

**Holy Spirit Episcopal Church
Gulf Shores, Alabama
Parish Profile
March, 2019**

A Short History of Holy Spirit Episcopal Church

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. Soon they moved to the new city theater. Area churches donated altar furnishings, prayer books and hymnals.

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 remains 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 desk in a corner of the parish hall. Transepts were added to the sanctuary and an addition (Nabors Hall) 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.



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 2010 to 2018, the population grew from 9,500 residents to just under 12,000 residents., 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, such as festivals (almost every weekend), golf, the Gulf State Park, shopping, really good restaurants, and of course, fishing, boating and the beach.

While the City of Gulf Shores has many visitors, it does a great job of maintaining a safe and family-friendly atmosphere. The City's website is an excellent source of information: www.gulfshoresal.gov

A Snapshot of Holy Spirit Parish

According to the 2018 Parochial Report, Holy Spirit has 379 baptized members. Of that number, about 259 are seasonal members and about 120 are year-round, active members.

On Easter Sunday 2018, a total of 266 people worshipped at Holy Spirit. The average age of parishioners is late-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. For the past 3 years we have consolidated the two Sunday services into one 9am service during the summer months.

Gulf Shores/Orange Beach, AL is a beachside, resort community. As such, dress can be casual. Holy Spirit Episcopal Church is very much a Rite II church.



Holy Spirit's Outreach of God's Love

Holy Spirit Episcopal Day School
HSEDS616@gmail.com

HSE's Day School is governed by a board of church members and is located in the administration portion of the church. It began with two classes serving a total of 20 students which has evolved into a thriving school with five classes of one, two, three, and four year-olds with care provided before and after school hours. Children experience chapel, music, library and a curriculum that fully prepares them for kindergarten. Typically the school is filled to capacity of 50 children with a growing waiting list. Growth potential is only limited by space and imagination.

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.

Staff is volunteer-based with three paid staff. Donations of clothing, furniture, books, housewares, appliances etc. are received, sorted, placed for sale, or bagged for pickup by Salvation Army, the local animal shelter, other organizations, or discarded if completely not useable.

Financial support from the proceeds are traditionally distributed to three major categories: Holy Spirit Parish General Fund, support for Episcopal ministries beyond HSE such as Camp Happy Sands, Camp Beckwith, and support needs outside the parish, such as Christian Service Center, South Baldwin Literacy Council, Hospice of Lower Alabama, Youth Reach Gulf Coast, Alabama Free Clinic, and many more.

Beyond direct financial support, the Thrift Shop touches many people in 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, among the volunteers, with customers and shoppers. 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.

The social needs that are addressed by the Christian Service Center include food, rent, and utilities for families in need. In addition, they refer clients of other programs such as Family Promise, Repair Baldwin County and the Thrift Shop.

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 for over 10 years, and have served hundreds of 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 and with cookies. 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 has evolved into an “at home” ministry. Members continue to knit but no longer meet at the church. Knitters are eager to teach knitting to anyone interested in joining our ever evolving prayer shawl ministry. The group has given away over 100 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.

HERD (Holy Spirit Episcopal Relief and Development)

For the past several years, the HERD committee has led the church during Lent in an outreach project through the denomination’s ERD program. We have in the past funded water wells, mosquito netting, chickens, goats, a donkey, a cart and a ploy, and this year pigs. These resources are distributed to areas served by the denomination and transform lives.

Family Promise

This year the Vestry voted to work with other area churches to provide food and housing for local homeless families. Working through our Outreach Committee we agreed to support by providing meals during the weeks our sister church provided housing. This is a new endeavor and one expect to continue and possibly expand.

Alabama First

Holy Spirit is working in Baldwin County with Alabama First. This statewide agency seeks to provide medical services and medicines to the uninsured. The church collects medicine, supplies and financial contributions in support of this program. In addition, we distribute brochures locally describing this service.

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), and the Handbell Choir. Both choirs are dedicated musicians devoted to leading the service music during 10:00 am worship.

The Handbell Choir enhances worship as they ring out their beautiful tunes on special occasions. Numbers vary, but range between 6 and 9 members in each group.

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. 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 program from a Master gardener about invasive, ornamental plants, another program taught us about the butterflies of the Gulf coast. We visited the Greek Orthodox church at Malbis Plantation and learned about Family Promise and how we can help to serve the homeless in our area.

Men's Club

All men of the Parish are members of the HSE Men's Club, which meets for a brown bag meal one evening every other month for fellowship and spiritual growth. Programs include talks by members of the group, as well as other groups in the area such as the Christian Service Center.

Holy Hammers

Are men of the church who have volunteered their services to help members of Holy Spirit with small in home projects.

Communication

Holy Spirit keeps parishioners, friends, winter members, and guests informed of church activities through a website (www.holyspirit.ep.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/fiduciarily responsible

Welcoming

Available

Holy Spirit's Mission

We at Holy Spirit welcome all, seek to know and serve Christ and share His unconditional love.

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.