

Narrative Responses

#1. Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry that you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

In 2015 the St. Andrew's and St. Cyprian's vestries determined our circa-1957 Parish House would not hold everyone at joint parish events. Following written and oral surveys, a joint Facilities Committee began discussing our needs with architects. It was determined that the shell of the existing structure would be renovated to house a larger Thrift Shop, and a new structure was designed with ADA compliant restrooms, a nursery, three classrooms, a larger and upgraded kitchen and pantry, and a fellowship hall to hold 150 people.

The vestries tasked the committee to lead the fundraising campaign, Our Mission in McIntosh. Pledged funds totaled at least double our expectations based on annual giving. With the Bishop's approval of a third of the funding coming from the St. Andrew's Black Fund, an RFP process led to a construction contract and a building loan, so the physical project began Spring 2018.

In April 2019, Bishop Benhase blessed the new Parish House. Our congregations supported the project at every turn, and with God's grace we enjoy a Parish House that serves both our churches and our local community and enhances the missions of our churches.

#2. Describe your liturgical style & practice. If your community provides more than one type of worship service, please describe all.

St. Andrew's practices may be considered traditional and follow the Diocese of Georgia's Liturgical Customary. Holy Eucharist is offered at one service each Sunday with seasonal usage of Rites I & II, featuring a full procession (including choir), Gospel procession, and hymns primarily from the 1980 Hymnal. Two weekday Eucharists are celebrated: Wed at Parishioner's home (10 am) & Thu Healing Service at church (12 noon). The Daily Office is observed through Laity-led Morning Prayer (Mon-Sat) and Evening Prayer (Wed). Sunday service is observed at 11:15 a.m.

The worship style at St. Cyprian's is best described as traditional (Rite II). Our congregational choir sings primarily from the Lift Every Voice and Sing Hymnal. During holidays and cultural events, we welcome a special hymn from one of our devoted parishioners. Our unique passing of peace involves a loyal line of members and visitors greeting one another. There are two lay Eucharistic ministers who assist the rector serving on Sundays and holy days. A lay reader is present to read the morning lessons. Four acolytes assist in the service as well. Sunday service is observed at 9 a.m.

#3. How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

We encourage participation by actively inviting people to join and through passive means, such as newsletter mentions of ministries and open invitations. We call when more hands are needed. While each church provides their own acolytes, crucifers, lectors, lay eucharistic ministers, ushers, and altar guild, both congregations participate in Episcopal Church Women, Christian Men's Fellowship, Christian Education, Youth Programs, Cursillo, Daughters of the King, 5 Loaves and 2 Fishes Food Pantry, Thrift Shop, and Two Saints Café. St. Andrews has a Newcomers Ministry, Pastoral Care, the church choir, deaconate candidates, Education for Ministry, the Prayer Shawl Ministry and a Financial Outreach Ministry. St. Cyprian's ministers to its members through the Benevolent Fund and provides a college

scholarship. Our Food Pantry and CMF draw community support from Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics, and the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints. Our Community Choir also draws from local and regional churches.

#4. As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being?

Spiritual: Along with our Sunday service and Bible Study classes, weekday services offer more opportunities for spiritual nourishment. Ushers, Greeters, Acolytes, Lectors, the Altar Guild, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, and the Choir (St. Andrews only) enrich Sunday worship. Cursillo and Ultreya are encouraged. St. Andrew's led EfM classes, though those halted during the pandemic.

Physical: At St. Andrews, Pastoral Care mails greeting cards to those on the prayer list each month and those with birthdays. If a special short-term need occurs, Pastoral Care will coordinate what is needed. LEM's and Clergy provide weekly communion to homebound or hospitalized members. At St. Cyprians, the Senior Warden phones members who have missed a few Sundays to ask about their well-being and learn of needs. For both churches, our rector offers pastoral consultation and does hospital and home visitation upon request.

Emotional: Service opportunities abound in our ministries, including the ECW, Christian Men's Fellowship, Two Saints Café, Food Pantry, Thrift Shop, Tutoring, Daughters of the King, Youth Ministry, and more.

#5. Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.

The churches of St. Andrew's and St. Cyprian's are two flocks, separate and distinct, and yet our parishes are connected through our shared ministries and the Rite II liturgy. Our coastal heritage defines us as people who have withstood the storms of life, battling wind and waves to survive and flourish. We share a philosophy of giving back to help feed, clothe and assist those in need as evident in our ministries. Together, we are deeply involved in our community. We're blessed to have a beautiful new facility which allows us to extend the olive branch if you will to numerous organizations/events including 12-Step groups; Bridge Clubs; Scout meetings/scout events, Empty Stocking Fund, and expansion of our own ministries.

St. Cyprian's was built for former slaves who began their worship on The Butler Island Plantation. In 1876 the church was built in Darien, GA, 15 years after The Civil War and 17 years after the largest slave auction in US history. In 1859 Pierce M. Butler, owner, was forced by creditors to sell the slaves. The auction became known as The Weeping Time. A total of 436 men, women & children were auctioned. However, this painful history is silent, even as descendants are among our congregation. St. Cyprian's Outreach goal is to initiate the conversation for peace & healing from the dark past.

#6. How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

Again, reflecting on our ministries which are open to any and everyone. Our priests have been active members of the local ministerial association, our presence has been known and felt throughout our community as whole, way outside of our church's walls and congregation specific needs. Our outreach programs have few boundaries at the end of the day. A food pantry that supplies food to the needy, a

thrift shop that provides clothing and household need assistance, meals, tutoring programs within the local public schools, an open door for prayer and reflection in our churches (prior to covid).

#7. Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past 5 years. Who can be contacted about this?

Two Saints Café was founded in 2019 by Parishioner Latrelle Gore. Latrelle had been working with other local churches throughout our community and saw a need to further extend the ministry of offering hot meals during the day to people within the community. The ministry serves approximately 100 hot meals once a week. Latrelle Gore is the contact person.

#8. How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?

We were a 20th century church, operating in the 21st Century. In-person worship restrictions prompted us to embrace the digital age. We familiarized ourselves with technology that enabled continued services & our in-person ministries via social media and video conferencing platforms. This includes adding Wi-Fi to our churches and increasing bandwidth capabilities for streaming purposes. While we do not believe this is the future Church, we acknowledge it as both an entry point for engaging potential members and a means to keeping parishioners unable to attend in person, engaged in fellowship.

To accommodate the future Church, we have expanded our Parish House as a multipurpose meeting space for church fellowship, small group meetings, youth programs, food ministries, and community use. It also allowed us to double the size of our thrift store. We have also recently purchased an adjacent lot to existing church property.

We do not know what God has in store. We invite the continued opportunities to represent the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement in McIntosh County; trying to meet the needs of the impoverished and enriching the spiritual lives of all who pass our thresholds.

#9. What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

Both St. Andrews and St. Cyprians share similar stewardship campaigns. In late October through mid-November, stewardship is emphasized during our Sunday worship services. For three successive Sundays, different members from the congregation speak to their home church about stewardship from their perspective between Announcements and Offertory. On the 4th and final Sunday, a guest Episcopal minister talks about stewardship, and pledge cards are distributed. Those cards are placed on the altar at the end of the service by each church member. At St. Andrew's, vestry members follow up with congregation members who missed the opportunity to pledge.

#10. What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

Collectively, the search committee feels we have at least for our lifetimes done well addressing any conflict through open, up-front communications with our congregations. We cannot think of a particular instance where we have had a specific issue of escalation. Our vestries continue to be made of

committed individuals who strive to ensure conflict is as sparse as possible. Perhaps this is in part to our close-knit parishes, the congregations' can-do attitude and our will to adapt and overcome.

#11. What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

Over the last 14 years, we added new ministries, built a new parish house, and had a priest who was supportive of our congregations' and community's needs. We added a youth director to minister to all youth, and our church member demographics skewed toward retirees. Most congregants are reserved about change but respond well to good communications and changes enacted at a reasonable pace.

As a whole, we seek a new rector with theological knowledge, one who is willing to share the good and the bad, one who is in tune with real-life preaching. We need new approaches in the cultivation of younger families and spiritual care for the sick and homebound.

Preparing for a new rector involved self-examination and visioning. It required a two-way information conduit through the search committee to both churches. We effected this through listening as well as newsletters, interim bulletins, and in-service announcements. Overall, both congregations are poised for that next step forward, though human nature suggests some will respond to this change better than others. We strive to reconcile with lapsed members and build bridges to effect their return.

#12. Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

- 1. Relatable Preaching*
- 2. Inspirational*
- 3. Open Minded*
- 4. Passionate*