



The Episcopal Church of the
HOLY COMFORTER

Charlotte, North Carolina

*P*ARISH PROFILE

*"I will send you another comforter from
the Father, even the spirit of truth."*

John 14:16



The Episcopal Church of the
HOLY COMFORTER

A PRAYER

Almighty and everliving God, look favorably upon us, the people of Holy Comforter, in this time of transition as we search for a new rector.

We pray for the life of our parish, that we may continue to be guided by your love and strengthened in our mission to serve you through ministry, fellowship and worship.

We pray for the search committee, that their hearts and minds may be open to what your Spirit is saying.

We pray for the priest whose name is yet known to you alone, that he or she be open to your call.

*Give us your grace to follow where you would lead us, and grant us your peace. In Jesus' name we pray. **AMEN.***



TABLE of CONTENTS

Introduction	pg 3
Who We Are	pg 5
Who We Seek	pg 9
Additional Information	pg 11





INTRODUCTION



The Episcopal Church of the
HOLY COMFORTER

Set among some of Charlotte's earliest "streetcar" suburbs, the Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter has, since its founding in 1903, continued to actively engage in ministry, gather in fellowship, and worship in thanksgiving for the abundance of God. We share our Bishop Michael Curry's prayer that our church will " ... reflect the face of the peoples of North Carolina in all of our variety and God-given diversity." And that it will be known of us far and wide that "All are welcome in this place."



We seek a rector who is a servant leader whose skills bring us together as a community of believers, clearly communicating a shared vision for our future. We seek an outgoing, energizing person who is not shy when talking about God, who shares from personal experience, who laughs readily, and is comfortable with his/her own gifts and shortcomings. We seek a rector who is a kind and able listener.

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a vibrant community, challenging and committing ourselves to serve Christ through Worship, Discipleship, Stewardship and Leadership.

This is an exciting time for us as we seek a new rector to lead us in our spiritual journey, and we invite you to join us in our discernment process.



INTRODUCTION



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HOLY COMFORTER

SEARCH DISCERNMENT



Through the search process, we have discerned the following about who we are and who we seek as a rector:

WORSHIP. As our central act as a community of faith, our worship services blend traditional, yet personal

elements in our liturgy, music, and sermons. We seek a rector who will lead us in meaningful and inspirational worship that feeds and strengthens us to do God's work in the world.

OUTREACH. An important part of our identity comes from our service and ministry to the needs of all people. We seek a rector who can help us deepen our outreach legacy.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. We have a hunger to learn about our faith and grow in our relationship with God. We seek a rector who will teach, lead and support us; someone who will be involved in developing and improving education offerings for youth and adults.

FELLOWSHIP AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH. We are here at Holy Comforter because we feel welcomed by the spirit of God's love and seek relationships with our Christian family. We seek a rector who will unite us

in our mission to serve God, guide us through our uncertainties surrounding our faith, and kindle our spiritual growth, no matter where we are in the journey.

STEWARDSHIP. We are generous with our time and talents yet we strive to grow in our understanding and practice of the fullness of stewardship. We seek a rector who will help us recognize and respond to the gifts we receive from God, improve our financial offerings and increase our pledge participation. We seek a rector who will develop additional lay leaders, help us to become more environmentally responsible and will fully utilize our new building.





WHO WE ARE



The Episcopal Church of the
HOLY COMFORTER

WORSHIP

In worship, we offer ourselves to God, are fed by the Word and the Eucharist, are knit together as a community of believers, and are strengthened to carry out God's work in the world.

ASSETS. Our sanctuary, with its Tiffany altar window, and our nave, with its soaring oak ceiling, beautifully reflect our love of our Episcopal liturgical tradition and the warm, personal worship style we enjoy. We expect well-prepared sermons that illuminate Scripture for us and challenge us to grow, that are seasoned with humor and that share with us the preacher's personal faith experience.

We pull out all the stops for our name day, the Feast of Pentecost. Our adult and handbell choirs provide us with a variety and breadth of musical offerings. Although our organ is in need of major repairs, we have raised the capital funds needed and have contracted with Bunn-Minnick Co. Pipe Organs for the work to be done in 2010.

CHALLENGES. While the parish survey revealed that about 4 in 5 of us think we do well with music and sermons, there is room for improvement. Our children's choir is dormant. The survey also showed some concerns about our weekday and seasonal services and interest in varying those offerings.



OUTREACH

Outreach is an essential part of our discipleship as followers of Christ. In outreach, we are Christ's hands and feet in the world, meeting the needs of the poor and the suffering, and practicing our baptismal vows to seek and serve Christ in all persons, to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of all persons.

ASSETS. We have a vigorous and varied program of outreach ministries, modeled after Jesus' example of radical hospitality. Holy Comforter has a long-standing legacy of leadership on outreach in the community, ably championed by our deacon and strongly supported by the parish, Vestry and our other clergy. The list is long, and most notably includes Loaves & Fishes (food pantry), Room In The Inn (cold weather shelter), Stop Hunger Now (world hunger relief), and our convocation's first





WHO WE ARE



The Episcopal Church of the
HOLY COMFORTER



English as a Second Language program (ESL). Our ministry to the Hispanic/Latino community has recently expanded beyond ESL classes to include a Sunday evening Spanish-language Eucharist, and a bilingual weekday pre-school.

CHALLENGES. We are at a point in our growth as a parish where we must thoughtfully consider how to continue deepening our outreach ministry.

CHALLENGES. As with many parishes our size, finding the right formula for Christian Education programs is difficult. Our most pressing concerns are for Youth and Adult Christian Education. Our Youth programs are not well attended but have potential. Participation in Adult Christian Education offerings is inconsistent, and although survey respondents indicated this is very important, less than half think it is done well. Sustaining a program that is both consistent enough to draw stronger participation and varied enough to appeal broadly is also a challenge.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

“Sunday School,” “Spiritual Formation,” “Christian Education.” By any name, an important part of growing in our faith is participation in regular classes to study, share with each other, and learn about the Bible, about prayer, and about living more fully as Christians.

ASSETS. Our elementary-aged children enjoy Catechesis of the Good Shepherd while for our middle-and high-school youths we offer the Journey to Adulthood program, which includes Rite-13.





WHO WE ARE



The Episcopal Church of the
HOLY COMFORTER

FELLOWSHIP & SPIRITUAL GROWTH

"All are welcome." We are a family, always eager to add to our household, doors and hearts open wide to newcomers. We are connected by more than friendship. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, learning from and leaning on each other, growing in our understanding of the Spirit's working amongst and through us.

ASSETS. Fellowship opportunities are important to us, and often are whole-parish events, such as barbecue & bluegrass picnics, potluck luncheons, the Chili Cook-off, and our annual parish retreat at Kanuga Conference Center. Others are geared to specific groups, such as the Oyster Roast (adults only), the Brotherhood of the Biscuits (breakfast chefs), or the Tuesday Brunch Bunch (an older crowd). Our in-reach ministries provide support when any of us are in need, and strengthen the bonds of fellowship between the participants.



STEWARDSHIP

*"All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee."
(1 Chronicles 29:14) From pledging, to committing our time and talents to God's service, to caring for the earth and for our buildings and grounds, we strive to be good stewards of the gifts God has given us.*

ASSETS. Our parishioners are actively involved in the life of the church, from worship, to outreach and fellowship. Our Endowment and Foundation provide long-term funding to support outreach and capital improvements, respectively. We are blessed with an architecturally beautiful set of buildings that are well situated amidst mature oaks and lovingly tended gardens. Major systems, such as roof and HVAC, are sound. We successfully completed a capital campaign this past year, raising \$3 million to expand and renovate our facilities and repair the organ. Construction began in June 2009 and will add much needed classroom and outreach space.

CHALLENGES. There is an unmet demand for small group fellowship for study and spiritual development, but we have yet to find a sustainable approach to meeting this need. Others among us are expressing a desire for more resources to guide individual spiritual development. Our young adults (without children) and empty nesters express a desire for more fellowship opportunities aimed at their life stages. And although we are perceived as a very welcoming parish, newcomers sometimes find it difficult to become integrated into the life of the parish.





WHO WE ARE



The Episcopal Church of the
HOLY COMFORTER

CHALLENGES. While we are a financially sound and well-managed parish, we must grow and broaden our base of pledge income. We also need to cultivate a broader base of lay leaders, and we need to quickly maximize use of our new and renovated facilities. Many parishioners expressed interest in becoming more environmentally responsible.



ADDITIONAL ASSETS & CHALLENGES

ASSETS. We have a strong relationship with our diocese and consistently meet 100% of our “diocesan asking.” For decades we have operated as a program church, with a rector and associate rector. For several years we have also benefited from the presence of a Deacon, who has brought the parish to an extraordinary commitment to community outreach. Our member demographics show a healthy mix of life stages, including many young families, and we are predominantly

graduates of college or graduate school. Our in-reach ministries are numerous and varied, ranging from groups that support our worship services, to pastoral care, to fellowship and discipleship. We are home to Boy Scout Troop 1, the county’s first established Troop. The Holy Comforter Weekday School, overseen by an independent board of directors and partially funded by the parish, has served the community for over 50 years.

CHALLENGES. Effective communication is a key issue, with survey respondents requesting better use of our website, re-instatement of our monthly newsletter, and more judicious use of email blasts and telephone calling posts. While we also have a vacancy with our associate rector, we are anxious to quickly return to the staff required of a program parish.





WHO WE SEEK



The Episcopal Church of the
HOLY COMFORTER

*"The gifts He gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ..."
(Ephesians 4:11-12)*

PREACHING

"Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. (Psalms 25:4-5)

We value well-prepared and delivered sermons that explain theological context and meaning, clarify Biblical nuances, and make the Gospel relevant in our lives. We appreciate someone who will share with us his or her personal experiences and struggles, and uses humor effectively to connect with us. We seek a rector who enjoys preaching and welcomes the opportunity to challenge us

through sermons. We seek a rector who will mentor our other clergy in preaching, and invite guest preachers to our pulpit.



PASTORAL CARE

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up." (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

We are meant to walk through this life with caring people by our side. We seek a new rector who will be approachable and available when we find ourselves aching, vulnerable and alone. We seek a new rector who will guide and lead our lay ministers who care for us through the years. And we seek a new rector who will personally care for each of us in our times of joy, sorrow, trouble and need.





WHO WE SEEK



The Episcopal Church of the
HOLY COMFORTER



SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

“Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.” (Romans 8:5)

There are many paths and ways to discover a life with God. We want to be guided along the way as we strive to live more spirit-filled lives. We seek a rector who will talk with us openly about our doubts and questions, and direct us with focus so that the Spirit may reflect through us God’s values and love.

TEACHING

“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.” (1 Timothy 4:13)

The discipline of gathering regularly to learn about our faith is an integral part of our lives as Christians. Yet, we struggle to deliver a consistent program of Christian Education offerings that meet the diverse needs of our youths and adults. We seek a rector who will develop and implement a plan for a cohesive Christian Education program, ranging from teaching us about Episcopal history and traditions to clergy-supported Bible study.





ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



The Episcopal Church of the
HOLY COMFORTER

HISTORY OF HOLY COMFORTER. In 2003, we joyfully celebrated 100 years as a parish. Find out more about our legacy of leadership in faith and service at

www.holycomforter-clt.org/calling_a_rector.php

HOLY COMFORTER WEEKDAY SCHOOL.

Our Weekday School has served families in our community for over fifty years. For more information, visit

www.holycomforter-clt.org/weekday-school.php

PHYSICAL FACILITIES / CAPITAL

CAMPAIGN. We broke ground in the building phase of our Forward in Faith capital campaign in July 2009 and expect to begin enjoying our expanded and renovated facilities for Outreach, Christian Education, and administration in 2010.

See the building plans and construction updates at www.holycomforter-clt.org/capital-campaign.php



FINANCIAL. As the financial summary below shows, we've typically enjoyed steady growth in revenues, although the economic recession has certainly been felt in our current year's operating budget. While this may make more appropriate than ever our tongue-in-cheek description of our parish as "a lean, mean, Christian machine," we are serious about putting our resources to work in God's service. We are also fortunate to have an Endowment that funds outreach beyond our annual operating budget and a Foundation supporting capital improvements to our physical plant.



	JAN - DEC 2006	JAN - DEC 2007	JAN - DEC 2008	JAN - DEC 2009 (BUDGET)
REVENUES				
PLEDGE INCOME	\$673,057.90	\$729,404.85	\$761,742.63	\$652,656.00
NON-PLEDGE GIFTS	\$61,625.52	\$97,139.85	\$61,371.07	\$59,344.00
INTEREST/DIVIDENDS & OTHER	\$13,647.55	\$38,209.84	\$29,851.09	\$18,400.47
Total Revenues	\$748,330.97	\$864,754.54	\$852,964.79	\$730,400.47
EXPENSES				
PERSONNEL	\$429,165.08	\$457,875.32	\$461,305.29	\$386,045.96
PROGRAMS	\$106,826.33	\$81,686.58	\$93,317.54	\$70,741.30
ADMIN AND OPERATING	\$133,154.47	\$138,093.46	\$131,113.77	\$127,748.00
DIOCESAN ASKING	\$80,700.00	\$119,303.00	\$117,476.00	\$125,866.00
Total Expenses	\$749,845.88	\$796,958.36	\$803,212.60	\$710,401.26
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	(\$1,514.91)	\$67,796.18	\$49,752.19	\$19,999.21



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



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PARISH SURVEY RESULTS. To explore the parish survey results, see www.holycomforter-clt.org/calling_a_rector.php

DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA. We are proud to be part of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, which, under the leadership of Bishop Michael B. Curry, has articulated this mission statement: “Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Diocese of North Carolina seeks to live God’s dream by making disciples and making a difference. We do so by building joyful congregations and other communities of faith, centered on the Gospel, in the communion of the Episcopal Church. We go forth to offer God’s reconciling love to all persons, with special concerns for the unchurched, young people, and those on the margins of society.” Find out more at www.episdionc.org



CHARLOTTE & NORTH CAROLINA. Center of one of the nation’s fastest-growing metropolitan areas, Charlotte is a New South city in the Old North State. For more on living here, go to the Visit Charlotte website at www.charlottesgotalot.com and the state’s official tourism website at www.visitnc.com





OUR HYMN



The Episcopal Church of the
HOLY COMFORTER

Commemorating the 100th Year of Holy Comforter, Charlotte NC

The Call to Discipleship

Patricia Blaze Clark
2003
Unison

HOLY COMFORTER
11.10.11.11. with Refrain
Russell Schulz-Widmar 2003

1. The call to dis - ci - ple - ship sounds through the years;
 2. In - vest - ed as stew - ards, we come to this place,
 3. U - nit - ed in wor - ship, our spir - its are fed,
 4. Com - mis - sioned as lead - ers we look to our Guide:

lay o - pen your heart to the In - car - nate Word.
 that they be not hoard - ed but tend - ed and shared.
 and wel - come the hun - gry, with arms o - pen wide.
 we lab - or to raise up a world that is good.

"Come be my fol - low - ers and o - pen your ears."
 bear - ing the boun - ty of God's lov - ing grace.
 nour - ished and strength - ened by Christ, liv - ing Bread.
 lead - ing by ser - ving sets glo - ry a - side.

Christ's prom - ise is sure: You will not be a - lone:

At - tend to the mes - sage a - pos - tles first heard;
 These tal - ents and treas - ures are placed in our care,
 Now we are Christ's Bod - y; in love we a - bide
 As hum - bly we stand where our fore - bears have stood,

I will send you a Com - fort - er the Spir - it of Truth."





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