Welcome to the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit
Alabaster, Alabama
The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit

Our parish is more than just a building with a nave, narthex, and community hall. We are a loving, diverse, and growing community of believers. We live our lives filled with hope, energy, and determination to fulfill our mission to be the Body of Christ on Earth as we strive to honor the two great commandments: *Love God and Love Each Other*.

The Holy Spirit Family is welcoming to all, inclusive in our beliefs, empowered by our faith, and grounded by Scripture, the Book of Common Prayer, the love of our Liturgy, and our identity as faithful Episcopalians.

The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit is calling for a rector that is not afraid to lead or afraid to be led. We will depend on our new rector to help us focus our hope and energy to live up to the Vision, Mission, and Values as described in this parish profile. In return, the Holy Spirit Family will never give our new rector reason to regret this very important decision.

We invite you to learn more about our parish and join with us as we move forward in faith!

In Christ’s Love,

The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit Search Committee
Our Journey

As the new millennium approached and the world was stressing about the number of critical computers that might fail when the calendar flipped to the year 2000 -- Alabama Episcopal Diocese leaders were thinking about the number of new parishes needed to grow the faith. By 2001 The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit was born in the hearts of the founders then nurtured and raised in their homes until room could be found in a local business.

Holy Spirit’s next move brought it to a storefront on Highway 31 in the city of Alabaster where the word of the Lord was shared, and the parish grew under the leadership of the first rector, The Reverend Lee Lowery. Holy Spirit continued to grow and by 2007 a beautiful church was built at our present location. A double wide trailer housed the parish hall, church office, nursery and Christian education classrooms until 2011. A generous gift from a parishioner then provided for the construction of a new parish hall that added a wonderful kitchen and multiple classrooms.

After The Reverend Lowery’s departure in 2013, The Reverend Mary Bea Sullivan became Holy Spirit’s rector upon her 2014 ordination in our sanctuary. The Reverend Sullivan saw growth in the parish ministries, additional staff members, and the addition of a beautiful new organ. The Reverend Sullivan’s ability to bring people together to facilitate honest and candid conversations provided the framework for the Holy Spirit family to participate in a yearlong deep discernment process that resulted in our parish extending the sacrament of marriage to same sex couples if they were blessed by The Bishop.

Upon The Reverend Sullivan’s transfer to another parish in 2016, we were blessed to have The Reverend Bill Blackerby serve as our Interim Rector. Father Blackerby’s kind, caring, and generous spirit allowed Holy Spirit to continue to move forward during a time of transition.
Vision

➢ Love for The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit is woven into the essential fabric of the lives of our parishioners and the local community.

➢ Our parish provides highly respected Christian Leadership for the Diocese of Alabama.

➢ Vibrant worship services, outreach services, and inreach services are the hallmarks of our Christian formation, commitment to the diverse communities we serve, and love for each other.

➢ Emphasis on our liturgy, community engagement, and service work fosters love for the Episcopal Church, the joy of lifelong learning, and the power of diverse perspectives.
Mission

➢ Enhance and promote healthy spiritual lives for our members and visitors by bringing our relationship with God into clear view.

➢ Provide a loving, safe, and welcoming place of worship for all of God’s children.

➢ Increase awareness of the importance of stewardship to strengthen our parish and to allow us to provide meaningful outreach and inreach services.

➢ Support our parish community, through good times and bad, with spiritual counseling, love, and grace.

➢ Counsel our members on how to discern their God given gifts and how to best put those gifts to work in the service of Jesus.

➢ Outreach engagement activities shall encourage Holy Spirit parishioners to be active in service to the community.

➢ Promote candid communication among our parishioners and with our vestry and clergy.

➢ Attendance efforts shall include actively seeking new members by demonstrating to invited guests and casual visitors the unique congregation that is the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit.

➢ Lay leaders support the clergy in worship, church governance, and spiritual formation.
**Diversity Statement**

- Parish actions toward our employees, our volunteers, our members, and the people we serve must reflect that we live in a state that is rich in human diversity in all its forms and every person deserves to be treated with respect, dignity, and care.

- Every decision we make should honor our commitment to God by fostering diversity, integrity, respect, trust, openness, excellence, accountability and justice.

- All our employees, volunteers, members, and the people we serve should have the opportunity to realize their full potential.

- Christian formation is the lifelong process of growing our relationship with God, self, others, and all creation. Focusing on those relationships allows us to build bridges to others that may look or think differently than we do.

- Embracing the differences among people makes our parish, our community, and our nation stronger.
Values

WE THANK GOD

WE ARE PROACTIVE

WE ANTICIPATE CHANGE

WE TAKE RESPONSIBLE RISKS

WE SUPPORT CONTINUOUS LEARNING

WE PRACTICE DIVERSITY IN ALL OUR ACTIONS

WE COMMIT TO INTEGRITY, FAIRNESS, AND JUSTICE

WE ENJOY OUR SERVICE AND LOVE ALL OF GOD’S CREATION

WE FOSTER COLLABORATION, RESPECT, TRUST, AND ACCOUNTABILITY
Our Worship

“Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love. Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.”

According to an old Irish saying, “Heaven and earth are only three feet apart, but in thin places that distance is even shorter.” Perhaps, The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit is a “thin place” and that’s why so many visitors to our parish say they can feel something special about our family of believers. We like to think it is the Holy Spirit filling their hearts with “the fire of Thy love.”

We engage all our senses in worship by incorporating song and silence, holy water and bells, language and gestures, vestments and icons. The physical way that we express our liturgy leads us to the sacrament of the Eucharist by demonstrating the outward and visible signs of the inward and invisible grace of God. We strive for beauty and dignity, without being rigid, self-conscious, or stuffy. We change vessels, vestments, and service music with the seasons, and coordinate other apparent and subtle changes as well. A large number of people contribute many hours every week and month to coordinate all that is needed. These include Lectors, Acolytes, Eucharistic Ministers, Altar Guild, singers, and musicians. Our approach to worship is intentional, with each liturgical action examined for meaning and appropriateness.

Essential to our worship is thoughtful preaching that helps us better understand the scripture readings of the day, recognizes current events that may call for an immediate Christian response, challenge us to lead more Christ-centered lives, and can open our minds to insights. Whether a priest, a deacon, or a parishioner is called upon to give the sermon, readings, or prayers, may the words of their mouths, and the meditations of their hearts, be acceptable in the sight of the Lord, our strength and our redeemer.

Even as we embrace tradition, we allow each service to develop its own character from the quiet spoken service at 8:30 a.m. to the glorious singing and chanting at the 10:30 a.m. service. From Sunday Services to a Healing Eucharist; from Taize to Lessons and Carols; from Centering Prayer to the Blessing of the Animals -- all of our services honor the foundation of the Episcopal tradition and most incorporate the beautiful language of the Book of Common Prayer.

The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit wraps its arms around our parishioners and that is why so many members say their favorite part of our worship is the true sense of community and fellowship that makes our time together feel like a family gathering. We are a thoughtful group of people who immerse ourselves in the treasures of the sacraments where we find the sublime in the rhythm of our traditions that are expressed through works of art, music, and by gestures.
Christian Formation = Prayer

➢ Prayer takes many forms. It is not just Sunday School!

➢ Reading scripture and studying the Word of God is a form of prayer.

➢ Asking, “How can I help feed the hungry or clothe the poor?” is a form of prayer.

➢ Yearning to be closer to God and the teachings of Christ is a form of prayer.

➢ Education that strengthens our understanding of the Episcopal Church’s traditions, liturgy, and history, can bring us closer to God as we better understand why we do what we do in the sanctuary, and that is a form of prayer.

➢ Reaching out to arrange the flowers, iron the vestments, make coffee, weed the garden, or bake the bread for the Eucharist is a form of prayer.

Our parishioners are eager to learn. We set a high value on Christian education for ourselves and for newcomers. And we want our Rector and church leaders to take advantage of professional learning opportunities.
**Inreach + Outreach = Action and Hope**

➢ **Action** allows Holy Spirit to honor Jesus’ example of performing works of mercy by finding ways to respond to those who are lonely, hungry, or in physical or spiritual need.

➢ **Christmas** is much brighter for the children served by our [Angel Tree](#) project that brings a smile to children across our community.

➢ **Taste of the Spirit’s** volunteers create a joyful event for fellowship, raise money for the parish, and invite others to enjoy our parish.

➢ **Invite, Welcome, and Connect Team** members reach out to the community and make everyone feel at home at Holy Spirit.

➢ **Outside of the view** of most people in our community are people in need who know they can count on our [Beans and Rice Ministry](#) to provide food, supplies, and love.

➢ **No parishioner is turned away** from participating in Inreach or Outreach activities.

➢ **Holy Smokers** is a unique group that provides wonderful Inreach actions for fellowship and parish fundraising, while at the same time providing Outreach actions that help our parish provide food for the needy.

➢ **Our Mow Team** handles the landscaping needs for the parish grounds.

➢ **Parish Life** prepares and coordinates all of the meals for our gatherings. And we do like to break bread together.

➢ **Education Inreach activities** such as [Sunday School](#) and [Children’s Chapel](#) bring our members closer to Christ.
Inreach and Outreach Moments in Time

In addition to the Inreach and Outreach activities already featured, our parishioners are working in the following ministries as they try to mirror the actions of Jesus when he met the needs of the people: Altar Guild; Lay Leaders; Lectors; Acolytes; Eucharistic Ministers; Choir; Christian Formation; Pastoral Care; Habitat for Humanity; Vacation Bible School; Daughters of the King; Cursillo; Men’s Breakfast Club; Women’s Group; and the Vestry.
“Behold, I will make all things new….”
Jesus

**Gifts and Skills Our New Rector Must Exhibit**

- A gift for pastoral care and the sensitivity to use that gift.
- A compassionate spirit and willingness to embrace all people of God, identifying with and appreciating the diversity of this congregation.
- A priest that will enter deeply and fully into our worship traditions while bringing his/her own unique experience to the parish.
- Authenticity and a genuine appreciation for a wide age range of parishioners.
- Ability to reconcile rather than divide, managing conflict swiftly and fairly.
- A deep grounding in scripture and tradition, and ability to communicate the mystery of our faith in sermons and classes.
- A practical person who is organized but not bureaucratic, who can manage the business of the parish, balance a budget, raise money, motivate givers, manage and motivate a staff (paid and volunteer), work collaboratively with the Vestry and provide opportunities to serve to all parishioners that want them.
- In accord with Canon Rules, the rector shall chair the meetings of the Vestry and collaborate with the Senior Warden to determine the agenda for Vestry meetings.
- The Vestry is charged with serving as the legislative authority for the parish and shall transact all of the temporal business of the parish that includes maintaining the finances and facilities of the parish. The rector is encouraged to assist with these duties.
- Delegation of duties to the staff and volunteers as warranted.
- Encouragement to our parish to support the discipline of stewardship (time, money, talent).
- Successful completion of all ministerial duties as outlined in the Canons of The Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Alabama and our Priest in Charge agreement.
- Be a positive Christian example.
Membership and Attendance

Our membership delights in its diversity that comes in all forms. Instead of a melting pot where each person might lose his or her identity, we consider ourselves to be more like a fruit salad where each ingredient is unique and when added to other unique ingredients it creates a wonderful experience.

The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit has a three-year average of 172 Active Baptized Members.

Three-year average attendance by service:

8:30 a.m. = 18

10:30 a.m. = 78

Easter Services Attendance: 169
Our Community and Neighborhood

According to AL.com, Alabaster, Helena, and Pelham in Shelby county are among the best places to live in Alabama. Most members of the Church of the Holy Spirit live in one of these areas. Please click on the link below to find out more.


Holy Spirit’s home town, Alabaster, Alabama, is the largest city in Shelby County that is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. Time/Money magazine selected Alabaster, along with the adjoining cities of Helena and Pelham as among the 100 best cities to live in the United States.

The communities near the Church of the Holy Spirit offer great housing, shopping, and a low cost of living as compared to the national average. In addition, you are only a few hours drive to some of the world’s most beautiful sugar white sand beaches at Gulf Shores, Alabama or the old-world charm of Mobile, where America celebrated its first Madi Gras. Head north and you will find the thrill of the Space Industry in Huntsville, Alabama, where the rocket that took Americans to the Moon was created. If you go about another hour north of Huntsville you will be in Music City, Nashville. If you prefer the hustle and bustle of a big city Atlanta is only a short drive to the east. And, of course, Birmingham is brimming with cultural, entertainment, and educational activities that can always keep your life interesting.

Quite simply, the communities around the Church of the Holy Spirit provide wonderful places to raise a family while, at the same time, you would only be a short distance away from many adventures. And that is not even counting the great natural wonders of Alabama. You could spend the rest of your life discovering Alabama and not see it all. However, don’t take our word for it. Just conduct a simple Internet search and you will begin your Alabama Adventure.
The Diocese of Alabama
On Official Letterhead