



St Francis Episcopal Church

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November 1, 2022

Dear St. Francis Family:

It has been said that it “takes a village” to raise a child. In our case it “takes a parish” to call a rector. We have been actively seeking for what feels like a long time and that journey has finally come to a wonderful end.

Before I share the details of this good news it is important to thank everyone who made this next chapter at St. Francis possible. Our Profile Committee worked hard to faithfully discern the things that are most important to our parish; they led us in spirit filled conversations about who we were, who we are now, and who we want to be. That good work creating our profile gave our Search Committee the tools they needed to choose the right candidates, to meet with those candidates, and ultimately present their prayerfully considered choice to the Vestry. Your Vestry considered, prayed, and deliberated wanting to hear God’s call for the right rector for St. Francis. We believe we have listened to the best of our ability and are grateful to share that a new rector has been called. Thank you again to the three-dozen people who shepherded this process. Special thanks to the entire parish for your prayers, guidance, insight, patience, and your abiding love for St. Francis Church during this discernment, without you we could not have done this work.

This process could not have been accomplished without the incomparable leadership and spiritual guidance generously given to us by Fr. Jerry. Jerry brought wisdom, calm insight, procedural expertise, and the gift of his genuine care for our flock while we worked through the transition. We will deeply miss Jerry and Annette as part of our community, but we send them forward to new opportunities with immense love and gratitude for the blessing of a vibrant transition ministry. We will have a lovely farewell ceremony early next year to share our gratitude.

Our new rector is The Reverend Jason Shelby. Below is a short biography of Jason as a brief introduction to the godly man who will lead us. We expect to welcome the Shelby Family February 1, 2023.

Jason Shelby was born and raised in Northeast Indiana, in a crossroads village surrounded by corn fields. He has three younger sisters who still live in Indiana, as do his parents, who have lived in the same home for 45 years. Jason completed his undergraduate studies in History at Indiana Purdue Fort Wayne and, after some time in discernment, graduated from seminary at the School of Theology at The University of the South, in Sewanee, Tennessee. After graduating he worked at St. Martin's Episcopal School in Metairie, Louisiana, where he was the Middle School Chaplain and religion teacher. From there he moved to St. Columb's in Ridgeland, Mississippi (a suburb of Jackson), where he served for two years as assistant rector, then to the Mississippi Delta, where he served as rector at St. George's for nine years, and finally, to St. Paul's in Columbus, MS, where he is currently rector. Jason is married to Jennifer, who grew up in La Mesa, California, and came to Mississippi through Teach for America. Together they have three young children: Tom (10), Rachel (3), and Archie (2). Jason and Jennifer don't have free time, but if they did, they would go to museums, fun restaurants, and antique stores. Jason enjoys cooking, reading, and most things artsy.

In other news, the Fall Season is upon us and with it comes our Annual Stewardship Campaign for 2023. "kick-off" Sunday for this campaign will be November 6 with remarks by Vestry Stewardship Co-Chair Richard Downie. In gathering Sunday is planned for December 4. The Vestry will formulate the 2023 budget in late December based on the pledges we receive.

We are truly grateful for your gifts of time, talent, and treasure in 2022 and hope that you will give for next year to the extent that you are able. You will find a 2023 pledge form and return envelope enclosed. Please sign and return it by dropping it in the offering plate on a Sunday or mailing it to the office. Please contact me or Stewardship Co-Chairperson Richard Downie or Dick Briggs if you have questions about pledging.

Your continuing support has made so much possible in our shared life in Christ and the Vestry and Staff join me in thanking you for your faithfulness and generosity in a year filled with both challenges and joys.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Holly Valiquette". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large, stylized 'H' and 'V'.

Holly Valiquette
Senior Warden

"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above..." James 1:17