

The Calling of a Priest-in-Charge The Church of the Good Shepherd

In 1900 the Church of the Good Shepherd opened its doors at 493 South Jackson Street in the city of Montgomery, becoming one of the oldest Black Episcopal Churches in what is now the Diocese of Alabama. First served by clergy from St. John's Episcopal Church, out of which it was formed, Good Shepherd started with "about fifty adherents" and received its own priest in 1902, the Rev. John Randolph Brooks. In the late 1950's and early 1960's the Rev. Robert E. DuBose served as vicar of Good Shepherd, leading in a time of growth and engagement in the Civil Rights movement in Montgomery. Over the next forty years, the parish was served by numerous priests, including two from Africa. Through the first quarter of the 21st century, clergy leadership has been provided by retired priests and a deacon in charge, all serving part-time. In periods without a priest, the parish continued to worship faithfully with laypeople reading Morning Prayer. Presently, Good Shepherd is experiencing signs of new life, both in attendance and giving. Over the past two years they have welcomed over twenty pilgrimage groups from around the country that have sought a place to reflect and engage in conversation after visiting the Equal Justice Initiative's Museum, Memorial, and Sculpture Park—as well as other sites in the region. With this new growth and expanded mission for the parish and with recent prospects for revitalization of the historic, predominantly black Centennial Hill community, at the heart of which Good Shepherd lies, one can sense the stirrings of hope for a new day. God's Spirit is moving, preparing the way for a new and challenging ministry for the Episcopal Church in Montgomery.

As we move forward, members of the Church of the Good Shepherd seek ordained leadership that:

- Speaks to us in preaching and teaching, so that we may grow in faith and service;
- Plans and leads worship that enriches our spirits to be the body of Christ in the world;
- Provides pastoral care that heals us and helps us to be a caring community;
- Is committed to working for and with us in promoting justice and mercy in our wider community;
- Is informed about the challenges and opportunities of being a historically Black Episcopal Church and is committed to helping us find strategies to address both in meaningful ways;
- Embraces ministering in a richly diverse community whose members seek to be a beloved community open to all;
- Will join and guide us in developing our ministries to Episcopalians and others who come on pilgrimage to Montgomery's museums, memorials, and historic sites seeking to understand the past and create new ways of living together in a just and fair commonwealth;
- Can work with other churches and civic groups in peaceful, yet prophetic engagement to promote the common good, as reflected in Scripture and the teachings of our Church.

Aware that we have a mission in our community that we cannot do alone, on November 2, 2023, the Vestry of the Church of the Good Shepherd committed the parish to work with the Diocese of Alabama and Montgomery's St. John's Episcopal Church to establish this new ministry. We have agreed that it would involve the calling of a Priest-in-charge at Good Shepherd who would also serve part-time as an Associate Rector at St. John's. We have agreed further that with the completion of a diocesan supported pilgrimage center at Good Shepherd, the position would also include coordinating a program for the center in cooperation with St. John's, the other Churches of the Montgomery convocation, and the Diocese. Planning for this new ministry and pilgrimage center is ongoing and subject to revision. Further information is available for candidates interested in the position.