

# GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH



## 2023 PARISH PROFILE

305 ARNOLD STREET N. E.  
CULLMAN, ALABAMA 35055  
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# WELCOME

Grace Episcopal Church is located in the City of Cullman, Alabama. From its founding in 1949, the Parish has been committed to providing a welcoming home to all who seek comfort in God's bountiful Grace. Grace Church is blessed with a friendly, caring, and committed congregation and is intentional through its worship, ministries, and leadership to grow daily in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are seeking a Parish priest who wishes to join us in the journey, and we pray for God's guidance to place among us the leader the Spirit has chosen to guide Grace Episcopal Church into the future.

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# MISSION

As parishioners of Grace Episcopal Church, we believe we are called to follow Christ's example in all ways and at all times. In answer to that call, we provide all who come to Grace with a loving home for faithful worship, spiritual education, fellowship, and opportunities to serve others. In our life together, we seek to grow in our knowledge and love of God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we draw others into our community of faith.



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# THE VISION FOR GRACE

**Parishioners ranked their five most important ministry areas for our new Rector as:**

Preaching/Pastoral Care/  
Strategic Leadership/  
Teaching & Training and  
Change Management.

Parishioners ranked their five most important characteristics for a Grace Episcopal Church Rector: Preaching, Pastoral Care, Strategic Leadership, Teaching & Training, and Change Management (the capacity to lead a church through a significant and necessary change). Grace Church considers itself warm, accepting, and friendly. The Parish offers the laity a variety of opportunities to be involved in its ministries, and many actively participate. There is a strong desire to partner with the Rector to build on existing internal and external ministries to develop a strong parish and craft a vision for the future.

Members of Grace believe the Christian education program should be designed for people of all ages and should balance Biblical studies; the tenets, traditions, and values of the Episcopal Church; commitment to God, His people, and the world, as well as contemporary topics and issues. It is felt that there is a need for Christian education offerings outside of Sunday mornings. A strong music program is also essential to the Parish.

Parishioners seek a Rector who can develop programs and opportunities to attract young families, can lead us in growing spiritually, and challenge us to lead lives grounded in faith and understand our roles within the Parish and community.

The majority of the Parish comes from other faith traditions. We are all growing in Christ and

**Our Rector should:**

- ◆ Provide effective pastoral leadership and understand the importance of serving as a “noble shepherd” of the flock while encouraging pastoral care from the laity,
- ◆ Help set a direction for the future while building trust among the laity,
- ◆ Maintain a mix of traditional and contemporary worship styles,
- ◆ Be seeking a parish and community to call home, and
- ◆ Be mindful of community outreach opportunities, and be an active participant in community activities.

learning what it means to be an Episcopalian. The Church looks to the Rector as a guide in our individual and corporate spiritual journeys. The parish shows a high level of spiritual diversity.

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Although Grace Episcopal Church was founded some 73 years ago, we are mindful that the Episcopal faith is not understood, recognized, or well known in the Cullman area.

Grace Church serves as the spiritual home to parishioners from a broad geographic region. Our parish family covers a 30-mile radius and hospital visits often include trips to Birmingham and Huntsville.

Grace Episcopal Church is a loving and welcoming spiritual home. We reach out in comfort with prayers, presence, and food to those whose families suffer loss. We regularly pray for the sick

and infirmed among us and for others outside the parish family. Parishioners' birthdays and anniversaries, and other happy milestones are also recognized and celebrated.

For the last several years, our parishioners regularly receive news via Grace-Mail, also known as G-Mail, keeping parishioners informed about births, deaths, illnesses, and other parish, community, and diocesan news. We also have a website and Facebook page to broaden our communication outreach.

<https://gracecullman.dioala.org/>

Cullman's Grace Episcopal Church has a rich heritage. We look for our new Rector to lead, guide, teach, nourish and pray with us as we grow together in



Clockwise: Wednesday evening Lenten dinner and speaker, Trinity Sunday in the park with Lutheran and Presbyterian Churches, Post Confirmation reception.

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# OUR PARISH FROM A TO Ω

Grace Church offers many opportunities for fellowship and serving our Lord.

**Arnold House:** One of the many historic homes in Cullman, the Arnold House serves as the Parish offices, church school classrooms for children, and a Vestry meeting place. The dining/conference room and parlor can also be used as a venue for baby and bridal showers and other occasions. The Arnold House Chapel is also conveniently located in the Arnold House. The chapel serves as a quiet place for prayer and reflection and can be accessed directly from the outside of the building. It is open at all times.

**Arnold Street Band:** This group is comprised of talented musicians from the Parish who volunteer their time and talents with acoustic guitar playing and singing before Church School during coffee hour on Sunday mornings, often during the Eucharist at the 10:30 am Sunday service, once per month at Grace Cafe', the Cursillo Community's Ultreyas, and other occasions throughout the church year. The music is led from the Alleluia III Song Book.

**Blessing of the Animals:** Each year on St. Francis' Sunday, the parish hosts this special ceremony for the pets belonging to Grace parishioners, friends, and members of the Cullman community.

**Christian Education:** An important function and mission of Grace Episcopal Church is the ministry to children and adults through a solid Christian Educa-

tion program. A vital element of the strength and focus of the children's education program has been the establishment of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Middle school and high school-age children are also a priority. They have their designated meeting and activities center in the Carriage House adjacent to the main church building. The adult education program has been led by a variety of parishioners, in addition to the priest, leading a discussion on various topics such as the history of the Church, comparative religions, Bible study, and contemporary books. Our parish survey indicates there is some interest in having Christian Education programs at times other than Sunday mornings. It has also been our tradition for the church school to go on hiatus from the Memorial Day weekend in May until the first Sunday after Labor Day in September.

**Church Facilities:** Grace Church facilities have been used by the community for concerts, cultural events, community meetings, and various support groups including A.A., N.A., and Al-Anon. We feel this is an integral part of the mission of outreach to the community.

**Clean-up/Fix-up:** Two times a year, parishioners gather on a Saturday to clean, repair, build, plant, weed, and generally spruce up the church grounds and facilities.

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# OUR PARISH FROM A TO Ω

**Cursillo:** Many members of Grace have attended a Cursillo Weekend. There is an active Ultreya which meets monthly as well as during weekly reunion groups. Grace Church has actively supported and encouraged Renewal efforts and programs like Cursillo.

**Daughters of the King:** DOK meets regularly to join in prayer for our Church, clergy, Parish, and for those who have special prayer requests.

**ECW:** There is an active Episcopal Church Women's group at Grace. The ECW is one of the driving forces for outreach and support of the many activities of the Church. Through the annual Cheeseball Sale and their fundraising activities, the ECW supports non-profit organizations in our community, diocese, nation and the world.

**EFM:** Many parishioners have participated and completed EFM studies in the last 25 years. Although there is not a current program being offered we hope there will be in the future.

**Evangelism:** We reach out to our community through personal Christian witness, special events, Inquirer's classes, and newspaper advertising of our services. Evangelism is also visible in the many outreach activities Grace Church has established in the community of Cullman.

**Kairos:** The Kairos ministry has many dedicated parishioners who have participated over the years. It has also offered parishioners an opportunity to become involved by drawing posters, baking cookies and praying for the pilgrims and staff during the weekend.

**Lent:** Lent has always been a very special time in the life of Grace Church. Mid-week services with guest speakers, daily meditations written by parishioners and compiled in *40 Days of Grace*, Church School programs, and Holy Week services give meaning to the season.

**Monday Bible Study and Dutch Treat Breakfast:** Before the pandemic, members of the Parish gathered at the Red Door Café each Monday morning from 7-7:45 for a small group Bible study led by the Parish priest.

**Music:** The Grace Church choir is comprised of many dedicated and talented adults and is directed by a musically-gifted leader. The choir is an integral component of the liturgy and services for which Grace Episcopal Church is known. Some of the choir members are also participants in community choirs which perform events in the area.

# OUR PARISH FROM A TO Ω

**Outreach:** Members of Grace Church come together to address great needs in our community. The following are programs and activities Grace Episcopal church has spearheaded or is currently participating:

*The Beans and Rice Ministry* began in October 2014. On the third Saturday of each month, beans and rice were given to all who come. Local farmers have also participated by providing fresh produce, and parishioners donate peanut butter and other items to accompany the beans and rice. The ministry was closed during the pandemic, but efforts are underway to restart this much needed community outreach program.

*The Good Samaritan Health Clinic* is located in the Folsom Center just across the street from Grace's Arnold House. Members of the Parish have served as officers and board members, as well as volunteers. While the idea and driving force to bring it to fruition and manage during its formative years came out of Grace, the Clinic is now a separate community-supported nonprofit.

*Hope Horses*, a therapeutic riding program for mentally and physically challenged individuals, was founded by two members of Grace. Other members of the Parish have served as officers and board members, as well as volunteers.

*Camp McDowell Special Session*, since 2011, members of Grace Parish have taken horses to Camp McDowell for people with special needs. Other parishioners volunteer to help during this Special Session allowing them the opportunity to serve others.



*Camp McDowell's* Grace House was the beneficiary of over \$30,000 contributed by parishioners towards the building project which houses staff at the camp's handicapped-accessible Bethany Village.



A HOPE CLIENT ENJOYING A RIDE AT THE HOPE FACILITY

# OUR PARISH FROM A TO Ω

Grace Cafe' first opened its doors in May, 2009, and continued to serve the community before the pandemic. Since its beginning, the 'Cafe' has nourished thousands of people with delicious food, warm fellowship, and God's People from every facet of our community. We come together to chat, sing along with the Arnold Street Band, and enjoy lunch at no cost and with no strings attached.

Grace Place was led by Grace Episcopal Church Deacon, Jerry Jacob. It served as a ministry designed to assist people with memory loss and their caregivers. Prior to the pandemic, the program met on Tuesday and Thursday from 10am-2pm and was open to the public. It provided mental, physical, social, and spiritual stimulation for those with mild to moderate memory loss.

The Caring Support Group served the caregivers of loved ones who suffered from memory loss before COVID. The program provided caregivers loving support, and an opportunity to share with other caregivers an experience far beyond what most cannot begin to understand. Led by a parishioner, the group met on the first Tuesday of each month at 6pm in the Grace Church Arnold House.

**Pastoral Care Committee:** Established in 2022 and directed by the Rector, the committee takes an active role in reaching out to parish members who may be in need of a meal, a ride, home communion, or other needs that can be met by parish members.

**Stations of the Cross:** The visible signs of the remembrance of the Passion of Christ; the Stations of the Cross can be found around the perimeter wall of our nave and are illustrative of the Church's spiritual journey through Lent and Holy Week.

**Sunday Ministries:** Grace Church is blessed with devoted and active participants in the Altar and Flower Guilds. There are many of our youth and adults who serve as acolytes, ushers, crucifers, LEMs and Verger. Some of our LEMs are licensed to provide communion to those parishioners who are shut-in or hospitalized.



YOUTH ACOLYTES & SERVERS

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# OUR HISTORY



THE "LITTLE WHITE CHURCH ON THE CORNER"

The dream of Grace Episcopal Church began in the 1940's with a few people wanting to know, "How can we get an Episcopal Church in Cullman?" Thanks to the Rev. Eugene M. Chapman, Rector of St. John's in Decatur, Alabama, it did not end there. Father Chapman came to Cullman and met with a small interested group. Several families began regularly attending Sunday morning services at St. John's in Decatur. That same group would meet for Church School on Sunday night at people's homes in Cullman, followed by Evening Prayer and confirmation instructions.

On December 13, 1949, ten people were confirmed. The next week, after Evening Prayer, the Episcopal mission in Cullman was formally organized and became Grace Episcopal Church.

In June 1950, Bishop Randolph Claiborne assigned a Sewanee Seminary student to be the church's student minister. By the first Sunday in January, 1951, the church had grown to 21 communicants.

The church continued to meet in Mrs. H.C. Arnold's living room and the need for a more permanent meeting place was felt. All went to work finding ways to build a worship space. Money was raised, land was given, and parishioners even borrowed money to donate to the goal of building a church.

On July 1, 1951, the building was completed and the first service was held. The original building cost \$14,000 of which \$3,000 was financed with money from various church members. The church became affectionately known as "the little white church on the corner."

The historic Arnold House was purchased in 1995. The Arnold House provides space for church offices, children's Church School, a parlor and dining/conference room for meetings or events. A small chapel provides an inviting and intimate worship space.

In 2003, the present building was consecrated and continues to serve as the home of Grace Episcopal Church. The current building is a dramatic shift from the "little white church on the corner", nevertheless, the spirit of "can do" continues and Grace Church serves as a vital part of the faith community of Cullman. Those who wish to explore and expand their relationship with God will find a nurturing, welcoming church family at Grace.



GRACE CHURCH FROM THE BACK VIEW



ARNOLD HOUSE  
CHURCH OFFICES AND  
CHURCH SCHOOL ROOMS

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# WORSHIP



GRACE'S BEAUTIFUL NAVE



## Special Services at Grace Church:

Advent  
Lessons and Carols  
Christmas Eve  
Epiphany  
Ash Wednesday  
Stations of the Cross during Lent  
Midweek Speakers & Suppers During Lent  
Maundy Thursday with Stripping of the Altar  
Good Friday  
Easter Vigil  
Easter Day  
Pentecost  
Blessing of the Animals  
Thanksgiving

We celebrate two Sunday morning worship services held at 8:00 and 10:30. Between services, we fellowship in the Parish Hall with refreshments, conversation and song before going to our respective Christian Education classes.

The traditional service uses the 1979 Book of Common Prayer and the 1982 Hymnal. At the 10:30 service, the choir is led by the Organist and Interim Choir Director. The Arnold Street Band often leads singing during the Eucharist from the Alleluia III Songbook. The 8:00 o'clock service does not include music.

A wide variety of parishioners participate in the worship services through the many available lay ministries which include LEMs, Crucifers, Acolytes, Vergers, Lay Readers, and Ushers.

The Altar Guild prepares the altar for Sunday worship and all special days. The Flower Guild adorns the church with fresh flowers for all worship occasions.

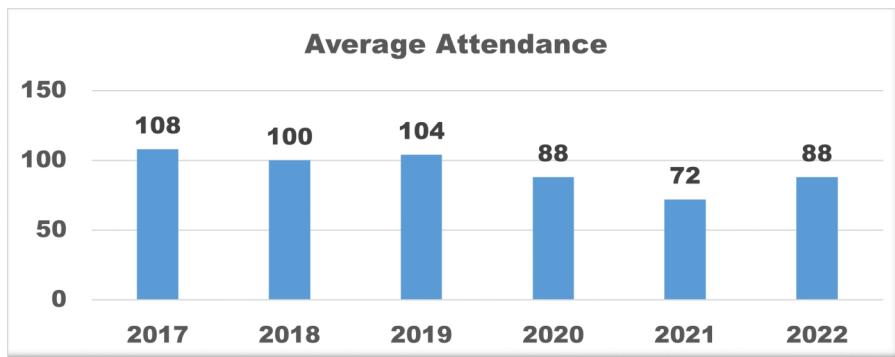
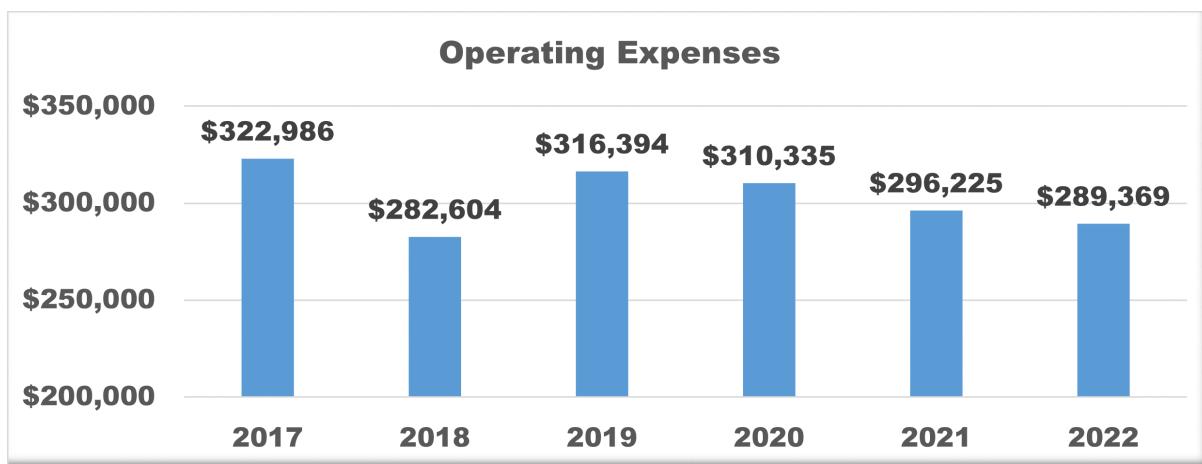
Grace Episcopal Church is a community of Christians coming together to serve and worship our Lord in the liturgy and grand traditions of the Episcopal Church.



THE ARNOLD STREET BAND

# BY THE NUMBERS

Below is a brief look at our history of finances and participation in worship..





EPISCOPAL DIOCESE  
OF ALABAMA



## *The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama*

Welcome to the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama. Whether you came to this parish profile via a web search, a mailing, or a personal invitation, I am glad that you are here. As you read through these pages prepared by a congregation who is seeking new leadership, I hope that you will sense the warmth of our diocese, the imaginations of our congregations to envision God's dream for themselves and for their neighbors, and the desire to live faithfully into the call of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Our diocese stretches north to the banks of the fertile Tennessee River Valley, south to the state capital of Montgomery, west to historic rivers and farms of the Blackbelt and east to the booming Wiregrass Region. Our common life is enriched by a wide diversity of parishes who are drawn together in common prayer, worship, and service. Our history is deep and rich, but we are also boldly leading toward the future as our churches seek to preach the Gospel, welcome the stranger and care for the neighbor in ways both new and old.

As you are discerning the next step in your ministry, know that we are praying for you. If the diocesan office can be of help to you as you look toward the future, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Blessings,

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Glenda S. Curry

# CULLMAN COUNTY ALABAMA

Grace Episcopal Church is located in the City of Cullman, Alabama; a town of approximately 18,000 people situated in north central Alabama and strategically located 50 miles north of Birmingham and 50 miles south of Huntsville on Interstate 65. Cullman is the largest town in Cullman County and serves as the county seat. The county's 2021 population exceeded 89,000 and ranks #11 among the fastest growing counties in Alabama.

Originally settled by German immigrants in the 1870's, Cullman still blends small town charm and hospitality with a progressive attitude toward the future.

Family living at its best, Cullman boasts a low crime rate, a modern state-of-the-art medical center, excellent public and private schools, numerous churches, great restaurants, good shopping, and outstanding recreational opportunities. Bloomberg Business Week named the City of Cullman one of the best places in Alabama to raise children. Education is recognized as a critical component in benefitting the quality of life in Cullman and Cullman County. Five schools and over 3100 students comprise the Cullman City School System. The system is ranked #14 of 138 best school districts in Alabama, #24 of 138 for the best school district for athletes in Alabama, and #24 of 137 as best places to teach in Alabama. The Cullman County School System comprises 28 schools serving over 9600 students in grades PK and K-12. The student-to-teacher ratio is 17 to 1.

Cullman Parks, Recreation, & Sports Tourism has been an innovative leader in providing quality recreation opportunities to Cullman and surrounding area residents for over 30 years.



STRIKING WELTI FALLS



QUALITY SCHOOLS AND A GREAT PLACE TO RAISE A FAMILY



CULLMAN WELLNESS & AQUATIC CENTER

Various groups in the community sponsor numerous events and festivals:

**The Bloomin' Festival**, a two-day festival held each year on the grounds of St. Bernard Abbey and Prep School, offers terrific food and a wide variety of juried arts and crafts by vendors from throughout the country; thousands of visitors attend each year.

**Strawberry Festival**, one of the oldest festivals in Cullman, celebrates Cullman strawberries grown in abundance by local farmers.

**"Dinner on First,"** a Cullman Parks and Recreation fundraiser, features an elegant dinner under the stars on First Avenue in the Warehouse District. The event benefitted the opening of the Connected Playground at Margaret Ingle Park.

**Octoberfest**, Cullman's German heritage, is celebrated during this week-long festival featuring German music, food, and beer. It is held at the Festhalle and Depot Park near downtown Cullman's Warehouse District.

**"Rock the South,"** a two-day outdoor concert held in Cullman, AL featuring top country music stars; over 60,000 people from all over the US attended the first day in 2022.

**Christmas in Cullman** pays homage to our German heritage and features the German pyramid, a nighttime parade, tree-lighting, Cullman Christkindlmarkt, and German food.

**The Cullman County Fair**, sponsored by Cullman Lion's Club, is a ten-day Fair held each year in late September. National Geographic has recognized it as one of the US's oldest and best community-supported fairs.

Visit Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce website at [www.cullmanchamber.org](http://www.cullmanchamber.org) for more information on local events, activities, business and shopping.



MIKE MULLANEY  
2022 BURGERMEISTER



A girl enjoys a ride on the merry-go-round.



Brothers Mason, 4, and Jackson, 2, Forester look on in amazement as Tone-Tone the Clown makes a balloon animal. Their parents, Lindsey and Dustin, look on.

CULLMAN COUNTY FAIR 2022

Smith Lake with over 500 miles of shoreline, is twenty minutes from downtown Cullman where fishing, boating, and water sports are all available within easy access to Cullman and surrounding areas. Cullman County's Smith Lake Park is also within easy access and provides a beach for swimming, cabins, and camping; on the Fourth of July hosts, one of the largest Fireworks shows in the area.

Hiking and birding at Hurricane Creek Park are popular activities, as is spending time playing golf on three local golf courses.

Other attractions include Stony Lonesome ATV Park, which provides "mudders" and other adventurous souls a sanctioned course to ride their ATVs. Camping and cabins are also available.

Sportsman's Lake Park is located near the Cullman Fair Grounds and is an in-city park with walking trails, children's playgrounds, outdoor pavilions for gatherings, fishing, and an abundance of ducks to feed.

Shopping is convenient with several shopping centers located throughout the area with Belk, Dick's Sporting Goods, TJ Maxx, Ross, Badcock Furniture, Standard Furniture, two Walmart Supercenters, Lowe's Home Center; and national grocery chains such as Publix and Aldi. The City also has many locally-owned specialty stores and boutiques offering a unique array of merchandise.

Cullman is home to a wide variety of well-known national and regional restaurants and an ever-increasing number of locally-owned eateries.

Cullman County's unemployment rate was 2.2% in September 2022. In 2020, the county was ranked #1 in Alabama for both total economic projects for the year and #1 for exist-



SMITH LAKE FISHING



STONY LONESOME ATV PARK



HISTORIC DOWNTOWN DISTRICT  
NEAR GRACE CHURCH

ing economic expansions. Over 483 jobs and \$159,074,971 had been allocated for capital investments during 2020.

Cullman was ranked #4 in 2022 and has also been has been placed in the top ten micropolitan areas in the nation for the past 8 years by Site Selection Magazine.

Modern industries such as General Dynamics, Webb Wheel, REHAU, Yutaka, Cullman Casting, Reliance Worldwide Corporation (RWA), Topre, ZeroRPM, and Royal Technologies are among the many industries that have chosen the area for their manufacturing locations. The Walmart distribution center is one of the largest centers of its kind east of the Mississippi River.

Alabama is the #3 state in the nation for raising broiler chickens. Cullman County is ranked the #1 county for broiler production in Alabama. Cullman County ranks among the highest nationally and regionally for poultry, sweet potato, and agriculture production.

Wallace State Community College is located in Cullman County, less than 10 miles from downtown Cullman in Hanceville. WSCC is one of the largest colleges in the Alabama Community College System, serving more than 4700 students each semester. Wallace State offers 100 associate and certificate programs and vibrant and flourishing arts programs. Athens State University and Faulkner University offer classes on the Wallace State campus.

The nationally recognized Ave Maria Grotto was dedicated in 1934, and is located on the grounds of St. Bernard Abbey and Preparatory School in Cullman; the tourist attraction is known throughout the world as “Jerusalem in Miniature”. It is a beautifully landscaped, four-acre park designed to provide a natural setting for the 125 miniature reproductions of some of the most famous historic buildings and religious shrines in the world. It represents the lifetime work of Benedictine Monk,



BROILER CHICKENS



WALLACE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



JERUSALEM IN MINIATURE AT AVE MARIE GROTTO

Bro. Joseph Zoettl, who immigrated from Germany in 1892. His work began as a hobby working with the various materials he could find. through his own creativity, patience and remarkable sense of symmetry, he re-created some of the greatest edifices of all time. Bro. Joseph died in 1961 at St. Bernard Abbey and is buried in the Abbey Cemetery.

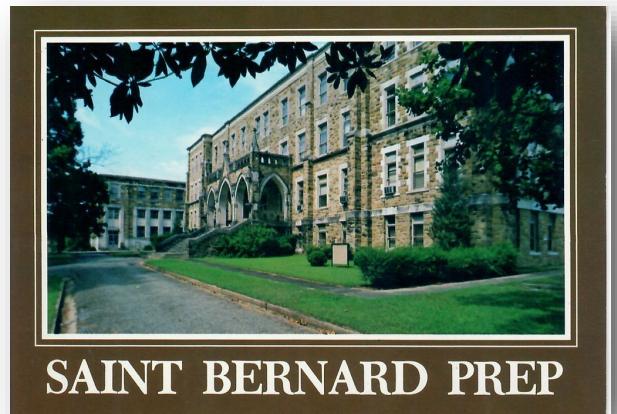
Cullman is home to two Benedictine Monasteries. St. Bernard Abbey was founded in 1891 to serve the German population of Cullman. A school and college were founded and are located on 800 acres. Today St. Bernard Preparatory School operates as a boarding and day school for grades 7-12. Sacred Heart Convent and Monastery opened in 1902. During its tenure, Sacred Heart was once a two-year women's college. Today, the Sacred Heart Sisters are active in the monastic Benedictine community and offer spiritual retreats and programs for Catholic and Protestant pilgrims.

The Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament of Our Lady of Angels Monastery is located in Cullman County near Hanceville and was founded by the late Mother Angelica and consecrated in 1999. Adjacent to the Shrine is the cloistered Monastery of Poor Clare Nuns of Perpetual Adoration. The Shrine is situated on a 400-acre site and is a religious center affiliated with the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN). The Shrine has become, in its 23 years, a significant tourist attraction for the region and state.

The people of Cullman are proud of their rich heritage, and life in this small Southern town is safe and welcoming. The quality of life in Cullman is exceptional. It is a town that encourages community involvement, and you will find Cullman offers many service opportunities.



BEAUTIFUL GARGENS AT  
AVE MARIE GROTTO



SAINT BERNARD PREP



SHRINE OF THE MOST BLESSED  
SACRAMENT