



St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Gulfport, Mississippi

Parish Profile

Parish Staff:

The Very Reverend James B. "Bo" Roberts: Rector

Anna Rose Davis: Organist and Choir Master

Cindy Chambliss: Secretary

Vestry:

Roger Hayes: Senior Warden

Todd Ladner: Junior Warden

Shorty Sneed: Treasurer

Dianne Hayes: Clerk

James Barnett

Len Blackwell

Walt Denton

Matthew Grice

Tim Haller

Marilyn Parrish

Heather Riemann



St. Mark's Episcopal Church

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Welcome to St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Established in 1846 and located in Gulfport along the beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast, St. Mark's Episcopal Church is one of the oldest Episcopal churches in Mississippi. We are a strong and faithful congregation with over 600 members with a diverse program of ministry that draws on the many talents within the parish.

After over 43 years of devoted service to St. Mark's, our Rector, the Very Rev. James B. "Bo" Roberts will retire in 2013. During his tenure, St. Mark's has grown from a small parish to a thriving one poised for continued growth around a solid foundation of worship, education and outreach. St. Mark's is a proud community of faith that stands strong together against the fiercest storms. While we have built fantastic new facilities since 2005, the "Spirit of St. Mark's" is the tie that binds and moves through all of us to make Christ's church a reality.

We pray that our search will bring St. Mark's a new Priest who, by providing spiritual leadership and a living faith, will join us in our journey and help us to live fuller lives in God's service. We seek a Priest who will connect with people within our congregation and in the broader community. We also seek a learned priest who is an inspired and inspiring communicator of God's Word and a leader who will help us discern more fully God's calling.

We invite you to read the enclosed Parish Profile, as well as view our Community Portfolio Discernment Profile and our website www.stmarksepiscopal-gulfport.com to learn more about St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

In Christ,



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SEARCH COMMITTEE:

Matthew Grice, Chair | Roger Hayes, Sr. Warden | John Harral | Todd Ladner | David Nichols | Chad Riemann |
Barbara Rosetti | Suanna Smith | Shorty Sneed | Rodger Wilder



Our History

St. Mark's is one of the oldest Episcopal churches in Mississippi. It was organized in 1846 in Mississippi City (now part of Gulfport) on the beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast. The church first used a community log church before building its original sanctuary in 1855, which was used until Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

St. Mark's became a Parish in 1858. In 1859, there were just four communicants. By 1871, the number of communicants had increased to twenty-three. Jefferson Davis was a member of St. Mark's after the War and served on its Vestry.

The last years of the nineteenth century were lean times for St. Mark's, and, in 1882, the status of the church changed from Parish to Mission. The congregation was then without a resident priest and was dependent upon the services of a lay reader and occasional visits from the Rector of the Church of the Redeemer in Biloxi. In 1905, the Rev. Henry Sneed, Rector at St. Peter's By-The-Sea in Gulfport, (whose descendents remain members of St. Mark's), helped re-organize St. Mark's. He served as Vicar until his retirement in 1925. This was the longest tenure of any priest in St. Mark's history prior to its current rector, James B. Roberts, who is in his 43rd year.



In 1968, St. Mark's returned to Parish status and immediately called Rev. Sheldon Davis to serve as Rector. That same year three temporary buildings were purchased to house nine Sunday School classes.

On April 15, 1969, the Rev. James "Bo" Roberts became the Rector of St. Mark's. Just four months later Hurricane Camille struck the Mississippi Gulf Coast, destroying the Sunday School buildings, Parish Hall, and church office. The rectory was heavily damaged and the church was gutted, stripped of its sacristy, and torn from its foundation. In spite of this disaster, all services were held without interruption. By November, repairs and rebuilding were underway.

In August 1971, two years after the destruction, the Rt. Rev. John M. Allin dedicated the newly constructed Parish Hall and Sunday School facility. The Sunday School building was named in honor of Bishop Allin, commemorating his concern for Christian education as the sixth Bishop of Mississippi. Shortly thereafter he was elected Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of the United States.

St. Mark's continued to grow and prosper under Father Roberts' leadership. In September of 1971, a pre-school was opened with classes for three, four, and five year old children. In 1975, a choir loft was built, and in the spring of 1983, transepts were added to the sanctuary that provided an additional one hundred seats. There were more changes in 1986 as the kitchen in the Parish Hall was completely renovated and a stained glass window, created by Jim Birosong, a St. Mark's Communicant, was placed over the main entrance. In 1987, a building housing a library, choir room, youth room, and two Sunday School rooms was added.

In August of 2005, Hurricane Katrina destroyed the church, administration/parish hall and preschool buildings. On the first Sunday after the storm, Bishop Duncan M. Grey joined the congregation for a Eucharist service on the slab. The service was featured on CNN throughout the day. After much prayerful deliberation, the congregation and vestry decided to rebuild the church at a new, safer location farther from the water. All services were held in temporary buildings while plans were made to build a new church.

On March 3, 2008, Bishop Gray and Rev. Roberts celebrated the first Eucharist (and confirmation) in our new parish hall and Sunday School building. On Father's Day, June 15, 2008 we held our first service in the new sanctuary. Since then we have built on the grounds a new building for St. Mark's preschool, which is now operating at full capacity and with a healthy waiting list.

The success and productivity of Christ's church in St. Mark's Parish over the years have been exciting and gratifying. St. Mark's currently enjoys the largest congregation in its history and is among the largest in the diocese. We continue the mission of St. Mark's with great enthusiasm and high hopes.



The Church





Our Worship

Weekly worship consists of three services on Sunday morning. 7:30am, 9:30am and 11:30am with an average Sunday attendance of 275. The first service is quieter and more intimate where we worship from the 1928 Prayer Book without a choir or congregational singing of hymns. The 9:30 service is Holy Eucharist Rite I and offers Sunday school and nursery care. Our adult choir leads the congregation in hymns and presents a musical communion offertory. The second Sunday includes a children's sermon with youth lay readers and youth choir. Lay parishioners' participation includes readers, ushers, acolytes and lay Eucharistic ministers at the 9:30 service. The 11:30 services is Holy Eucharist Rite II with a processional and recessional hymn.





St. Mark's is blessed to have a talented and dedicated Adult Choir, whose repertoire is growing. We sing music from the Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical periods, as well as compositions from contemporary Anglican composers. In addition to our singers, we now have a budding group of twelve ringers who make up the St. Mark's Handbell Choir. We have three octaves of Schulmerich Handbells.

The St. Mark's Youth Choir currently has fifteen members. They rehearse and sing sacred choral music for youth, praise songs and also play Handbells and percussion instruments. The Youth Choir sings the second Sunday of each month.

Education at St. Mark's

- The St. Mark's Sunday School Program includes sixty-two children from 3 years through High School. St. Mark's also has Vacation Bible School each summer along with other Family Ministries such as Family Fall Fest and Family Olympics.
- St. Mark's Preschool for 3 and 4 year old children is a self sustaining entity. It has been a ministry of St. Mark's Church for 40 plus years. St. Mark's Preschool prides itself on preparing children to enter kindergarten ready to met all requirements of today's schools.
- The preschool has 48 children with 4 teachers and one Director. Entering its fourth year since Hurricane Katrina, it has full enrollment with a waiting list for the the next three years.
- St. Mark's has had an active Education For Ministry (EFM) program for over ten years. EFM is a four-year course of study, which educates the participants in the Old and New Testaments, church history, and theological philosophy. It is taught at St. Mark's by laypersons under the auspices of the University of the South. This dedicated group meets one night a week from September through May.



Our Resources

- St. Mark's Episcopal Church sits on a new campus, completed in 2008, surrounded by established, vibrant neighborhoods along the growing Cowan-Lorraine Road corridor.
- St. Mark's has an active ECW. The Episcopal Church Women meet the second Thursday of each month and host a Ladies' Bible Study group.
- St. Mark's has an annual operational budget of approximately \$400,000.
- St. Mark's has no outstanding debt.





Opportunities for the Future

Things That Are Most Important To Us:

Preaching
Administration
Counseling
Church Growth and Development
Worship
Pastoral Care
Youth Group Development

Ministries We Do Well:

Worship – liturgy and music
Administration
Pastoral Care
Fellowship

Ministries We Need/Want Strengthened:

Adult Education
Youth Ministry and Education
Children's Ministry

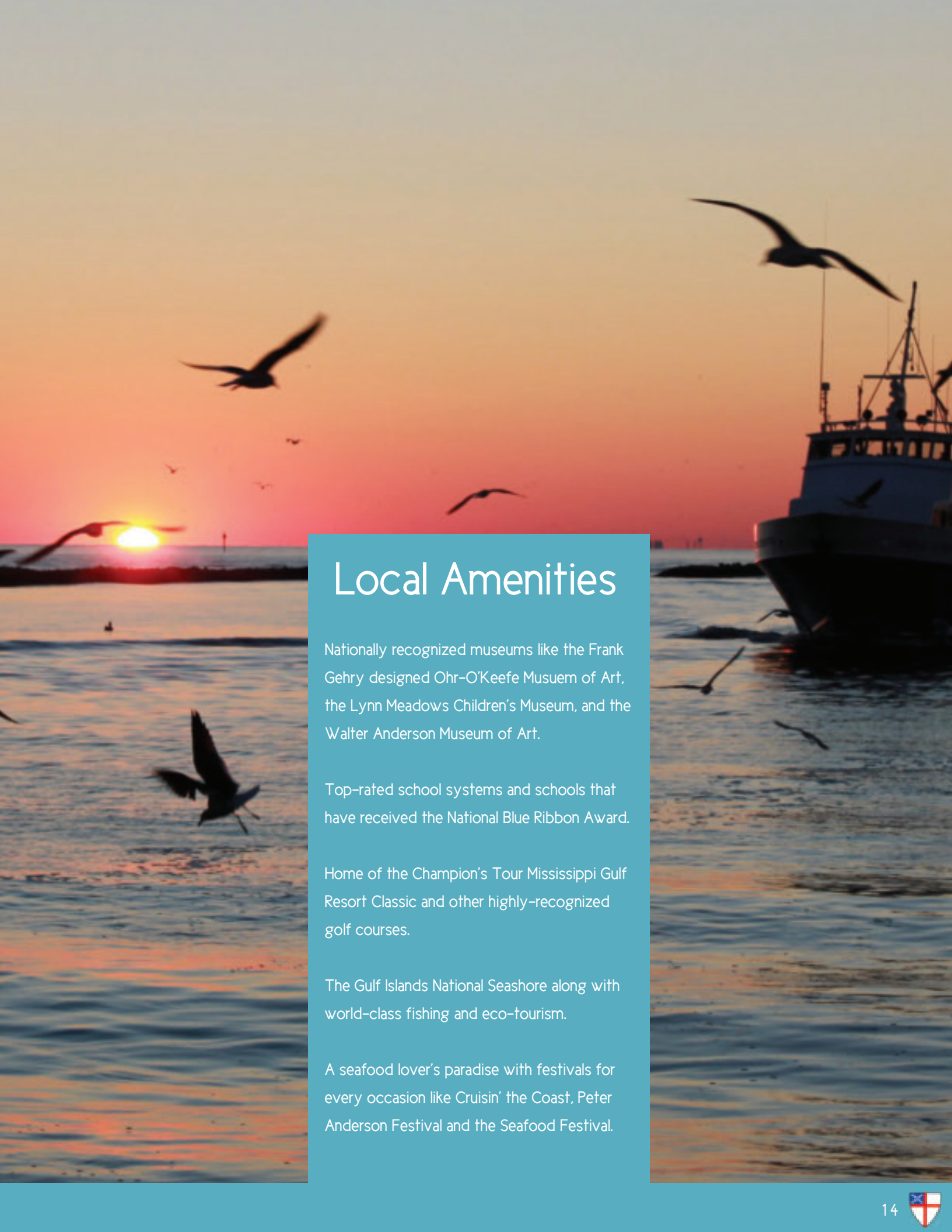
St. Mark's is blessed with the strong foundation of a long and storied history, a current membership of over 600 and a diverse, vibrant program of ministry. It is a parish preparing itself for its next chapter, to build the St. Mark's of the future on that strong foundation – poised for continued growth in the traditional Spirit of St. Mark's. We seek a priest that will lead the church to the fulfillment of its vision of expanded ministries and increasingly dedicated members. We need and want a priest who will embrace the history and spirit of our parish and the legacy of Father Bo but at the same time chart new, exciting chapters in the life of St. Mark's.



Our Community

St. Mark's is located in Gulfport, Mississippi, along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Here we live side-by-side with the Gulf of Mexico. Most consider New Orleans an extension of our backyard and the barrier islands our personal getaways. It is a place of history and has long attracted adventurers all the way back to Pierre Lemoyne Sieur d'Iberville in 1699.





Local Amenities

Nationally recognized museums like the Frank Gehry designed Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, the Lynn Meadows Children's Museum, and the Walter Anderson Museum of Art.

Top-rated school systems and schools that have received the National Blue Ribbon Award.

Home of the Champion's Tour Mississippi Gulf Resort Classic and other highly-recognized golf courses.

The Gulf Islands National Seashore along with world-class fishing and eco-tourism.

A seafood lover's paradise with festivals for every occasion like Cruisin' the Coast, Peter Anderson Festival and the Seafood Festival.

Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi

St. Mark's is one of 84 congregations which comprise the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi. The diocese, which includes the entire state, is headquartered in the capital city of Jackson and is led by the Right Reverend Duncan M. Gray, III, IX Bishop of Mississippi.

The Diocese of Mississippi and its rich mixture of urban, suburban, town, and rural congregations embrace all styles of worship and churchmanship, from Anglo-Catholic to Evangelical. It has a history of being a moderate but progressive voice in the life of the Episcopal Church.

Much of the diocese's energy has been focused on the rebuilding of the Mississippi Gulf Coast since Katrina's landfall on August 29, 2005. Bishop Gray is urging the diocese's continued support for those efforts and is also pointing the clergy and laity toward the realization of the diocesan vision of being "One Church in Mission: Inviting, Transforming and Reconciling."

The diocese is part of Province IV of the Episcopal Church and is one of the owning dioceses of the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee.

Many people describe the heart of the diocese as being the Duncan M. Gray Camp and Conference Center, 30 miles north of Jackson and named for the fifth Bishop of Mississippi. Central to the center's ministry is Camp Bratton-Green, which each summer hosts hundreds of young people to six sessions of camp, and scores of special needs adults for two sessions of their own unique camps. Generations of Episcopalians have been formed at Camp Bratton-Green, and many clergy have emerged from its ranks.



