



Servants of Christ Anglican Church

A PARISH IN THE GULF ATLANTIC DIOCESE OF
THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

WHO WE ARE

It's no accident that our name is Servants of Christ Anglican Church. In 2006, as the congregation was formed, we knew that serving Christ and His world was paramount and that teaching others to follow in His steps was the key to our existence. Though the exact process of "making disciples, learning to do all that Jesus said" has morphed over time, the mission remains the same. As a parish near the center of Gainesville, FL, we recognize the unique opportunities we have to serve our city and the community around us while we follow Jesus and show His love to others.



“Making disciples, learning to do all that Jesus said.”

More About Us

Our Parish History

Shared from the perspective of a founding member, this brief history of Servants provides context for where we have been.

Gainesville Community Profile

Compiled by a parishioner, this profile provides an excellent orientation to our city and community.

As our parish has matured, we have recognized that our best hope for growing and reaching others is to create a partnership between lay leaders and clergy, with the rector setting the vision and equipping lay leaders who will be empowered to carry out the vision according to their gifts. We have been intentionally moving away from a rector-centered model since 2016, and to aid that transition, we have identified a mission structure to guide our work and to move newcomers into our fellowship where we can serve together.

We aim to:

- foster Spirit-filled prayer and worship
- enable our congregants to form connections with one another
- help them grow through formation and discipleship
- equip them to disciple and lead at whatever level they find themselves
- discern a calling to mission and service in our parish, our community, and the world

Our structure is based around our multi-generational community of highly-engaged believers in a university town. On Sundays at 9:30am, anywhere from 70-100 of us gather in person and online to worship. We get together regularly to fellowship and pray with one another in a variety of settings outside of Sunday services. We value serving one another and our community, caring for each other's needs, and supporting one another during hard times. We seek to be a welcoming community for people of all ages, races, and backgrounds.

Foundational Priorities

Core Purpose

An explanation of our foundational priorities created by our vestry.

Membership & High-Level Strategy

Renders our long-held community values, basic plans for bringing newcomers into our fellowship, and the outline of the mission structure we work from in a graphic format.

PRAYER & WORSHIP

Central to our life together is prayer and worship. We teach people to worship God rooted in ancient ways, following the *2019 Book of Common Prayer* using a combination of high and low liturgical elements. We understand the importance of tradition, but we do not put it on an untouchable pedestal.



More on Worship

Liturgy at Servants

How we currently make use of the liturgy at Servants.

Our Philosophy

Written by our Worship Arts Director, this offers some thoughts about our worship style.

Of greatest importance is faithful preaching of the Bible. Having come out of a tradition where the authority of the Word was questioned and then abandoned, we value orthodox preaching and teaching. Our preachers have generally chosen to preach on the Gospel readings and topical sermon series are rare, yet the emphasis is always on how the Good News of Jesus changes our lives, calling us to sanctification.

To help emphasize the themes from the readings and sermon, the music leader and the preacher collaborate on music selection, allowing congregants to be formed cohesively by the worship. Our music is folksy, making use of guitar, drums, and even harmonica; we sing ancient hymns, contemporary choruses, folk spirituals, and new service music. We have discovered our own sound as a church.

We have a strong Prayer Ministry Team that provides intercessory prayer, Soaking Prayer, and healing prayer ministry. Intercessory prayer is available every Sunday during Communion where anyone may ask for confidential prayer and intercessors will pray for them on the spot. Monthly Soaking Prayer is a time to seek the Lord through prayer and meditation. The time of “soaking” allows the Lord to speak through His Holy Spirit. When requested we also offer inner healing prayer from seasoned prayer ministers who are trained to bring to light, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the things that have hurt the person, and then pray to the Lord to free them from the binding effects of their hurtful past. At each new challenge we have faced, both individually and corporately, prayer has been at the center.

More on Prayer

Soaking Prayer & Healing Prayer

Describes in more detail how our Prayer Team serves at Servants.

Find our Services

YouTube

We live stream our service every Sunday.

Our Podcast

Sermons are posted to our podcast each week.

CONNECTION

Gainesville is by nature a transient city. University towns welcome and release people on a regular basis and Servants reflects the nature of the city for the same reasons. As the only ACNA parish in Gainesville, we feel we have been called to be off 8th Avenue, a main thoroughfare in Gainesville that reaches from the far east side to the west, and which is minutes from the University of Florida (UF). As a result of our location and connection to the larger Anglican body worldwide, each semester we see new faces. This constant ebb and flow of people makes for an interesting church environment. Forming meaningful relationships with new people is challenging but is at the heart of what we do.

We have three active Community Groups in our parish. Community Groups are medium-sized groups of 25-40 that meet in homes and public venues around the city once a month. The groups are neighborhood-centered, multi-generational, and

aim to meet in places friendly to all ages. Generally the groups gather for snacks or a meal and fellowship together, welcoming new people and providing a low-pressure environment to get to know each other. We encourage all our members to be in a Community Group, and we have lately worked to utilize the groups as a kind of first response team when a need is made known.

Each year we try to offer options for adventure trips or service projects. Our men's ministry has been consistent in offering a hiking trip each fall since 2011. In May 2019 the men helped with the recovery from Hurricane Michael which had made landfall the previous fall. In the last few years the women's ministry has also begun to offer a hiking or camping trip. In 2019 the women held a weekend retreat in Steinhatchee, FL, where they worshiped, learned, and spent time together.

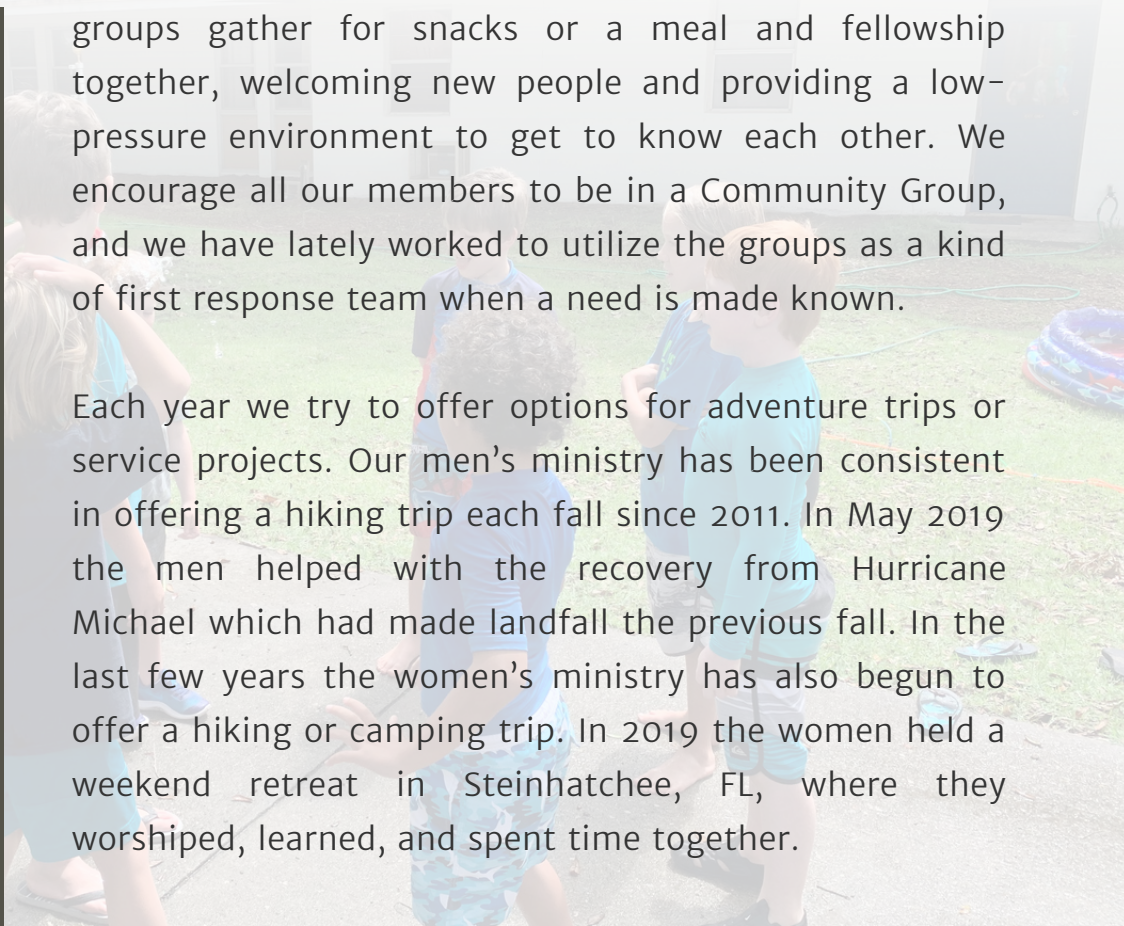
Additional Opportunities

JOYs

Just Older Youngsters is for retirees or those retiring soon and includes prayer and fellowship.

After-Service Coffee

Following some services, we share refreshments together on the grounds.



While COVID-19 has had an impact on our community and level of fellowship, we have reason to hope that the trend toward isolation is reversing. We recently hosted a Craft Night for everyone in the parish which was well attended. Last Maundy Thursday we gathered for a potluck which reminded us of the joy we take in breaking bread together. We are optimistic that our desire to be together is returning in full force.



On-Ramp to Connection

Our App

Launched in September 2022, our app is a one-stop shop for events and groups, facilitating event registrations, sign ups, messaging, and more.

FORMATION & DISCIPLESHIP

We cannot talk about community without recognizing that our formation and discipleship groups offer attendees the opportunity to form deeper connections to the Lord in addition to one another. We are formed through Holy Scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit through catechesis, age-specific classes, and involvement in diocesan programs.

Catechesis is an important step in the formation of any believer. Over the course of this past year, we have had four cohorts go through the catechism in various contexts. We have also had a few who have gone through the catechism one-on-one with a clergy person or lay catechist. We desire to move our people from simply being at church to owning their spiritual journey.



For those who are born into a family of believers, formation begins at birth. We hope to aid parents as they raise their children to love and serve the Lord. Each Sunday we offer nursery and child care for our youngest parishioners, and kindergarten through third grade students are invited to Children's Church. Club 345 for third through fifth grades meets weekly for lessons, games, service, and more. Our sixth through twelfth grade students are mentored each week in small groups and meet as a large group monthly for service and fun. Finally, our young adult group, consisting of college students and twenty-somethings, meets weekly for fellowship, study, and prayer.

We believe that children should be included in the Sunday service as soon as they are able. For us this means that beginning in fourth grade students remain in the service for its entirety. If parents want to keep their youngest children in the service as well, we welcome their presence, even their crying, because we know that they are important to Jesus, who welcomed little children to Him. Our liturgy forms us each week through Word and Sacrament, re-familiarizing us with the Gospel as we hear the lessons, sing together, and eat at the Table. The rhythms of liturgy tell the story holistically but simply enough that children can understand the basics of belief over time as they hear the liturgy spoken week after week.

For adults, we have large groups and small groups that meet weekly at the church, in homes, and in the community. We offer Life on the Porch groups for men and women. Our small groups consist of the Women's Fellowship & Bible Study, Covenant Groups, and book studies. The link below describes the format of these groups.

We recognize that we are not disciplined in isolation. We participate in diocesan formation opportunities like Camp Araminta and Dynamos. An Anglican parish in Ocala (not ACNA) has allowed us to participate in their last few Anglican 4th Day retreats. Getting people excited about deepening their faith is a challenge we believe is worth pursuing.

Preview our Offerings

Dive In

Learn more about each of the classes and groups described.

EQUIPPING

Of the five elements in our ministry structure, equipping is the place we are hoping for the most growth. In the past, identifying leaders has consisted of noticing a gap and asking someone to fill in. The request has typically been made with no indication of time commitment, training (beyond the basic needs of the position), or length of service. Our servant-hearted people have enthusiastically stepped into those roles, but we have come to realize that this model of identifying leaders and running ministries is unsustainable. We hope to have a rector who can help us continue to implement plans and develop strategies in this area.



Nevertheless, the Lord has worked in our midst and we have three members in the process of ordination to the diaconate. Two are postulants seeking to be vocational deacons and are about halfway through their ministry skills checklist and education. The third has felt a calling to ordination for many years and is in the middle of the parish discernment process. We are excited to see what ministries God will grow in our parish as a result of these ordinations-in-process.

We also recognize the need for equipping for non-leadership roles such as evangelism and discipleship. Many of our people have indicated that they hope to see evangelism as more of a focus in the future.

SERVICE & MISSIONS

As one would imagine with a name like Servants of Christ, we take the call to service and missions seriously. Nearly 60% of our regular attenders serve at Servants in some way or another at least once a month. Many of our members also serve in our community as well. Our Missions Team guides us by offering opportunities to serve Jesus' mission to the world. And our vestry demonstrates their commitment to missions by designating 8% of our income for missions work.

Our Mission Partners

Supporting the Great Commission

Learn more about each of our mission partners.

We pray for and financially support 12 organizations and missionaries, locally and abroad. For each mission with which we partner, at least two people in our congregation have some personal connection to the ministry. The appendix above includes a list of our partners and additional information about each.



Of all the mission and service work that Servants does, the one we have been most united around as a congregation has been serving our next-door neighbor, Littlewood Elementary School. We want to be a visible presence in the lives of the students and families at Littlewood with the hope that relationships will grow as a result.

We have also worked with the Alachua County Christian Pastor's Association (ACCPA), an organization which expresses the desire of local pastors to show that despite racial and theological differences, we can work together.

Beyond Servants and our community, we are also highly involved at the diocesan and provincial level with New Wineskins, the Access Leadership Network, and participation in diocesan and provincial councils. Aiding in the bigger picture of what God is doing in His Church is important to us, so we work with others outside our city and state to do our part.



Lay Ministry at Servants

Serving One Another

Our engaged parishioners serve one another as well as Gainesville and the world.

WHAT WE HOPE FOR IN A RECTOR

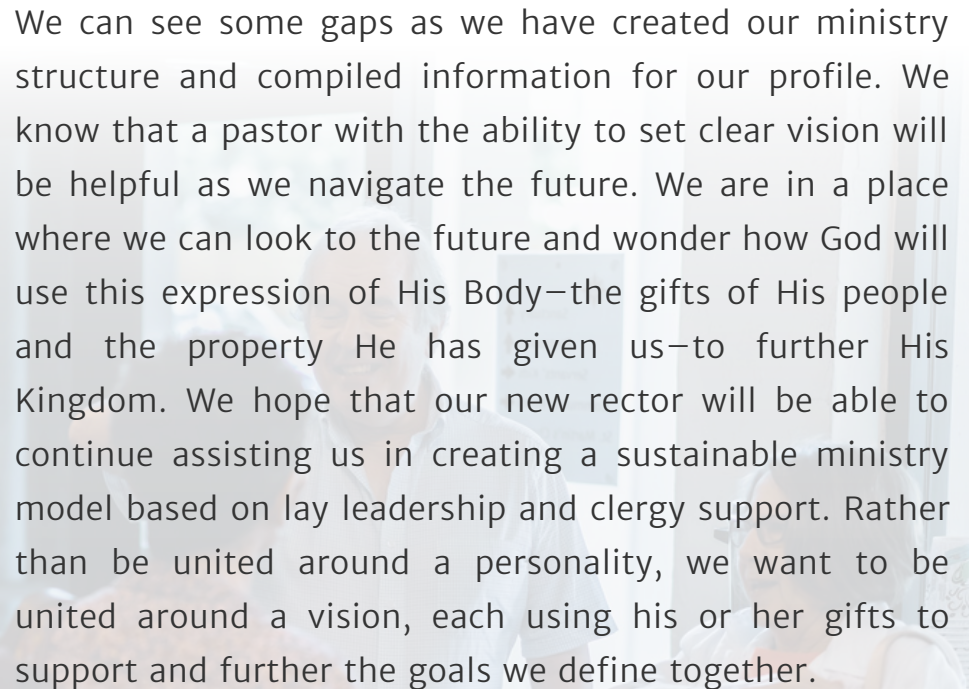
We have a list of qualities we hope for in a rector, but we know in the end it's the Lord who will guide us to the one He has chosen. To help us know what our parish as a whole feels is important, we created a survey that was administered in September 2022. The results of the survey have been helpful as we self-reflect. We know, for instance, that of supreme importance to our people is that any new rector be able to give biblically-based sermons and have strong pastoral care abilities, and that being in a university town, having a strong educational background and/or commitment to lifelong learning is important. We know that we desire to have a pastor who displays the fruits of the Spirit and has a passion for spreading the Gospel. Given that we welcome many visitors, having an approachable and personable rector is important.

Parish Survey

Parish Survey Report

In September 2022, we conducted a survey of our parish to assist in our rector search.

We can see some gaps as we have created our ministry structure and compiled information for our profile. We know that a pastor with the ability to set clear vision will be helpful as we navigate the future. We are in a place where we can look to the future and wonder how God will use this expression of His Body—the gifts of His people and the property He has given us—to further His Kingdom. We hope that our new rector will be able to continue assisting us in creating a sustainable ministry model based on lay leadership and clergy support. Rather than be united around a personality, we want to be united around a vision, each using his or her gifts to support and further the goals we define together.



We want our new rector to be an ally for those who have been marginalized in our society, especially those with disabilities and people of color. We desire to be a welcoming place for anyone who comes through our door. We want any rector that comes to us to be excited about working to heal racial issues in the Church and our city. Parishioners with visible and non-visible disabilities are a valued part of the community at Servant's of Christ. We desire a rector who is aware of and willing to listen to issues of accessibility. Our common good is enriched by the presence and service of those with differing abilities and perspectives.

Servants has a history of supporting female clergy. We currently have a female priest serving on staff and two women pursuing ordination to the diaconate. Any rector we welcome should be comfortable with and supportive of our ordained women.



Parishioners' Perspectives

Access at Servants

Three of our members share their experience of and hopes for continued inclusion.

OUR GOVERNANCE

Servants is served by a vestry and several paid and volunteer clergy and staff. The vestry and rector oversee the business of the church, including (but not necessarily limited to) budgeting for the year, handling the search for new staff, and making decisions about the building and grounds. The rector, clergy, and staff oversee the ministry of the church, including (but again, not limited to) scheduling and conducting services, communicating to leadership and the congregation items of importance, and creating opportunities for discipleship, equipping, and fellowship. The rector, clergy, vestry, and staff collaborate on the vision and ministry strategy for the parish.

The Lord has blessed us richly with a wide variety of skills in our clergy. We have:

- an interim rector (15 hours/week) - who was previously one of our volunteer priests - with many years of teaching experience, a deep interest in theological matters, and a passion for leading worship in the Anglican tradition
- a curate for youth ministry and outreach (full time) with great communication skills and a pastor's heart
- a priest in charge of formation (5 hours/week) with many years of experience setting up and running nonprofit organizations and caring for the marginalized
- a volunteer, retired priest with extensive pastoral care skills and training in healing prayer ministry

Being a small parish, our list of staff is not long, but all are dedicated to helping our parish succeed. Our staff consists of:

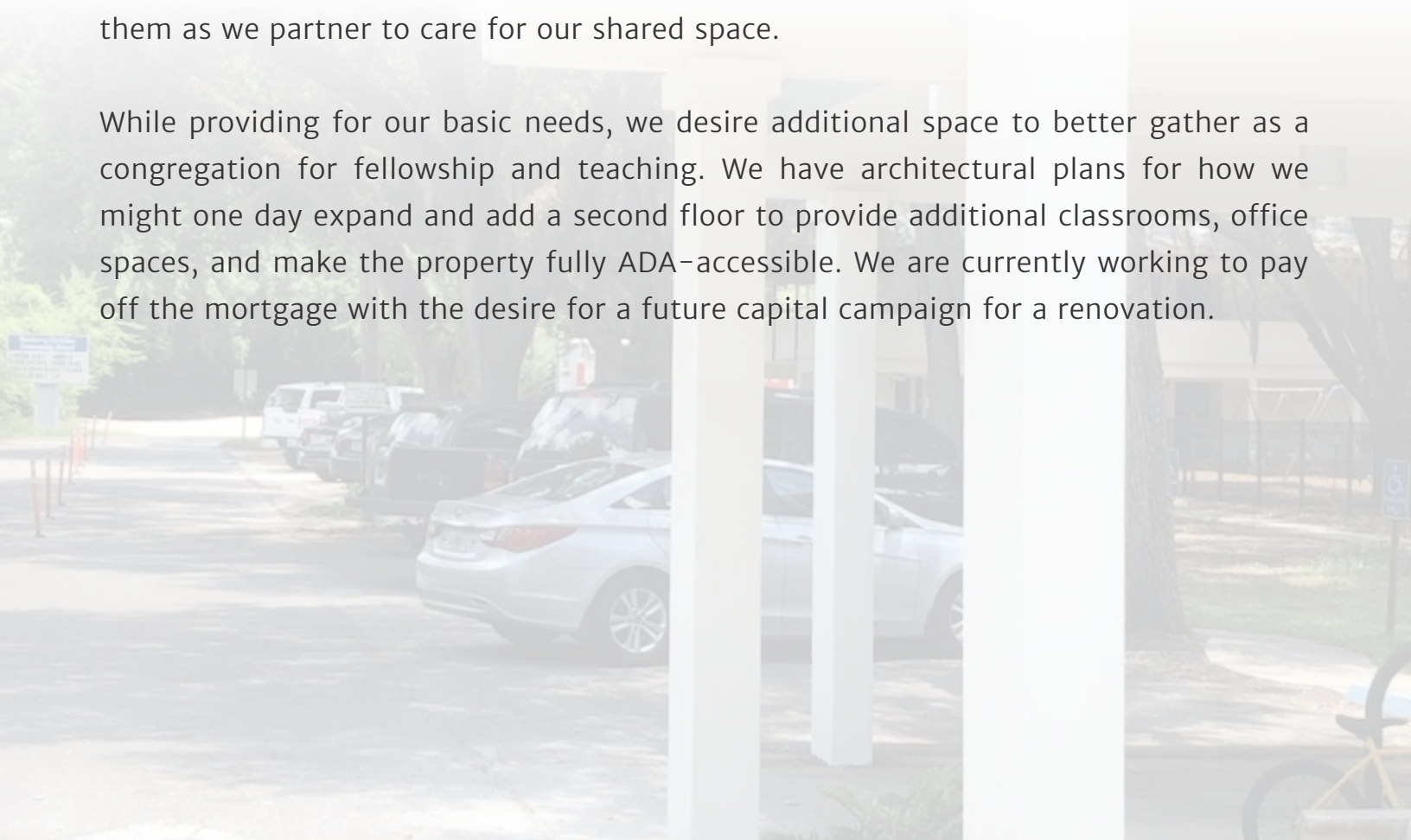
- a children's ministry director/young adult mentor and coordinator (25 hours/week)
- a volunteer director of worship arts
- a communications director (10 hours/week)
- an administrative assistant (9 hours/week)
- and a bookkeeper (7 hours/week)

OUR FACILITIES

Though there have been several changes over the years, Servants has always met at the same location: a former Methodist church property. In the early years, we rented the sanctuary building from the church who owned it at the time. Later, we rented the parish hall building. In 2015 the property was purchased by Gainesville Christian Community School (GCCS) who has invested heavily in restoring and growing the property. In 2018, we worked with the school to convert the property into a condominium association and to purchase the sanctuary building.

Sharing space has always had its challenges, but we have felt blessed to have partners in ministry with whom we can pool resources so that all may be better stewards of what God has given. GCCS is a K-12 private Christian school which owns 65% of the condominium units; we own the other 35%. We have a good working relationship with them as we partner to care for our shared space.

While providing for our basic needs, we desire additional space to better gather as a congregation for fellowship and teaching. We have architectural plans for how we might one day expand and add a second floor to provide additional classrooms, office spaces, and make the property fully ADA-accessible. We are currently working to pay off the mortgage with the desire for a future capital campaign for a renovation.



OUR FINANCES

Our fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th. Last fiscal year we received \$320,000 in unrestricted cash and stock donations plus another \$96,000 in designated giving. This is consistent with our generally increasing contributions over the last 5 years, though it did not meet our budget expectation. Our budget last fiscal year was \$361,000, which we stayed within, spending \$357,000 for the year. The decision to extend ourselves budgetarily was intentional based on several factors including a reserve of stocks which were sold to cover the deficit as planned. We ended the year with \$36,000 in the operating accounts and continue to maintain a reserve of \$40,000.

Some specific financial obligations we have that are worth noting are the curacy which runs through 2023, our mortgage which will be renegotiated in April 2023, and our ongoing tithing obligations to the diocese and missions.

Servants of Christ adheres to the Gulf Atlantic Diocese's Compensation and Benefits Guidelines for a rector. The combined stipend and housing allowance range for the position is \$75k-\$80k per year. The comprehensive benefits package includes retirement contribution, health insurance, and group life insurance. Time is provided for annual leave, continuing education, and sabbatical leave.

Financials

Overview

Provides additional context and information about much of the information given above.

Interested candidates should send their CV
addressed to Canon Mark Eldridge at
execadmin@gulfatlanticdiocese.org.

