



## The Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

9 September 2020

Dear Mobile area Clergy and Senior Wardens in charge,

I am writing to announce some exciting news about the ministry and mission of our Episcopal Church in Mobile.

Over the past 5 years we have been working toward a diocesan vision of life together in which we, as the Body of Christ, are transforming people from members into disciples, discerning more deeply God's call to all people as ministers, and extending our mission beyond the status quo. In particular, the past three years have focused on developing evangelism and missional engagement projects that move us beyond our usual structures and systems.

To that end, four years ago we partnered with the Diocese of Georgia and were awarded a grant to identify areas in our diocese that are particularly poised for creative ministry beyond the status quo. The results of our study revealed three locations of greatest potential, one being downtown/midtown Mobile.

Guided by the work of The Reverend Kammy Young and her Missional Development Team, we have been awarded two additional grants to support the commencement of a missional engagement project in Mobile: 1.] a New Episcopal Community Discernment Grant of \$5,000; 2.] a UTO grant of \$50,000.

These funds help establish and support the hiring of a Missioner for Mobile. In part, this leader will focus on the discernment and exploration of planting a community outreach center. One idea is to build this center around a pay-as-you-able-cafe that serves the physical, financial, social, and spiritual needs of those in the Mobile community, especially those beyond our church walls.

The Rev. Mary Alice Mathison has demonstrated the gifts, temperament, and passion for this type of entrepreneurial ministry. I am excited to announce that I am appointing her as Missioner for Mobile beginning November 1, 2020.

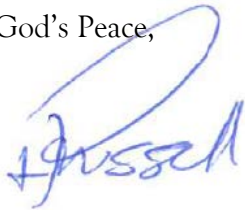
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I've invited Mary Alice to share a couple of words with you:

*"One of the most important aspects of this missional development project is building relationships, especially with our clergy and lay leadership in Mobile. Your insights and knowledge of the culture and needs of the broader community will be vital to help this project move forward. Finding ourselves in the middle of a pandemic has meant navigating new waters for the Church, and Mobile is an exciting place for us to discern how some of those new models of being the Church can help us to further God's work in the world. This project seeks to reach those that might not walk through the traditional church doors and to bring people together of various backgrounds and experiences. My hope is that bringing people together includes opportunities for us as Episcopalians to deepen our relationships with one another and our Mobile community. I look forward to coming to Mobile and I'm grateful for the opportunity to explore this more with you all and the wider Mobile community."*

True to her enthusiasm for this work, Mary Alice has already begun to reach out to you to schedule conversations. This groundwork is vital for her future ministry. I ask you to give her your time and help her by sharing your own ideas for how this project might unfold in your city. Mary Alice will be a resource to you, a colleague with you, and an advocate for you. I'm excited for Mary Alice's energy for this project and I look forward to how God is revealed to all of us and our Mobile community in this work.

God's Peace,



The Rt. Rev. J. Russell Kendrick  
Bishop of the Central Gulf Coast

JRK/mrp