



**Holy Spirit Episcopal Church
Gulf Shores, Alabama
Parish Profile
May, 2014**

A Short History of Holy Spirit Episcopal Church (HSE)

On July 24, 1984, Archdeacon Sam Hardman met with a dozen Episcopalians who were either local residents or had vacation homes in Gulf Shores. They decided it was time to start an Episcopal mission, so they held a service at the Gulf Shores Community House. Area churches donated altar furnishings, prayer books and hymnals.

Almost 30 years later only four of the founders are still parishioners: Lillian, Jayne, and Donal Bemis, and Julia Donahue. Hi and Ann Gurney were among the first who joined the growing congregation.

Soon they moved to the new city theater. At the 1985 Diocesan Convention, Holy Spirit was accepted as a mission station. A vestry was elected and supply clergy served the mission until Bishop Charles F. Duvall appointed Rev. Fred Lindstrom Vicar, serving only two days a week. His first service as Vicar was Easter Sunday 1988.

Meanwhile, plans for a church had been moving along with the purchase of a five-acre parcel on Ft. Morgan Road. (The north part is undeveloped and wooded). Architect Carlton McCurry drew building plans. On Pentecost 1988, ground breaking was celebrated followed by dedication on May 14, 1989.

The church continued to grow; a full-time priest was needed. The Rev. Denis B. Baum was appointed full-time Vicar in August 1992. At the Diocesan Convention in 1994, Holy Spirit achieved parish status. The church has never received any grants from the diocese.

Soon the original building was outgrown. The rector's office was a small room off the narthex (now part of the kitchen), and the part-time assistant had a desk in a corner of the parish hall. Transepts were added to the sanctuary and an addition was built to house Sunday School,

meeting rooms, and administrative offices; its \$100,000 mortgage was paid off on January 16, 2000. Later a Memorial Garden and a Columbarium were added in the front yard of the church. Recently the Vestry developed a maintenance fund and master plan for capital projects



Altar



Memorial Garden

The Town of Gulf Shores – A Small Town with a Big Beach

Location and Demographics:

The Town of Gulf Shores was incorporated on February 12, 1957; it is located on the white, sandy beaches of the southern tip of Baldwin County, Alabama on the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. From 2004 to 2008, the population grew from 6,000 residents to just over 10,000 residents, and the number of residents has been fairly stable around 10,000 since then.

Friendly town:

Just about everyone in Gulf Shores came from someplace else, so, most people are open to welcoming newcomers. Many residents have spent time vacationing here before moving here. In its own way, Gulf Shores seems to grow on people.

Tourism Industry:

Gulf Shores is driven by the vacation industry and all of the retail and entertainment businesses that support it. As a result, there is a huge number of activities and entertainment opportunities available. Some of the big ones are: festivals (almost every weekend), golf, the Gulf State Park, shopping, really good restaurants, and of course, the beach.

While the City of Gulf Shores does have lots of visitors, it does a great job of maintaining a safe and family-friendly atmosphere. The City's website has lots of good information:

www.gulfshoresal.gov



Ariel View of
Paradise Island:

Gulf Shores, AL

A Snapshot of Holy Spirit Parish

According to the 2013 Parochial Report, Holy Spirit has 371 baptized members. Of that number, about 170 are winter members and about 160 are year-round, active members. On Easter Sunday 2014, a total of 320 people worshipped at Holy Spirit. The average age of parishioners is mid-50's. Typically, 65--75 families submit pledges. The Church has two Sunday services—8 am and 10 am, as well as a healing service with Eucharist on Wednesday evenings.

Gulf Shores/Orange Beach, AL is a beachside, resort community. As such, dress is very casual, leading Holy Spirit to give a button to visitors that reads, "It's okay to dress casual for church. Jesus did." Holy Spirit Episcopal Church is very much a Rite II church.

Holy Spirit's Outreach of God's Love

Holy Spirit Episcopal Day School www.hseds616.com

HSE's preschool is governed by a board of church members and is located in the administration building of the church. It began with two classes of 20 students total and has evolved into a thriving school with four classes of two, three, and four year-olds with care provided before and after school hours. Children learn Spanish, sign language, chapel, and a curriculum that fully prepares them for kindergarten. Typically the school is filled to capacity of 50 children with a growing waiting list. One year-old and younger day care is needed. Growth potential is only limited by space and imagination.



Older Children's
Playground

Holy Spirit Thrift Shop

The Holy Spirit Thrift Shop Outreach Ministry is managed directly by a nine-member board operating as a subordinate Parish organization according to bylaws approved by the Vestry. The ministry began in August 2007 in a small storefront, moving to a larger building in 2009, which was bought in 2010 and remodeled with a showroom of 5000 square feet plus a work area and receiving/hold area.

Workers are volunteers from HSE, winter members and others from the community with only two paid staff. Donations of clothing, furniture, books, housewares, appliances etc. are received, sorted, placed for sale, or bagged for pickup by Good Will, the local zoo, or other organizations, or discarded if completely not useable.

Financial support from the proceeds are distributed to three categories: Holy Spirit Parish General Fund, support for Episcopal ministries beyond HSE such as Camp Happy Sands, Camp Beckwith, and currently two seminarians, and support needs outside the parish, such as Christian

Service Center, South Baldwin Literacy Council, Hospice of Lower Alabama, Youth Reach Gulf Coast, Saving Grace for Women, Lighthouse and more.



Beyond direct financial support, the Thrift Shop touches many people in many diverse ways. Items are given directly to people in need, and functional, lightly used items are sold at very reasonable prices. People from all walks of life and from all over the country come to the Shop. There are interactions with people as they donate, with customers and among the volunteers. All staff work to make everyone's experience pleasant, memorable and fun! This has made Holy Spirit Parish visible and well known for many direct and indirect contributions to the community.

Christian Service Center

<http://www.cscgs.org>

In 1988, a lunch conversation between three ministers sparked the origin of the Pleasure Island Ministerial Association (PIMA). PIMA started with two goals: to unite churches to recognize important dates for the Christian community and to form a united group of congregations to help with social needs. Since 1991, the Christian Service Center (CSC) has served the Fort Morgan-Gulf Shores-Orange Beach area.

Programs offered by the CSC include Christmas Cheer for clients' children, Birthday Club for kids, Christmas Spirit for elderly or shut-ins, and Christmas dinners. The CSC also helps screen for and coordinate Meals-on-Wheels, Back-up Pantry, HSE Thrift Shop, and Camp Happy Sands.

Members of Holy Spirit support CSC with regular donations of food, funds and as volunteers. Our Thrift Shop provides clothing and household items to clients who have been given a voucher by a CSC caseworker.

Camp Happy Sands

Camp Happy Sands is an inner-county program that allows children the opportunity to attend a weeklong summer day camp. The camp is located on a beach in Perdido, FL—just over the AL line. Children experience a beach with all that goes with it—fishing, swimming, crafts, and food—in a Christian environment. In cooperation with the Christian Service Center, Holy Spirit sponsors a week at the camp. Children in Gulf Shores are picked up, transported, and returned home daily during the week. Holy Spirit volunteers provide and serve food during that week. So far, Holy Spirit has served over 100 children in this happy ministry.

Kairos and Cursillo

Holy Spirit supports both the Kairos prison ministry and Cursillo with both manpower and dollars. Although small in numbers, the Kairos supporters are devout. They have had at least one person on most weekend staffs for many years, and the church has always helped out financially. The church's Cursillo community supports each Cursillo weekend with Palanca, members on Staff or as Pilgrims and hosting Ultreyas.

Twelve-Step Groups

Holy Spirit supports, through low cost leases of meeting space, many local Twelve Step Groups. We currently have seven AA meetings, three NA meetings, one Al-Anon meeting, and one Nicotine Anonymous meeting per week. This has been a good arrangement for the Church in that it introduced the Church to these people as a safe place and a place for healing. This is another way Holy Spirit supports the local community.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer Shawl ministry began in 2009 and meets on the third Tuesday of each month. Members knit together and share fellowship. Knitters teach knitting to anyone interested in joining. The group has given away over 80 prayer shawls to friends with health problems. Also shawls have been sent to military hospitals for distribution to the wounded. When the shawls are completed, they are blessed at one of the Sunday services. A note and prayer accompany every shawl from the group.

Diocesan World Missions

Since 1993, Holy Spirit has supported the Diocesan World Missions by sending one or more members to medical and construction missions, sponsoring fund raising events for missions, and awarding grants via the Outreach Committee. From 1993 until 2005, the missions were to Guatemala. Since 2007, the missions, both medical and construction, have been to the



Dominican Republic. The construction group has acquired tools, supplies, and generators to operate a workshop that can produce mahogany furniture for a church in one week.

Holy Spirit's Internal Evangelism of God's Love

Music Ministry

Holy Spirit has a very active music ministry, including the Adult Choir (seasonally enhanced by several winter members), Youth Choir, and the Handbell Choir. All choirs are dedicated musicians devoted to leading the service music during 10:00 am worship.

Regular practice with the Youth Choristers and Youth Choir makes it possible for teens and younger children to perform several times a year. The Handbell Choir enhances worship as they ring out their beautiful tunes on special occasions. Numbers vary, but range between 12 and 18 members in each group.



Handbell Choir

Christian Education

The Adult Forum meets for 45 minutes every Sunday morning at 9:00. The topics are based on "Life in the Church" and the "Rector's Ramblings". The group is always open to new members and welcomes anyone who wishes to join.

Children's Chapel is available during the 10:00 am service September through May. The children follow their cross and their teacher out after Opening Prayer and return following the Prayers of the People. Currently Holy Spirit has two groups of children – ages 3 to 10 and 11 to 16. A Nursery is available at both Sunday Services.

Episcopal Church Women

ECW meets on the first Friday of the month at noon in the Parish Hall. Every gathering begins with a devotional given by that month's hostess and finishes with the ECW prayer. All ladies of the church are members. The objective of this organization is growth in spiritual knowledge and fellowship. Serving the church family after the death of a loved one, ECW ladies provide a reception for family and friends after the funeral or memorial service.

Examples of this year's meetings include: a potluck Christmas luncheon with a musical program, bingo with prizes from the Thrift Shop, a tea with a fashion show of outfits from the Thrift Shop and a luncheon at Ivey's restaurant followed by a tour of the Greek Orthodox Church in Malbis, AL.

Sisters in Spirit

Sisters in Spirit (SIS) Ladies Night Out is not a club or organization, but an informal gathering of women who wish to enjoy an evening out once a month with no agenda but fun, food and fellowship. It is a fellowship activity within the broader activities of the parish and ECW. All women of the parish are invited and encouraged to bring along family and friends.

The group enjoys dinner at a different area restaurant each month, sampling the wonderful cuisine of the Alabama Gulf Coast. Attendance usually ranges between 15 and 20. SIS especially assists winter and new members in getting to know each other in a more informal setting.

Men's Club

All men of the Parish are members of the HSE Men's Club, which meets in an area restaurant one evening a month for fellowship and spiritual growth. Programs include talks by members of the group, as well as other Christian men in the area.

Parish Nurse Ministry

Holy Spirit's Parish Nurse Ministry offers parishioners information regarding health and wellness issues, medical suggestions, and referrals to physicians, pharmacists, and hospitals. The ministry also arranges AED/defibrillator and CPR classes, flu clinics, and other health opportunities for the parish.

Other Internal Evangelism Activities

Holy Spirit offers many opportunities for parishioners to get together for fun and fellowship. HSE is the only church with a float in the Gulf Shores Mardi Gras Parade, which is followed by an annual pancake supper. The church offers a spring golf tournament, a dolphin cruise, brunch at area restaurants after church, biking outings, a Christmas Parade float, birding trips, nature walks, beach outings, group theatre attendance, etc. All are welcome to participate.

Communication

Holy Spirit keeps parishioners, friends, winter members, and guests informed of church activities through a website (www.holyspiritep.com), an electronic newsletter, the *Spindrift*, a weekly electronic reminder, *What's Happening?*, and an annual parish meeting.

Holy Spirit's Hope for its next Rector

Parishioners were invited to attend one of three coffee hour brainstorm sessions (n = 82) on what qualities/characteristics the next Rector should have. They were also encouraged to submit written comments anonymously in a locked box (n = 12) or via email (n = 4); a total of 98 people participated in the process.



The most important characteristics/qualities of the next Rector are:

Spiritual Leader

One who will enrich existing ministries while promoting outreach

Non-judgmental/inclusive heart

Others high on the lists include:

Healthy/energetic/younger than ready to retire

Pastoral care

Likes people/relates well to all age groups/friendly, loving, caring

Lives within the community/involved in community

Family becomes part of church family

Biblical knowledge/religiously traditional/Episcopal liturgically knowledgeable

Grows membership

Grow Christian Education and Episcopal Youth Community

Good steward of assets/fiduciarly responsible

Welcoming

Available

Holy Spirit's Mission

Holy Spirit serves Christ Jesus by sharing his unconditional love as we reach out to the people of our coastal community and the world through Eucharistic worship, study, Christian fellowship, evangelism, and outreach.

Holy Spirit's Hope

Holy Spirit needs a spiritual leader who will support existing internal and external ministries while assisting the parish in living its mission today and into the future.

2014 Rector Search Committee Members

Claudia McDade, Chair

Rick Brandon, Vestry Member

Debi Edler

Biff Johnson

Joey McAleer

Dan Ratliff

Sandra Sanchez

Sue Wiggins

Donna Workman

Rhonda Barber, Alternate Member

Fr. Massey Gentry, Diocesan Consultant

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