



In common mission with



The Rev. Dr. Sarah Gaede, Interim Rector  
The Rev. Dr. Billy Walton, Deacon

---

June 30, 2019

Dear Parish Family,

It is a great time to be a part of All Saints' Episcopal Church and Christ the King Lutheran Church, the Tupelo, MS Episcopal/Lutheran branch of the Jesus Movement.

Just one year ago, All Saints' and Christ the King entered a Mediation process with The Rev. Peter Gray from Greenwood, MS. From that process we have learned a great deal about who we are as a Body of Christ. Through this process, we have dealt with conflict and worked toward resolution and healing. There is no organization that is immune from conflict: no workplace, no government, no home and no church. The common misconception that churches will always be peaceful, and loving can be very hurtful. Although the church is the institution that strives to spread love as Christ loved us, we are human. The beauty is that while living into our Baptismal vows and seeking Christ in all persons, we can improve, we can learn, and we can LOVE despite differences.

During this process of healing several proposals were developed to improve our mission in seeking and serving Christ in all persons. The Vestry, beginning in February, has diligently worked through these proposals to make them agreements that will better serve the community of All Saints' and Christ the King as well as the greater community.

Many of these agreements have already been put into action. Timelines and goals have been placed on others yet to be activated. The Vestry will continue to review these agreements to assure that we stay on task.

I am thankful to the Vestry of 2018 for the brave leadership and decision to enter the mediation process. Their leadership and commitment to All Saints' and Christ the King have led us to be a stronger and wiser and more unified community. We are a strong parish. We will never be free from fault and conflict, but we have the tools, guidelines and leadership to face these issues better in the future.

Quoting Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, "The truth is that what you do and what we do matters, and how we do it matters significantly, temporally and eternally. It matters."

NOW, we, All Saints' and Christ the King are equipped to do it well, with God's help.

Faithfully,  
Deanna Alford, Sr. Warden

**MEDIATION AGREEMENTS**  
**APPROVED BY THE VESTRY**  
**APRIL, MAY & JUNE 2019**

**A. To address MISSION AND PURPOSE, we agree:**

1. That in collaboration with our next rector, a process be designed by the Vestry to review and possibly revise the mission statement. This review will:
  - a. Include opportunities for congregational participation throughout the process, to ensure that it accurately captures the spirit, identity, welcome, courage, and mission of All Saints.
  - b. Reflect the presiding bishop's focus on the Jesus Movement
  - c. Include the work of the Strategic Planning Committee.
  - d. Reflect the congregation's commitment to caring conflict transformation
    - *Implementation timeline: As soon as the new vestry begins its work in 2019.*
  
2. That during the fall Stewardship Campaign, part of the kickoff be a "time, talent, and treasure fair" in which the mission statement is presented and our ministries are explicitly connected to the mission statement, and that, as a part of this process, areas for growth and improvement be identified, as well as consideration for the creation of emerging ministries.
  - *Implementation timeline: Fall 2019.*
  
3. That during Stewardship Emphasis season, each parishioner be led to ask: "What is my role in fulfilling our/this mission?"; that parishioner – including children and youth – be invited and encouraged to seek opportunities for connection and involvement using his/her unique gifts and talents; and that parishioners be led to ask: "How does my financial stewardship help to fulfill our mission?" And further that during Stewardship Emphasis season, parishioners active in various ministries share with the parish via Sunday services, newsletter, etc., why they serve and about their experiences, and that the upcoming Capital Campaign will be considered in this effort.
  - *Implementation timeline: Six weeks prior to Pledge Sunday.*
  
4. That the Stewardship Committee be made a permanent committee and be tasked with the fall Stewardship Campaign and incorporating the gifts and talents of members into our ministries throughout the year.
  - *Implementation timeline: As soon as the new vestry begins its work in 2019.*

**B. To address WORSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY, we agree:**

1. That the youth of the congregation become more involved in the church and that members of the church become more integrated into the life of our youth in numerous ways, including:
  - a. Offering the EYC the opportunity to have a youth-led Sunday service(s) at least once or twice a year that is coordinated by the priest, vergers, youth director and the youth.
  - b. Actively inviting youth to participate as lectors, choir members, altar guild, leadership, etc. throughout the year.
  - c. Offering parish-wide communication opportunities each month to the EYC created by the EYC highlighting their activities for the month and their accomplishments inside or outside of the church.
  - d. Actively promoting and educating the congregation about all diocesan youth activities throughout the year – CBG Summer Camp sessions, DOY, Happening, Winter Solstice – so that the congregation can become more vested in encouraging, sending and helping our youth participate in these activities.
  - e. Having the Vestry and DOK help with Happening Caritas each time.
  - f. Continuing the College Care packages sent twice each year before exam time.
  - g. Finding ways to actively promote children's Christian formation including summer opportunities.
  - h. Conducting a thorough acolyte training by the priest, vergers, and senior acolytes at least once a year to instruct all acolytes on all the different jobs.
  - i. Offering parish-wide communication opportunities each month to Troop and Pack 85, created by the Senior Patrol Leader or other youth from the Troop or Pack, detailing their activities of the month and their accomplishments.
  - *Implementation timeline: To be determined by Parish Administrator, Youth Leader, and scout leaders.*
2. That the priest offers a range of Christian education opportunities for all adults including Episcopal traditions and liturgy and confirmation-type classes.
  - *Implementation timeline: Rector option.*
3. That the service bulletin be expanded to include the scripture readings of the service to help visitors become more involved in the service.
  - *Implementation timeline: Immediate and ongoing. [DONE]*

4. That the Choirmaster and Choir teach the congregation about hymn choices/music requirements throughout the year via periodic potluck supper presentations, during EYC, or during other gatherings.
  - *Implementation timeline: Fall of 2019 and periodically after that.*
5. That the Centering Prayer program be offered again if a qualified and willing leader can be recruited.
  - *Implementation timeline: Spring of 2020 and ongoing.*
6. That a weekly short-term adult Bible Study session be offered periodically throughout the year. Leaders of this Bible study will be recruited by the Director of Christian Education.
  - *Implementation timeline: Lent of 2020 and periodically throughout year.*
7. Ensure enrollment for Educations for Ministry (EfM) is promoted beginning in mid-Spring.
  - *Implementation timeline: Spring 2019. [Done]*

**C. To address CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER, we agree:**

1. That a Newcomers Committee be reconstituted, working with the Care Team, to design and implement a program to welcome and incorporate newcomers, uninvolved members, and lapsed members using the following resources:
  - Greeters
  - Time/talent surveys
  - Reminders during the announcements or the Peace
  - *Implementation timeline: Immediate and ongoing.*
2. That a pastoral request form be placed on the website with information about who will receive it and an acknowledgement of receipt.
  - *Implementation timeline: When the website is redesigned.*
3. That the Vestry study the reconstitution of Family Groups as a way to nurture relationships and embrace and respect the diversity of perspectives within the congregation.
  - *Implementation timeline: By the end of 2020.*
4. That discussion groups be created where diverse theological, social, and political perspectives can be expressed in a structured, respectful, and open-minded way, and that intentionally incorporate skills from the mediation workshops.
  - *Implementation timeline: Late 2020 at Rector's discretion.*

5. That the use of name tags be implemented.
  - *Implementation timeline: Upon arrival of new Rector for one month and periodically thereafter.*

**D. To address CARING FROM PASTORS, we agree:**

1. That during the search process, the Vestry and Search Committee thoroughly communicate to the candidates the parish's expectations of consistent and direct pastoral care for parishioners. The Vestry and Search Committee will also thoroughly communicate with each candidate regarding his/her pastoral care philosophy and practice, and communicate to candidates the expectation that he/she should have the capacity to handle all aspects of a busy parish, including self-care, the ability to nurture unity in diversity, and the ability to work effectively with and care for all ages.
  - *Implementation timeline: When new Search Committee is formed and operational.*
2. That with the arrival of the new rector, the Vestry offer opportunities for the rector and parishioners to interact in small informal groups to facilitate community and relationships. In these small groups, parishioners will have an opportunity to discuss pastoral care expectations with the new rector.
  - *Implementation timeline: First 120 days after rector's arrival, or longer if necessary.*
3. That the Vestry communicate to the parish in multiple ways whom to contact and how to contact clergy with pastoral care needs, including a new pastoral request form on the website.
  - *Implementation timeline: Immediate and Ongoing.*

**E. To address CARING FOR THE PASTOR, we agree:**

1. That church members be informed of the Vestry's expectations of the pastor as stated in the Letter of Agreement including a recognition that, on occasion:
  - a visit from a lay minister can substitute for a clergy visit.
  - the pastor may not be able to participate in relationship building activities at all times.
  - the pastor should be able to delegate tasks to the staff and other lay ministers.
  - *Implementation timeline: Immediate and ongoing.*
2. That the wardens should schedule monthly lunches with the pastor to "check in."
  - *Implementation timeline: Immediate and ongoing. [DONE]*
3. That a stated expectation of Vestry members be to initiate the taking of responsibility for

tasks.

- *Implementation timeline: Immediate and ongoing.*

4. That the Vestry should explore the creation of an annual or semi-annual Mutual Ministry Review with the rector in order to have structured opportunities to review how expectations in the Letter of Agreement have and have not been met and how the Vestry has and has not met the rector's expectations of their leadership.

- *Implementation timeline: Upon the arrival of a new rector.*

**F. To address CARING CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION, we agree:**

1. That the congregation be reminded in a variety of ways that conflict is normal, that the leadership is receptive to concerns, and that conflict can lead to progress when addressed.

- *Implementation timeline: During the Vestry retreat and following the call of the new rector.*

2. That the Vestry and congregation be educated on ways to address conflict directly and when to invite the help of a third party.

- *Implementation timeline: During Vestry retreat following the call of the new rector.*

3. That the Vestry covenant be revisited to include and implement skills learned from the mediation process as a way of addressing concerns, using Matthew 18 as our guide.

- *Implementation timeline: During Vestry retreat following the call of the new rector.*

**G. To address COMMUNICATION AND DECISION MAKING, we agree:**

1. That the rector and Vestry ensures that all decisions be communicated with transparency by having:

- a. A Vestry member report on the Vestry agenda and projects during Wednesday potluck and conclude with a Q & A session.
- b. The Vestry review the "Newcomers Packet" to ensure clarity and thoroughness including how newcomers prefer to be communicated with (mail, email, etc.).
- c. The church office makes the annual report available to each member of the parish and a cover letter from the rector include at a minimum: a statement of appreciation for the person/family, encouragement for the future year, and appreciation for continued and timely stewardship support. **[Done]**
- d. The church bookkeeper sends a quarterly pledge statement to each church member with a statement of appreciation for remaining current with pledge contributions. **[DONE]**
- e. The congregation review the Vestry covenant at the annual meeting with

- emphasis on decision making and communication.
  - *Implementation timeline: Immediate and ongoing.*
2. That the Vestry promote improved communication with youth and EYC by having:
    - a. A Vestry member visit EYC regularly.
    - b. Youth confirmation classes include information about how the Vestry works.
    - c. Contact information of the youth collected at the time of confirmation and on other occasions for their inclusion in church emails, texts, and social media.
    - *Implementation timeline: Immediate and ongoing.*
  3. That the Church office staff display in prominent places updated information on parish matters, diocesan events, the national church, and CBG/Gray Center news.  
[Done]
    - *Implementation timeline: Immediate and ongoing.*
  4. That the Church update and fully utilize our website capabilities, including:
    - a. Utilizing Facebook and other social media as appropriate to help disseminate information. **[Done]**
    - b. Posting information on events prominently to help church members more easily include them on their own personal calendars. **[Done]**
    - *Implementation timeline: By the end of 2019 and updated thereafter.*
  5. That announcements in church clearly, effectively, and concisely articulate the importance of the announcements to the mission of the church.
    - *Implementation timeline: Immediate and ongoing.*
  6. That major decisions in the life of the church be accompanied by prayer and a planned process that both *gives information* to the congregation *and allows for* input from the congregation.
    - *Implementation timeline: Immediate and ongoing.*
  7. That the vestry annually evaluate the effectiveness of our communication strategy.
    - *Implementation timeline: Fall of 2019.*

#### **H. To address RECTOR SEARCH, we agree:**

1. That an open call be made via all media outlets – service bulletin, newsletter, email, website and service announcements – for parishioners interested in being a part of the next Search Committee to apply.
  - *Implementation timeline: Immediate and until committee is selected.*
2. That the following criteria for the selection of the next Search Committee be

considered by the Vestry:

- a. In accordance with Parish By-Laws, the Search Committee members include a total of 9 members – 3 from the Vestry – and that all be confirmed parishioners in good standing and pledgers of record.
  - b. A majority of the committee members, at least 5 people, come from the list of parishioners who participated in one or more of the Mediation Process sessions.
  - c. The nine members of the committee be as diverse a representation of the parish at large as possible while still maintaining the criteria above.
  - d. The 3 Vestry members be appointed bearing in mind their remaining tenure so that they remain on the Vestry for the duration of the search process until the Vestry elects the new rector.
    - *Implementation timeline: March 2019.*
3. That the Vestry solicit and implement recommendations from the search consultant about how best – and in accordance with Diocesan rules and procedures – to incorporate into the search process the participation of an EYC member
    - *Implementation timeline: April 2019 and until the process is complete.*
  4. That the Vestry request from the Diocesan office detailed written guidelines clarifying roles and expectations of both the Vestry and the Search Committee in the search process, that these guidelines be made available to the parish, and that the Vestry request the Diocesan office be available to the Search Committee throughout the process for questions, answers and guidance.
    - *Implementation timeline: Immediate and until the process is complete.*
  5. That the Search Committee communicate with the parish monthly during the process via newsletters, email, service bulletins, and Wednesday potluck suppers using the Bishop's Flowchart as a guideline; that the Search Committee share as much information as possible with the parish, keeping confidential only what must remain confidential (i.e. -names, locations); and that communication be more frequent than monthly when special developments occur.
    - *Implementation timeline: Immediate and until the process is complete.*
  6. That the Parish Profile be republished, especially if updated, via communication channels and at a potluck supper.
    - *Implementation timeline: Spring / Summer 2019; when complete.*
  7. That the Search Committee provide regular updates to the Vestry throughout the process and that upon selection of a candidate, the following steps will be taken:



- a. PRIOR to the Meet and Greet meeting, the Search Committee will meet with the Vestry to provide a full and detailed report, including a written report to the Vestry, on why they selected the candidate that they did, the division of the vote within the Search Committee, and, if the Search Committee's vote was not unanimous, any significant concerns of the minority.
  - b. In this meeting, the Search Committee will highlight what they deemed to be the strong points and the weaker points of the candidate.
  - c. The Meet and Greet should be a social time and not the appropriate setting for raising Vestry or staff concerns. The Transition Team will not be included in this event.
  - d. Prior to the candidate interview with the Vestry, the All Saints' staff and candidate will meet to discuss respective roles and their work. The staff will have the opportunity to voice their opinions of the candidate to the Vestry prior to the candidate's interview with the Vestry.
  - e. At the Vestry's interview of the candidate, Vestry members will ask the candidate directly about any concerns they plan to bring up later with the Vestry.
  - f. The Search Committee and the Vestry will meet once more following the Vestry interview and before the Vestry votes.
- *Implementation timeline: Fall 2019.*

**I. To address STRUCTURES AND LEADERSHIP, we agree:**

1. That the Time and Talent survey be revised and updated to include Christ the King and sent to the congregation and, further, that there be follow-up with the congregants who respond and that the entire process be evaluated for its efficacy.
  - *Implementation timeline: Octoberfest of 2019.*
2. That there be more education opportunities regarding Episcopal and Lutheran polity/governance, the role of the priest, the role of the vestry, and the background of some of our customs.
  - *Implementation timeline: At the Rector's discretion.*
3. That newer committee members be paired with more senior members to function as mentors. (Vestry, Altar Guild, Acolytes, Chalice Bearers, etc.)
  - *Implementation timeline: As soon as possible.*
4. That a Vestry Retreat be mandatory each year to focus on vision and to include education, by-laws, canons, etc.
  - *Implementation timeline: Soon after the new Vestry members are elected, possibly March 2019.*

**J. To address RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST THE KING, we agree:**

1. That the Time and Talent survey be sent out to members of Christ the King as well as members of All Saints' and include questions that would elicit the specific needs of both congregations and acknowledge the gifts of both.
  - *Implementation timeline: As soon as possible.*
  
2. That the document from the Task Force regarding the relationship between All Saints' and Christ the King be distributed to the Vestry and that information from the document be shared again with the congregation via mailings and the newsletter and be raised as a discussion topic for potluck or other gatherings.
  - *Implementation timeline: As soon as possible and ongoing.*
  
3. That a task force be formed by the members of Christ the King and All Saints' to plan service projects and social events, discover the needs specific to Christ the King and All Saints', and check in on the prior recommendations of the original task force.
  - *Implementation timeline: As soon as possible and ongoing.*