The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany
Leeds, Alabama
2015 Parish Profile



The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany is a diverse, welcoming congregation carrying forth the word and works of Jesus Christ through worship, education and community service.

We invite you to come in, look around and get to know us a little better. We think you will like what you see!

Introduction

Our Epiphany family describes our Parish as.....



Most commonly occuring words to describe Epiphany given by parishioners aged 16 - 80 who completed the 2015 Parish Survey

As you explore these pages, you will find that Epiphany is welcoming to all, rich in talent, beautiful in its setting, blessed in its history and poised for significant growth. Please join us as we tell you about ourselves, our mission and the unique qualities that make Epiphany our spiritual home.





Our History

George Jones, a leading member of the Leeds community, shared his vision, "We need an Episcopal Church in Leeds". So an organizational meeting for a new parish was held at the Citizen's Bank in Leeds shortly before Christmas in 1979.
The idea took hold...

Bishop Furman Stough said they could start the Church, but could not expect funding from the Diocese. Well, that was not a deterrent... and didn't stop these determined Episcopalians.

The first service was held on Epiphany Sunday, January 6, 1980 at the Leeds Presbyterian Church. Later, services were held at St. Theresa's Catholic Church in Leeds until a permanent Church structure could be constructed.

The parishioners built the first Church building with their own hands and celebrated Christmas in the still uncompleted building. Surrounded by the bare walls, warmed by kerosene stoves, the air filled with the scent of fresh straw, these few determined members gathered around the small wooden creche where the altar was to be and celebrated the birth of Jesus.

In 2000, with the help of the Diocese, Epiphany purchased the land and house next door. This latest extension of the Church was named Founder's Hall. Two years later, the parishioners began planning to build a new worship space; the existing structure was completed in 2005.





Our Unique and Growing Community

Leeds is a small southern town with a population of about 12,000, nestled in beautiful countryside with the Little Cahaba River running through our town and city park. Surrounded by rolling hills and horse farms, Leeds is a great place to live for those who prefer small town living. However, Leeds is a mere twenty minutes away from Birmingham, Alabama's largest city.







The hidden gem of Jefferson and St. Clair Counties, Leeds boasts clean and beautiful parks and outdoor recreational areas. Convenient shopping areas include quaint downtown shops, the new Grand River Outlet Mall and a Bass Pro Shop and Outdoor World. The Barber Motorsports Park provides a popular motorcycle museum, featuring vintage motorcyle and car shows and a rolling hill track. Leeds is also close to Logan Martin Lake, a favorite fishing and recreational lake with residential properties, state parks and hiking areas.

Leeds offers strong police and fire departments, resulting in low crime rates. We have many civic organizations, active Chamber of Commerce, theatre and arts center, library, garden clubs, historical society and book clubs. Leeds has an award-winning school system, consisting of an elementary, middle and high school with state of the art facilities. We are proud of our many veterans and maintain a memorial park with attention paid to our three medal of honor recipients.



The average age of Leeds residents is 39, with over 84% being high school graduates and about 10% completing graduate school. The population is made up of 70% Caucasian, 15% African-American and 6% Hispanic. We have a low unemployment rate, low property taxes and a low crime rate.

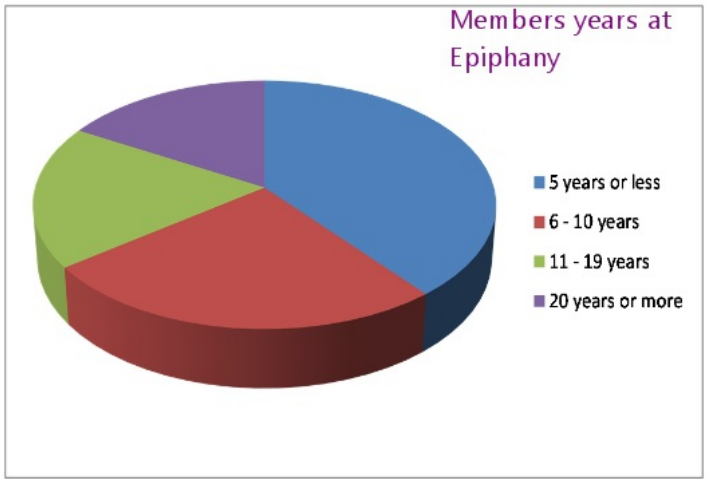
The Birmingham Metropolitan area provides numerous cultural opportunities with many small theatre groups, the Alabama Symphony, opera and ballet. There are a variety of museums, historical buildings and fun sporting events to explore. Birmingham also has many excellent restaurants of all ethnic tastes. The downtown area is in a resurgence of growth and revitalization, while preserving many historical sites.

Birmingham also offers world class medical facilities, including the level 1 trauma center at UAB.



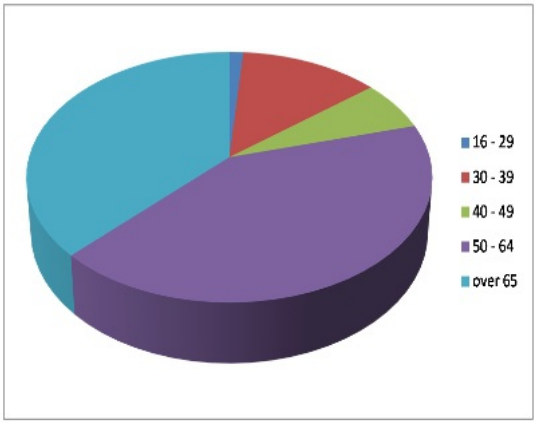
Our Parish Life

Our Parish now serves 112 baptized members with an average Sunday attendance of 60 parishioners.
Approximately 93% of our members live within a 25-mile radius of the Church. Being small in number requires willingness to serve in various capacities and roles such as:

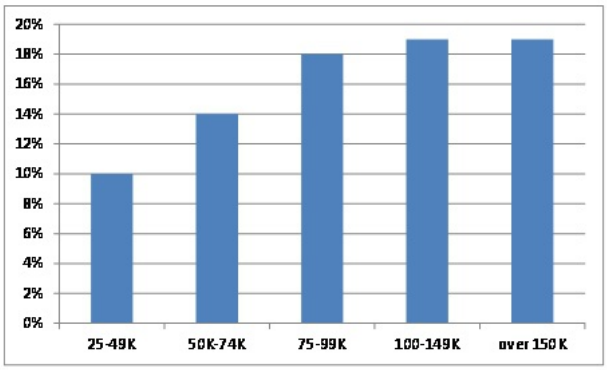


- Vestry
- Lay Eucharistic Ministers
- Acolytes
- Lectors
- Altar Guild
- Flower Guild
- Godly Play Leaders
- Choir
- Fund Raising
- Lay Outreach

We are how old?!?!



Average Income Level



Our membership is comprised of 67% married, 11% life-partnered, 8% widowed and 4% single parishioners, with a ratio of 64% female to 36% males.

In recent focus group meetings, our parishioners described us as:

- A welcoming and loving family
- A resilient, diverse and flexible parish
- Seeing God and people as muti-faceted
- Having a strong music program
- Providing creative fund raisers
- Providing our children with a wonderful Godly Play program
- Strong participants in Cursillo and Kairos
- Cohesive people with a sense of humor
- A fun place to be where we look forward to being together



Our Worship and Music

The essence of Epiphany is reflected in our approach to worship and music. We endeavour to be inclusive, diverse, enriching and thoughtful.

Two regular Sunday services offer varying liturgical and devotional settings:



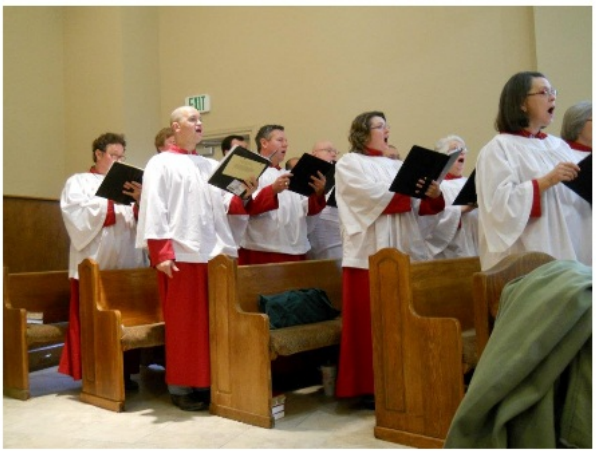
An 8:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist uses Rite II. This service has a more intimate crowd and is a quiet start to the day for a faithful group of "early birds". The readings are shared among the attendees and there is no music for this relaxed service.

Our 10:30 service also uses Rite II. The leadership and service roles are shared by men, women, clergy, and occasionally children. We vest and process as part of our "low church" liturgical style. This service blesses us with music-organ preludes and postludes, songs from the hymnal and Alleluia 3 accompanied by both the guitar and piano. Our parishioners enjoy the mix of traditional and the more contemporary music selections.



Wednesday night services offer a much needed mid-week boost to many of our parishioners, as we join together for an informal and intimate sharing of the table.

The congregation is an active participant in all aspects of worship and liturgy. Enthusiastic members each week serve as Godly Play teachers, acolytes, readers, ushers, choir members, and on the Flower and Altar Guilds. Whether attending, leading or supporting, all the members of Epiphany are dynamically engaged in joyful worship each week.



We regard the choir at Epiphany as one of our most important assets. A totally volunteer group, led by choir director, Mary Jo West and organist LuAnne Wilson, the Epiphany Choir continually delivers beautiful service music, anthems and hymns. During Advent, the choir blesses us with an annual Lessons and Carols service, and their weekly song selections showcase their talent and hard work. In 2014, a new digital organ was given to the Church by two loving parishioners. The choir and this lovely new instrument fill the acoustically designed nave with swelling music every week.

Christian Formation

Christian Formation is the lifelong process of growing in our relationship with God, self, others, and all creation. At Epiphany, Christian formation takes on numerous forms: programs and classes, various ministries, as well as fun and fellowship activities. We are a congregation that truly enjoys and seeks out opportunities to be together.

Children



During our 10:30 service, Godly Play is offered for children aged 4-11. This is a wonderful ministry for our children, who are so loved by the members of our parish. Although only 4 years old, this program has shown considerable growth. Using a hands on teaching approach, Godly Play leaders help children explore their faith. Each week, "I Wonder" questions afford the children an opportunity to discuss the lesson in a way that makes it more personal to them. Godly Play is encouraging families with young children to attend and join Epiphany and for that, we are grateful. Also during the 10:30 service, infant and toddler care is provided in our nursery. We are very excited to see growth in this area as well.



At this time, we do not have a program to offer young teens or teenagers. At Epiphany we truly feel that our children bring life to our parish, and 90% of those surveyed say that being able to offer and grow these programs is very important to them. Many parishioners are committed to fostering a strong youth program.

Adults



DOK Installation



Mardi Gras dinner kicks off Lenten Series

Christian Formation for adults is another area where we would like to see growth. At this time, no Sunday School is offered, but 35% of our members feel that an adult program is very important; however, we have lots of great activities that many of our adult members participate in regularly.

Book Cafe is a bi-monthly book club led by a few book lovers in our parish. "Good friends, good food, good books and good conversation" is an accurate summary of the fun had by all who participate!

Lenten Supper Series offers teachings and reflections by outside speakers during Lent. Each Wednesday night during Lent, we offer supper and a time of fellowship. Two-thirds of our membership felt that this teaching series is very important and would like to see it continued in the future.

Daughters of the King, St. Anne's Chapter, has a strong presence at Epiphany. The order enriches and strengthens the lives of women of all ages.

EFM (Education for Ministry) program provides people who are called to a ministry with the education to carry out that ministry. Many parishioners at Epiphany have completed or are in the process of completing the EFM program. We sponsor a group that meets at Epiphany and is mentored by two of our own parishioners.

Mass In The Grass



Simply put, Mass In The Grass is exactly what it sounds like! We meet at a different parishioner's home one Wednesday night a month during the summer for worship, fellowship and fun! This uniquely Epiphany experience has been enjoyed by parishioners for many years and always provides that special something that keeps our worship fun and fresh!

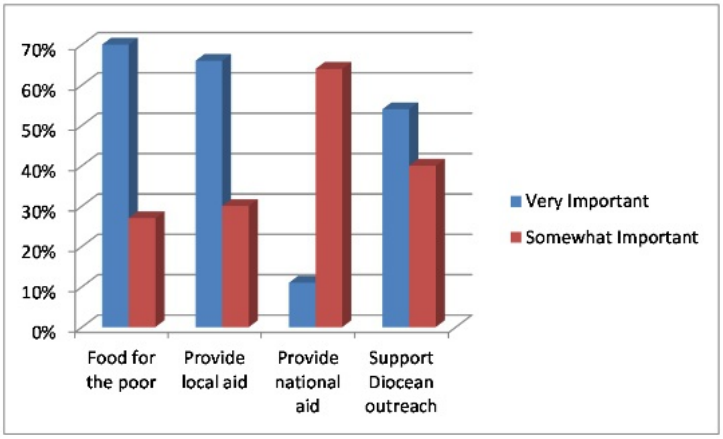






Our Outreach

Our members as individuals are generously involved in outreach to our community through their offering of time, talent and treasure. As a parish we annually provide requested supplies and staff meals for the Sawyerville Day Camp-a ministry that provides summer day camp for underprivileged children located in the Black Belt of Alabama. We also contribute food on a monthly basis to the Leeds Food Bank. We feel that we are lacking in the area of offering consistent services for the needs of our community.



Analysis of our Parish Survey questions on what type of outreach is most important to us shows that we are very concerned about taking care of folks in our own community.

Our Finances

The chart below is a reflection of our current year's financial picture. We currently have 45 pledging units, which is approximately a 20% increase over last year.

Because we are a small parish, we rely on everyone pitching in to help meet the financial needs and commitments of our Church. We sponsor unique fundraising opportunities that not only help us meet our financial goals, but brings us closer together. Over the last ten years, talented parishioners haved produced theatre productions with Epiphany receiving all proceeds. Showcasing local talent, our plays have grown in reputation with the community and help to attract new people to our parish.

INCOME	Amout Pledged for 2015 (as of 1/24/2015)	$148,537
	Estimated Plate Income	$21,882
	Estimated Gift from Project Share	$597
	Estimated Cash Gift to Parish	$25,272
	Estimated Fundraising	$15,000
	ESTIMATED TOTAL INCOME	$211,288
EXPENSES	Salaries	$119,458
	Utilities	$11,682
	Building	$38,967
	Other	$24,130
	Diocesan Pledge	$10,000
	ESTIMATED TOTAL EXPENSES	$204,237

Other fundraising endeavors include a Holiday Cheeseball sale, a string quintet concert, a bluegrass band concert and a variety of other creative ways to promote and benefit Epiphany.







Our Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Attract new families and grow our membership
- Revitalize our Christian Formation program
- Strengthen our Outreach Programs

Opportunities

- Leeds and Moody are poised for huge growth in the future.
- Epiphany's parishioners are open to receiving new and diverse members, adapting to change and growing spiritually.
- Our parish has a strong tradition of history, music and laity involvement that can be leveraged to strengthen our communal bonds.

Whom Do We Seek?

- A ***preacher*** who will challenge us to think and invite us to laugh.
- A ***teacher*** who will grow our spiritual roots and our membership branches.
- A ***pastor*** who will generate enthusiasm for our work and respite for our souls.



We thank you for your interest in Epiphany
and look forward to meeting you soon!