GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
103 Darby Drive
Sheffield, Alabama 35660

OUR HISTORY

Grace Church was established on January 6 (Epiphany) 1887. The first service was conducted in a Sheffield residence and later services were held in the public school. By 1888, the church was in its own building.

The present day Parish Hall, built in 1967, had the dual role of sanctuary and fellowship hall. In 1978 the current church building was completed.
ABOUT US

We extend a warm welcome to all who enter our doors! We are a multi-generational, family oriented and pastoral church. Sunday service starts at 9:30 am, followed by a 30-minute fellowship. During the sermon, children from age two to six are dismissed for Children's church. After the church service there are Sunday school classes for both adults and children. Nursery care is also provided. Our acolytes are a mix of adults and children. We have lay readers for each Sunday and retired clergy who are active in the parish. In addition our Deacon also conducts an adult Sunday school class.

An important routine of our Sunday worship is our intercessory prayer. The congregation reads out loud those names on our intercessory prayer list. We have a small but active choir. A Morning Prayer service is offered 2 times a week. Our Altar Guild consists of teams who are assigned specific months of duty.

There are two other parishes in the area that we share a service and picnic annually with.

Most of our members have always been a member of an Episcopal church. Our greatest assets are the youth of the church and the warm and friendly atmosphere that prevails within the congregation.
In addition to the Sunday after church fellowship, a covered dish supper is often a monthly event. Given the title of “Grace Night” this fellowship might include a speaker, a specific kind of menu or a special activity. We are currently planning on including a type of witnessing program for those who might like to share their experiences.

Grace Church has a book study group that meets on Wednesday evening. Those attending enjoy homemade soup before the book discussion. There has been a diversified amount of material read which has generated an interest for many.

Other programs include our Outreach Ministry, EFM (Education for Ministry) and the Knit Wits.

Because the acoustics inside the church are very favorable to both musical instruments and choral voices, many outstanding musicians have given concerts here.
The women of Grace Church who serve on the Altar Guild are dedicated to this ministry. Preparing for the Eucharist is more than polishing the brass and setting up the elements, it is preparing the Lord’s Table. The Eucharistic feast is the spiritual food that feeds our souls and fills our hearts.

We Serve the Lord with gladness!
The Grace Church choir is a diverse group of parishioners brought together by their love for music. Its primary purpose is to lead the music portion of corporate worship on Sundays and for special services. During the past three years the choir has prepared concerts for the church and community at large, including the Grace Church 125th Anniversary Celebration and the W.C. Handy Festival concerts. Advent Lessons and Carols and Choral Evensong have been presented in collaboration with area Episcopal choirs. The choir schedule includes weekly rehearsals on Wednesday evening and Sunday morning as well as other times as needed. Its repertoire covers a wide range of musical styles and accompaniment is usually organ or piano with various guest instrumentalists and singers which enhances the depth of the music. The choir is open to all Grace Parishioners with any level of musical gifts.
EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

EFM (Education for Ministry) was established at Grace Church in 1996. There have been over 30 graduates from the four-year program. One member has described the experience of the confidentiality that is maintained within the study to be a spiritual bond. Most important, also, is the opportunity to develop a deeper faith and better understanding of one’s relationship with God.

KNIT WITS

The Knit Wits is a group of ladies who meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month to create prayer shawls for members of the parish or friends who have a need (lost a relative, been sick or “hit a bad bump in the road of life”). Shawls are created by knitting or crocheting. Prayers are said as the stitches fill the needles. After each shawl is finished, the group says a prayer to bless it and that prayer is given to the recipient also.
OUTREACH

The congregation at Grace Church is very proud of its extensive outreach ministries. On a monthly basis, food items and toiletries are taken to the Colbert Caring Center. Each Sunday at the offertory, our young children take part and pull a red wagon with these items up to the altar area. Additionally, food items are provided for the YMCA Friday Backpack Ministry, the Westminster Interfaith Caring Place (WICP) and volunteers make deliveries for Meals-on-Wheels.

We participate in the Sawyerville Day Camp by providing bathing suits for campers. Other ministries include: 150 desserts to a Soup Kitchen 6 times a year, toiletries and school supplies to the Boys’ Attention Home, Prayer shawls for people in need (Knit Wits), Salvation Army Angel Tree, Christmas for Kids (ministry to children with an incarcerated parent), Be A Santa to a Senior, and Canterbury at UNA (Episcopal Campus Ministry) with meals and study bags each semester.

Monetary donations are made for children’s lunches in Haiti (Krik? Krack!), Safeplace, Salvation Army Empty Table Fund, The Cerebral Palsy Center and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.
Our Community

Four cities, with a combined population of about 80,000, make up the metro area that is often referred to as "The Shoals". These cities, situated in Northwest Alabama are Florence, Muscle Shoals, Sheffield and Tuscumbia. The overall community reflects a diversity of neighborhoods and individuals. The cities present different personalities, with shared history and regional development.

Amenities and cultural opportunities abound, including higher education offered by and through the University of North Alabama in Florence. The area has a rich history of manufacturing, developed after the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and therefore a strong working class base. Many descendants of the original pioneer stock which settled the Tennessee Valley in the early 1800’s still remain in the region. Individuals who developed an important recording industry call the area home and the area’s reputation as a music city gives it notoriety and draws tourists as well as aspiring musicians. Readily accessible are entertainment, good medical care with three hospitals, excellent public and private schools, shopping and dining.

Sheffield, Alabama, known as the "Center of the Shoals", is centrally located in the heart of the Quad Cities. Grace Church parishioners live and work in all of these towns. The make-up of the church is therefore diverse, with various interests and backgrounds. Situated on the banks and bluffs of the Tennessee River, Sheffield offers the beauty of natural resources and water recreations. The city, itself, exhibits a small-town atmosphere with friendly people. The downtown area is experiencing new growth with a number of renovations to property bringing in a variety of business.
Our number one priority is to have a Rector who takes a personal role in the teaching of our children and overseeing youth programs. We would like for the Rector to have strong preaching and staff management skills. Also important are outreach ministry, spiritual guidance and being a visionary.

We're looking for personal traits such as open mindedness, patience, compassion, friendliness and a sense of humor.

The Rector's duties would include taking a role in pastoral care, recruiting and training lay participants in worship, and leading us in our seasonal worship according to the Church calendar.