict's inreach and outreach offerings.

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A

welcoming community sharing and
spreading Christ's love through worship,
education, fellowship, and outreach

- Mission Statement, St. Benedict's Episcopal Church



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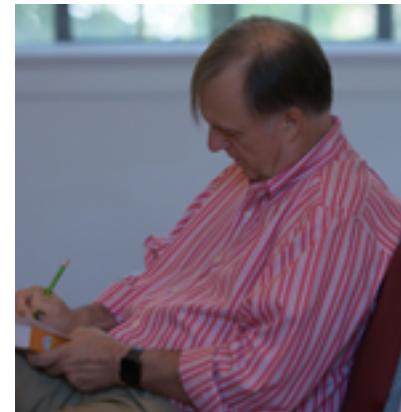
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PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral care is a central part of the St. Benedict's community; however, it has historically been a pastor-driven endeavor. During the parish's leadership transition, Deacon Edith Woodling has engaged the lay members to take on an increased role in this vital and valued outreach. Certain ministries, like our Greeting Card Ministry, are conducted entirely by laypeople. There has also been a recent move to license additional Eucharistic visitors.

Both clergy and lay people make home and hospital visits to members in times of illness or need, providing valuable comfort and companionship. We maintain several prayer lists, including published, non-published and long-term prayer lists. Certain aspects of our pastoral care are assumed by groups, such as recent efforts by the mother's bible study to provide meal trains for new parents. The common thread in all of these endeavors is a community effort to care for each other throughout our lives and spiritual journeys in Christ.

Our hope is that in the future, our rector will continue to empower the laity to find ways to meet the pastoral needs of our community.



“It’s all of us who make up our church community that is St. B’s.”



One of Money Magazine’s “50 Best Places to Live in America”

Incorporated in 1872, Smyrna is a lively and beautiful community, which boasts revitalized downtown areas and 33 acres of green space, including jogging trails, golf courses, parks (one of which is directly adjacent to our church!) and other community areas for Smyrna's 56,000 residents to congregate. Smyrna's demographic profile reflects a young and well-educated population, with a strong mix of families, baby boomers, and young adults.

Smyrna's population has been steadily growing, with a 53% population increase in the last 15 years. Smyrna keeps its highly engaged population busy with a full schedule of festivals, events, camps and entertainment, such as a spring/summer "Food Truck Tuesday", Annual Jonquil Festival, summer concert series, holiday carnivals and more.

Smyrna, GA Demographics	
Less than 9th Grade	3.28%
9th to 12th Grade	4.04%
High School	14.47%
Some College	18.29%
Associates Degree	6.17%
Bachelors Degree	32.05%
Graduate Degree	21.70%
Total Adults	43,214*
Median Age	34.9
Male	34.7
Female	35.1

*5,329 adults are seniors



LEADERSHIP & FACILITIES

St. Benedict's Episcopal School is led by the head of school and an appointed board of trustees. The rector, a vestry member and at least two church communicants in good standing hold seats on the board of trustees. The lease agreement between the church and school governs matters such as sharing and usage of space, alterations, utilities, maintenance, janitorial services and equipment, property management, security, property taxes, and the servicing of all debt obligations on the buildings and land that they both occupy, including other construction loans.

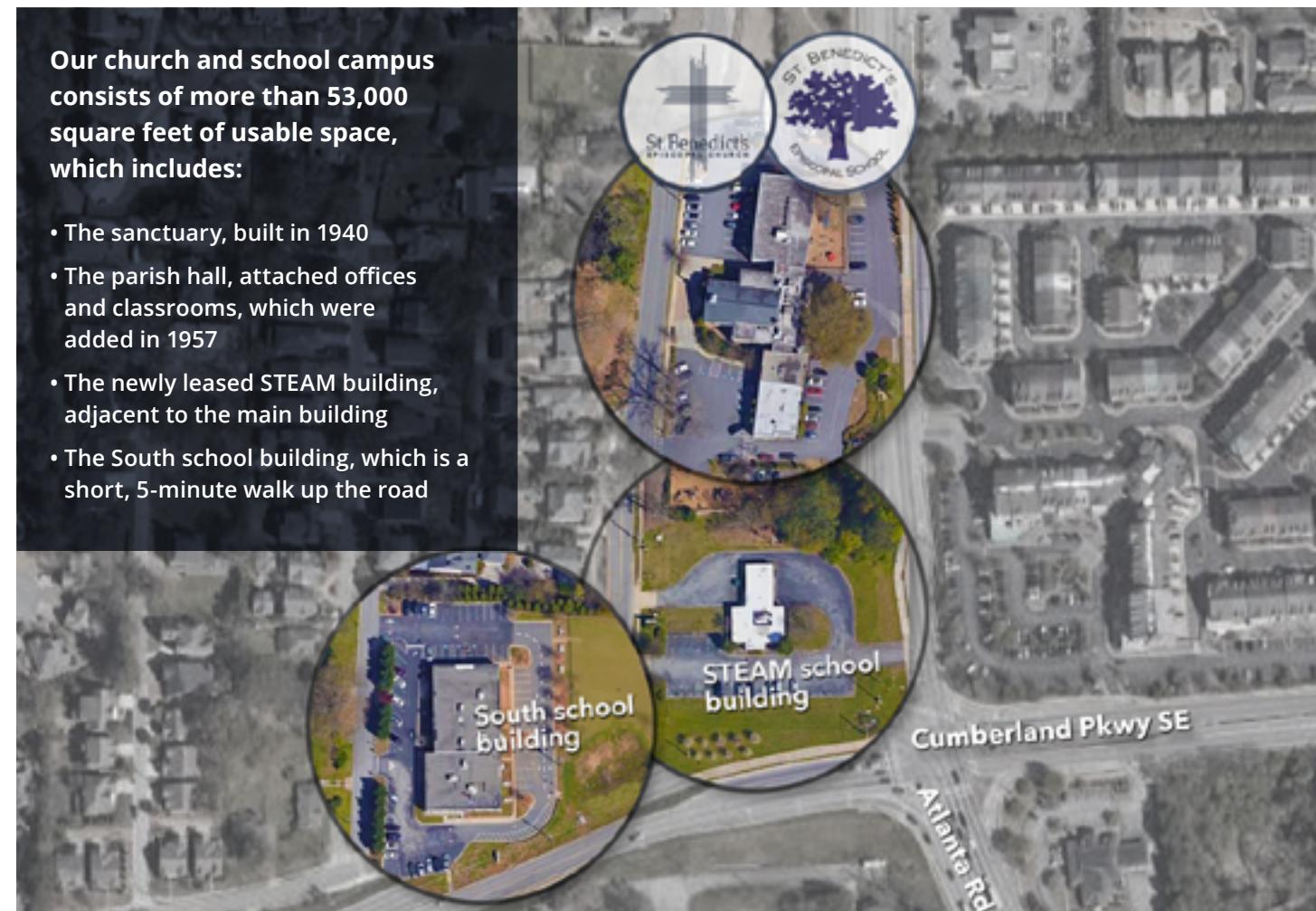
St. Benedict's church is guided by our leadership team, including the rector, senior warden, junior warden and the rest of the vestry. In its history, the parish has also had an associate rector. A parishioner-led finance committee, chaired by the treasurer, oversees important financial aspects of parish operations.

Our hope is to further expand our campus and find ways to utilize our space more efficiently to better commune with each other and Christ.



Our church and school campus consists of more than 53,000 square feet of usable space, which includes:

- The sanctuary, built in 1940
- The parish hall, attached offices and classrooms, which were added in 1957
- The newly leased STEAM building, adjacent to the main building
- The South school building, which is a short, 5-minute walk up the road



FINANCES & STEWARDSHIP

At just twelve years young, St. Benedict's has both the energy and potential to grow in relation to God and as a community. Financially, net positive income in 2019 and previous years has enabled us to maintain cash reserves of five to six months of expenses.

Financials for the previous two years are shown below. This year's pledge numbers are lower due to the loss of San Benedicto, the Hispanic congregation, as well as the clergy transition period. Contributions received from San Benedicto in 2019 totaled \$25,851. The Diocese found a permanent home for this congregation in June 2019.

The budget for 2020 has been established in the amount of \$588,799.

Our hope is that the new rector motivates membership engagement, helps bring past members back into the fold, and inspires a stability that spurs joyful giving to increase pledges.

ATTENDANCE	Average Sunday	Easter Sunday
2015	337	985
2016	375	1,067
2017	336	844
2018	297	911
2019	225	891

“Technically your money is coming out of your wallet, but spiritually your money is coming out of your heart.”

GIVING	Total pledging units	Total pledged	Average pledge
2015	194	\$421,665	\$2,174
2016	225	\$486,885	\$2,164
2017	192	\$506,398	\$2,637
2018	188	\$552,772	\$2,940
2019	141	\$521,330	\$3,697
2020	133	\$503,999	\$3,789

BALANCE SHEET	2018	2019
Assets		
Property, net of depreciation	\$4,336,948	\$4,275,223
Cash & cash equivalents	732,969	792,013
Receivables & other assets	83,990	43,961
Total assets	\$5,153,907	\$5,111,197
Liabilities		
Long-term debt	\$4,949,219	\$4,839,037
Current portion of debt	104,853	110,182
Payables & other liabilities	133,611	61,315
Total liabilities	\$5,187,683	\$5,010,534
Net Assets	<u>(\$33,776)</u>	<u>\$100,663</u>

INCOME STATEMENT	2018	2019
Revenues		
Pledge contributions	\$530,093	\$509,036
Non-pledge contribution	61,772	80,210
Other income	73,170	69,352
Total income	\$665,035	\$658,598
Expenses		
Staff payroll	\$158,242	\$192,955
Clergy compensation	141,400	149,318
Operating expenses	157,228	139,397
Diocesan pledge	56,495	58,315
Outreach & parish life	40,797	14,236
Total expenses	\$554,162	\$554,221



ST. BENEDICT'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

Founded in 2008 with 69 students, St. Benedict's Episcopal School now lovingly serves 500 pre-K through 8th grade students, providing a high-quality, Christian education in the Smyrna area. Our school chaplain provides weekly worship for all students, with services allowing for religious diversity from leaders of other faiths and families presenting their faith traditions.

The [five-year strategic plan](#) is focused on expanding space, academic programs, such as STEAM, and continued financial stability. Awards include the Best School in the Vinings/Smyrna area, the Georgia Independent School Association Teacher of the Year, and the Mayor's Annual Education Awards for outstanding faculty, staff, and volunteers.

St. Benedict's follows the best practices of the National Association of Episcopal Schools ([NAES](#)), National Association of Independent Schools ([NAIS](#)), and accreditation standards of SACS/Advanced Ed/Southern Association of Independent Schools ([SAIS](#)).

For current events, find us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#).

Our hope is that our new rector continues the strong relationship between the church and school.



Vision

St. Benedict's Episcopal School graduates scholars who are confident, courageous, compassionate leaders, respectful of diversity and grounded in faith.



Mission

St. Benedict's Episcopal School is a school of choice for preschool through 8th grade families focused on Inspiring Learning, Nurturing Growth, and Embracing the Values of Episcopal Education.



“St. B’s is a true community of children allowed to grow and experience the world...it also provides shelter and love in times of need.”



“What we all have in common is a fierce loyalty to this place and these people as our church home.”



A word cloud centered around the word **community**, with other words related to church life and their meanings:

- sacred** (centering prayer)
- space** (retreats)
- family** (oneness, happening, pancakes, children's choir)
- helpful** (people, called, radical hospitality, location, moral compass)
- belonging** (The parade of children at the 10:30 service, way-of-life)
- vulnerability**
- uplifting** (spirit week)
- nurturing**
- youth** (giving back)
- communion** (personal)
- duty** (raising the next *Episcopalians*)
- music** (acceptance, positive impact, experience, companionship, gratifying)
- engagement** (nonjudgmental)
- service** (all night BBQ, outreach, grounding, development, meaningful)
- friendship** (singing joyfully, I belong here, prayer for others, good energy, low-key)
- contemplation** (lay leaders, promise, intimacy)
- fellowship** (fostering autonomy, diversity, acceptance, work-in-progress, passion, reflect, openness)
- learning** (being a part of the conversation, open adult spiritual discussion, meaning in service, *mindfulness*, honest, seeking, *vivacious*, *ritual*)
- school** (open-minded shrove Tuesday, spiritual family, purpose, rejuvenating, *purpose*)
- community** (inspiration, small groups, *village*, *togetherness*, *uplifting*, *joy*, *inclusive*)
- welcoming** (identity, *we don't use incense too much!*, all-in, just feels right)
- children** (work-in-progress, inspiration, listening, *it's ok to not like parts of the bible*)
- caring** (life change, continuing education, *appreciation*)
- participate** (keep challenging the status quo)



A NOTE TO OUR NEXT RECTOR

As a community, St. Benedict's parishioners have compiled the following strengths as highly desirable in our next rector:

- Preach with relevance
- Attract and retain families, children, and youth
- Motivate us to action in mission and outreach
- Deepen ties and community between the school and church
- Empower lay leadership
- Become an integral part of our community
- Help us reconnect with members who have disengaged
- Lead with vision
- Love and accept the diverse and unique congregation that is St. Benedict's

Our past leaders have each brought unique gifts and insights that have helped St. Benedict's become the parish it is today. In this time of transition, we eagerly look forward to calling a new rector who can lead us into the future with emotional energy, inspiration, and infectious enthusiasm. Our members desire to share their stories, hoping to forge an open relationship and a strong bond with our new rector.

"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God."

Acts 20:28

If you feel that God is calling you to lead the St. Benedict's community, please submit materials to the [Diocese of Atlanta's online application system](#). We look forward to getting to know you better.

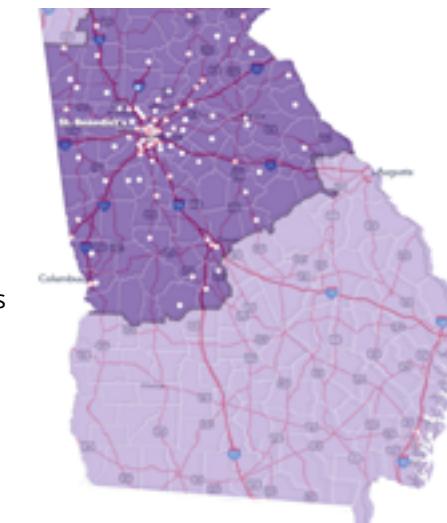
DIOCESE

The Diocese of Atlanta is a vibrant, diverse and expansive faith community, with 117 different communities focused on worshiping a living and loving God and working for a better world in the name of Jesus Christ. There are some 50,000 members in nearly 25,000 households in the 11 convocations that make up the diocese.

Our Diocesan Purpose Statement, adopted at Annual Council 2015, informs all aspects of our common life: " We challenge ourselves and the world to love like Jesus as we worship joyfully, serve compassionately, and grow spiritually."

We are a Christian community blessed with vibrance, variety and vitality. Our diocesan bishop is The Right Reverend Robert C. Wright, who was elected by the diocese in June 2012 and then ordained and consecrated Oct. 13, 2012. The Right Reverend Don A. Wimberly assists Bishop Wright in visitations.

The Offices of the Bishop are at the Cathedral of St. Philip in Atlanta. We have more than 200 clergy who are under Bishop Wright's oversight, and nearly as many who come from other dioceses, plus an abundant supply of lay ministers.



"It is a community of strangers helping strangers."

**2020 Vestry:**

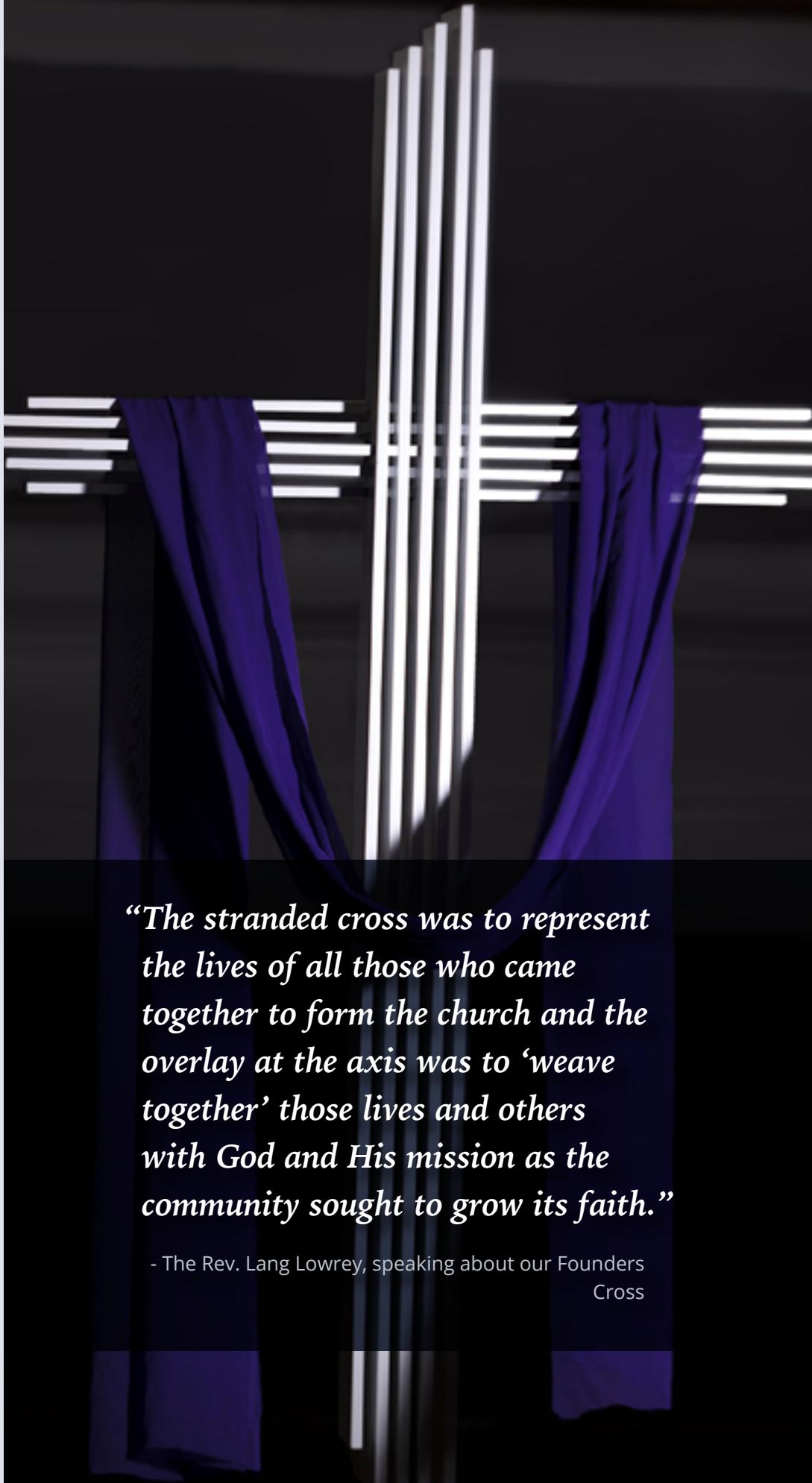
Saralee Parker, Sr. Warden
Ann Canipe, Jr. Warden
Paul Stein, Scrivener
Peggy Kessler
Gil Benjamin
Kelly McNabb
Scott Offen
Jack Sickling
Laura Bracci
Joe Thomas
Laura Alexander
Taylor Stukes
Scott Stewart, Treasurer

Clergy:

The Rev. Claiborne Jones,
Interim Rector
Edith Woodling, Deacon

Nominating Committee:

Kate Wiley, Chair
Ellen Gaffney
Tim Gould
Allen Hanahan
Phil King
Nick Loadholtes
Gary Newell
David Oliver
Travis Pietruza
Julia Searcy
Phylis Seitz
Christie Stevens
Chris DiGorgio, Chair Emeritus



“The stranded cross was to represent the lives of all those who came together to form the church and the overlay at the axis was to ‘weave together’ those lives and others with God and His mission as the community sought to grow its faith.”

- The Rev. Lang Lowrey, speaking about our Founders Cross