Narrative for Parish Portfolio
Grace Episcopal Church Sheffield, Alabama

1. Describe a moment in your worshipping community’s recent ministry that you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

Grace has recognized our outreach work as a priority in our community. A very successful drive for Christmas gifts for local children in need and home bound seniors held in December allowed parishioners of all ages to participate in organizing, purchasing, wrapping and delivering. It was great to see the congregation bonding in the cause. You can follow our Outreach programs directly on our website https://graceepiscopalsheffield.dioala.org or for more information email the parish office graceoffice1@comcast.net

2. How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

Grace over the years has found the most effective way to attract others to ministries is through personal contact by clergy or lay leadership. Informal invitations to join occur regularly. Our core ministries are in music and other forms of lay worship participation, such as Altar Guild, Ushering, serving as Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers and Acolytes. Parishioners are also active in the work of varied standing committees and groups: Community Outreach, Hospitality, Safety, Children’s Ministry, Website development and Vestry. The fact that many parishioners enjoy the fellowship of these events is quite apparent in our website photos. https://graceepiscopalsheffield.dioala.org/About%20Us/photo-gallery.html

3. Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this project?

One of our parishioners identified a need in the community and under our community outreach program started Grace Community Services Group which strives to provide services to anyone in the community with disabilities or other disadvantages needing help with small projects (i.e.
cleaning, ride to appointments, small home repairs and errands). For more information please email GraceCommServGrp@gmail.com

4. How are you preparing yourself for the Church of the future?

Grace is eager to grow and remain relevant in the lives of parishioners as well as the surrounding community. The physical infrastructure of Grace has been designed to accommodate growth and flexibility of use with a number of classrooms, a large Parish Hall, a space dedicated to youth formation and a modern worship space. The worshipping community is dedicated to providing quality programs for children and youth. Funding for children and youth programming is a priority in our budget and there is a strong core of volunteers working with children and youth in the parish.

5. Describe your worshipping community’s involvement in the wider church and in the geographical community.

Grace participates in the wider Church by its active parishioners who are involved in many of the Diocesan ministries. Our parishioners have served as a member of the Diocesan Council, delegates to the general Diocesan Convention and delegates for the election of Coadjutor Bishop The Rev. Dr. Glenda Curry. Many others participate in the Kairos Prison Ministry, the Canterbury Club of the University of North Alabama, Sawyerville Summer Camp, and Camp McDowell. Community outreach reaches the Colbert County Caring Center with food drives and diaper drives. Grace joins other area churches in sending home food with children for the weekend through the YMCA Back Pack Program. Many of the congregation deliver Meals on Wheels.
6. Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

Be a spiritual leader enthusiastically dedicated to developing our mission, vision, core values and goals.
Be an outstanding compelling preacher who calls, inspires, educates and challenges us.
Enjoy engaging with the wonderful diversity and comprehensiveness of the community life of Grace Church
Participate in the care of those with pastoral needs
Encourage us to make our church a welcoming place for everyone, to attract new members and integrate them into the life of the parish
Nourish our outreach ministries and help us to develop strategies to sustain our involvement with our many partner organizations
Guide the parish as we continue to develop our vision of what the church is and what it should become
Oversee the administration of the life of the church giving vision to strategic initiatives as they arise
Promote generous stewardship by encouraging members to pledge annually, to give additional gifts and to include the church in their wills as a beneficiary
Promote regular interaction and collaboration with the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama and the cities of The Shoals
Manage the parish’s assets and finances, in consultation with the Vestry
Setting of goals and the measurement and acknowledgment of progress