



The Anchor Line

Grace Episcopal Church, Panama City Beach, Florida

www.gracespirit.org

February, 2019

Dear friends of St. Thomas and Grace,

The following contains a lot of information, but I am hoping to provide further insight into our shared ministry work and discernment, to better serve our parish communities as February 2019 kicks off. If you see something in here that sounds interesting to be a part of let us know, there are many opportunities to serve in our shared ministry.

The beginning of 2019 has been a busy time, particularly as our shared ministry between our two churches has discerned ways we can more intentionally live into the work we do together, how we support one another, and how we reach out to our broader Panama City Beach community. With the greater Church of all denominations going through decline and change, our two parishes are seeking to find ways in which the Episcopal presence can be vital and sustainable for the long-term here on Panama City Beach. Bishop Russell has described our ministry as a laboratory, an opportunity to experiment with collaborative ministry that benefits not only the parish communities, but our broader community. What I love so dearly about St. Thomas and Grace, is that thinking outside the box, going beyond our church walls is in our DNA. There are members apart of both churches that have helped to start, cultivate, and sustain these parishes, and that continue to critically and thoughtfully discern how we engage and serve in God's mission in the face of the changing 21st century.

The shared ministry we are in with Grace and St. Thomas is a 3 year discernment and exploration of what the Episcopal presence looks like on Panama City Beach, and how do we ensure it's vitality and sustainability. Our first year has included the get to know you phase, and the arduous work of discernment that requires meetings and lots of conversation and discussion, and of course a hurricane.

Prior to Hurricane Michael, we had three groups from our vestries and shared ministry team exploring different options for our long term Episcopal presence on Panama City Beach, what our options were if we remained separate parishes, if we reminded in shared ministry with a shared priest, or if we merged our two churches, conversations and exploration that hurricane Michael interrupted. These three options have been a starting off point, to provide direction in our conversations, and as we have researched these options, it is also important to note that in doing this work there might be a fourth or fifth option that we become aware of in our

exploration. Originally we had wanted to try to provide the parishes with presentations on this research at the end of 2018, however the circumstances of the hurricane required us to push this back, and we are now planning to do a presentation for both parishes on **Wednesday, February 27th**.

As we turn the corner into 2019 we also must turn the corner and live more fully into our shared ministry together, in order for us to better understand the options that not only work for our two parishes, but what options best benefit how our presence on Panama City Beach serves those around us. The work we have done so far, the conversations, the prayers, the fellowship, is something that I hold close to my heart, and with that, I thought it might be helpful to share and articulate what my vision for Grace and St. Thomas is: A vibrant Episcopal presence that reaches out to the Panama City Beach community, worships together, serves together, and fellowships together. That can take on many different forms, at both churches, in different buildings, and different settings, and there are still a number of options to consider for our long-term future. However, know that in the present, this vision is inspired by the work we have all done together in the last year, and it constantly has me asking how does God call St. Thomas and Grace, call all of us, to live this out, in the present and in the future.

The following are some of the efforts we will be taking/considering/discussing/discerning as we move into our second year of shared ministry. Some of these mission opportunities will be outside of our comfort zone, despite that, I believe they hold a great deal of promise and hope for how we continue to explore and discern our shared ministry and the Episcopal presence on Panama City Beach. I continue to not only welcome, but need your feedback, and if you see something that sparks an interest in wanting to lead or take on, please let me know:

Active Preparation in Lent for Shared Services in the Season of Easter*

While we have had two great 5th Sunday Services together, a question that has been raised is what might a season of worship look like together. This suggestion first came about in November, and upon reflecting on the past year of our ministry together and the circumstances of Hurricane Michael, this opportunity invites us to explore what it truly is to journey together and to learn, in a new way, what it is for us to be community as Episcopal churches, but also to actively and intentionally do ministry outside our church walls.

Here is what we would like our communities to consider:

Beginning with the presentations from the shared discernment teams on Wednesday, February 27, we would spend the season of Lent in *active preparation* for planning our shared worship together during the season of Easter through Pentecost

(beginning April 28 through June 9). We would like to create shared small groups that help plan for our shared services, including worship logistics, altar guild, lectors, acolytes, greeters, Christian formation, outreach, and to offer time during our week day offerings for our broader parish communities to learn more about the purpose and mission of our shared ministry. Just as Jesus spends 40 days in the wilderness preparing for his ministry, we will spend our 40 days of Lent preparing for not only a season of worship together, but deepening our bonds of support for one another and communally listening to God's call for the ways in which our ministry broadens it reaches here in Panama City Beach.

The first Sunday after Easter, April 28, we would plan to begin our season of shared worship together on Sundays through the **Day of Pentecost, June 9.** After our time of preparation in Lent, we have an opportunity to celebrate new life found in the resurrection as we live that out for a season of trying something new together. Location options are open to discussion, and to be determined. Options that include a shared third space are certainly open for conversation, as well as considering our own spaces as well. Your insights are welcomed.

In this time of shared ministry we are invited to be extremely intentional about how we journey together and how we reach out to our broader community, that our journey as the Episcopal presence on Panama City Beach encourages us to serve, worship, commune, and fellowship together. While what that looks like in the long run is yet to be determined, what I hope this season of preparation and shared season of worship helps to cultivate is stronger bonds of support between both parishes and new ideas for how we can serve our community of Panama City Beach.

So I invite your suggestions and creativity as we discern, prepare, and share in ministry together. There are always many questions and concerns when trying something new, so please do not hesitate to ask me, a vestry member, or shared ministry team member. Your feedback is important. I truly believe this opportunity will invite us into new and creative ideas and actions that give us new perspective on our shared ministry and new perspective on our Episcopal presence and how we share God's love and mission with our Panama City Beach community. At this time our vision is calling us to look outwards and forwards, and sometimes we have to step outside our comfort zone in order to do that.

Outreach/Missional Opportunities

Animal Blessing

Originally we had planned to have an Animal Blessing the weekend of Hurricane Michael. Since we weren't able to do that, we are going to reschedule. Deacon Ed has spoken with Frank Brown Park and we are looking at a Saturday date in March in which we would be able to do a service with Animal Blessing, and collect pet food

donations for Heartland Rescue in Panama City. More details to follow.

Maundy Thursday Foot Care Clinic

A friend in the Diocese of Nebraska tried this last year and it went really well. Ultimately, we are looking at options to open up early for Supper at Grace on Thursday, April 18, and provide various foot care options (foot exams, new shoes, new socks, pedicures, etc) for our guests. We would still have our usual meal at 6:00pm, followed by an Maundy Thursday service in the sanctuary.

Laundry Love

During Lent, I would like us to consider partaking in Laundry Love. There are several laundry mats we are considering, in which we would show up at a designated day and time and wash people's clothes (provide the quarters for the machines, provide detergent if wanted/needed, assisting the washing if wanted/needed). This is a ministry that exists in Panama City, but not here on the beach. After Lent we will consider ways in which we could continue to participate in this ministry.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

6:00pm Grace and St. Thomas will be serving up pancakes as well celebrate Mardi Gras. This is a great time to bring a friend, enjoy some breakfast for dinner, and fellowship.

Ash Wednesday

Ashes To Go 7:00am at Grace
12:00pm service at St. Thomas
5:45pm service at Grace

Lenten Weekday Options

Laundry Love TBA
Holy Eucharist and Potluck, Wednesdays 5:45pm at Grace
Evening Prayer and Soup Supper, 5:30pm at St. Thomas

5th Sunday Shared Service

Sunday, March 31, 10:00am Eucharist followed by potluck at Grace

Finally, thank you, for all you do, all the input you give, all the heart and dedication you give to these parishes communities and this shared ministry. God's work is sometimes hard work that we are all called to do, but I could not think of a group of people I would rather do this with. Each of you provides for us examples of steadfast love and faith in this world, and it makes us better people for it.

God's Peace and Love, **MA John 15:9-17**



We need coffee hour hosts for February. Sign-up sheet is in Wilhite Hall. Thank you to everyone who participates in this ministry.



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON
Tuesday, February 12th, at 12noon at
The Wicked Wheel on Hutchison Blvd.
All men are invited and bring a friend!!



We thank you for your faithful support.
Anyone wishing to donate to Grace Church online may now do so. Just visit us at gracespirit.org and go to the Stewardship tab.

Our budget requirement weekly is \$2,649.50
If you have not turned in a pledge card, you may still do so. Go to our website and download it and email to Dawn in the church office at secretary@gracespirit.org.

Thirty-Eighth

Men's Conference and Retreat

March 1, 2, & 3, 2019

Doing the Bible Better

Presented by

Rev. Terence Elsberry

Author and Editor

Priest Associate Christ Church

Greenwich CT

Music led by Sam Richardson

Beckwith Camp and Conference Center

10400 Beckwith Lane

Fairhope, AL

More information is on the bulletin board in Wilhite Hall or for registration, visit the diocese website at www.diocgc.org/event-registration.

Those serving the month of **February**

02/3 9:00 am
Chalice Demo
Acolyte Hodges
Lector Demo
Intercessor Demo
Counters Walters
Greeters Swearingen

02/10
Chalice Knafelc
Acolyte Knafelc
Lector Westmoreland
Intercessor Westmoreland
Counters Swearingen
Greeters Swearingen

02/17
Chalice Gray
Acolyte Gray
Lector Shepard
Intercessor Shepard
Counters Richardson
Greeters Swearingen

02/24
Chalice Richardson
Acolyte Richardson
Lector Hale
Intercessor Hale
Counters Richardson
Greeters Swearingen



Sunday, February 3rd, 2019
First Reading Jeremiah 1:4-10
Psalm 71:1-6
Second Reading 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
Gospel Luke 4:21-30

Sunday, February 10th, 2019
First Reading Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-13)
Psalm 138

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Gospel Luke 5:1-11

Sunday, February 17th, 2019
First Reading Jeremiah 17:5-10
Psalm 1:1-6
Second Reading 1 Corinthians 15:12-20
Gospel Luke 6:17-26

Sunday, February 24th, 2019
First Reading Genesis 45:3-11, 15
Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
Second Reading 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50
Gospel Luke 6:27-38