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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Holy Comforter is to be a congregation where we joyfully grow together in Christ through worship, education and spiritual discipline; and to be a Christian fellowship where our gifts are used, together with other churches and organizations, in sustaining a common network for meeting human needs and promoting God’s justice in our community.
Our Church’s History

Holy Comforter was established in 1900 as the Chapel of the Holy Comforter, Rock Creek Parish. It was a parochial mission for an outlying community within Rock Creek Parish. In 1941, it became the Church of the Holy Comforter, St. Andrew’s Parish.

The history of the congregation that finally settled at the site of 7th and Oglethorpe Streets, N.W., began with three different groups of Episcopalians who lived in that part of northwest Washington known as Brightwood. In 1904 they erected a plain frame building on Georgia Avenue, N.W., which became the Chapel of the Holy Comforter (Holy Comforter Chapel), a parochial mission of Rock Creek Parish. In 1934 the second group, the Church of the Advent, which was then located at the corner of 2nd and U Streets, N.W., and was also a chapel of Rock Creek Parish, joined them. In 1938 the combined congregations moved into a new chapel building located on the corner of 7th and Oglethorpe Streets in northwest Washington, the current site of the Church of the Holy Comforter (Holy Comforter Church) today. Finally, in 1941 the third group, St. Andrew’s Church, St Andrew’s Parish, joined the merger. St. Andrew’s brought with it some of its most treasured possessions--the altar cross, processional cross, eagle lectern, litanary desk, and altar desk--all of which remain at Holy Comforter today.

By 1976 the number of pledging units was merely 46, but the average pledge per unit was very high and remained consistently so for many years, demonstrating a very small number of active members with a high ratio of giving. By 1990 there were 164 pledging units with an increase of 19 units in one year. Church membership continued to grow, and the church was renovated and expanded in 1994. To further accommodate its growing ministry and mission, the Bishop John Thomas Walker Learning Center, Inc. (Walker Center) was added to the structure in 2009.

Today, the expanded building stands as a sign and symbol of the dedication of this church family, its lively history, and the vibrant and visionary congregation that is the Church of the Holy Comforter. While we have lost some members over recent years, we remain a strong, committed group, and we look forward to our new rector continuing to move us into the future.
Our Diocese

The Church of the Holy Comforter, St. Andrew’s Parish, is part of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, which includes the District of Columbia and the Maryland counties of Montgomery, Prince George’s, Charles, and St. Mary’s. Under the leadership of the Right Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde, the “Diocese has committed to engaging a changing world with an enduring faith in Jesus Christ” by growing Christian community, connecting spirituality to everyday life, and striving for justice. The Diocese is composed of approximately 45,000 people in 89 congregations. It is blessed with rich racial and cultural diversity, including: one mission; St. Barnabas Church of the Deaf; three university chaplaincies; six Latino congregations; and a new Sierra Leonean Worshipping community. Twenty Episcopal schools are also affiliated with the Diocese.

The Church of the Holy Comforter is a member of Region 4, one of six geographic regions into which the Diocese is divided. Region 4 represents a portion of the District of Columbia and Montgomery County. It includes both moderate and small parishes in residential and commercial areas. This region’s Episcopal communities are ripe for growth through innovation. There are robust outreach opportunities, as well as tremendous room for fresh expressions of ministry and community building. The Diocese is particularly excited to have congregations integrate spirituality with everyday community life and so demonstrate what it means to be “the church” in this time of change.

Our Neighborhood

The Church of the Holy Comforter is located in the Brightwood neighborhood, in the northwest quadrant of Washington, D.C. It is a stable neighborhood with well-maintained houses, small businesses, and nearby parks. Brightwood is notable for its African American and Civil War history. It manages to mix history well with development.

Brightwood is home to many historical sites. There is a Brightwood Heritage Trail, which allows discovery of the personalities and forces that created this intriguing urban community. The Brightwood Heritage Trail’s 18 poster-sized, illustrated signs combine storytelling with historic images and maps. The 90-minute, self-guided tour loops through the Brightwood neighborhood and ends at the southwest corner of Georgia Avenue and Peabody Street, N.W.

The houses of Brightwood are the most notable element of the neighborhood. A drive through the area will reveal row after row of moderately-sized, well-maintained row houses, duplexes, detached bungalows and colonials, and unobtrusive apartment buildings with an art deco design style. The neighborhood developed as a stable, traditional, African American, professional community. However, the character of the area is changing gradually as a younger, more culturally and ethnically diverse population replaces the longtime, aging residents. Brightwood neighborhood’s cohesive nature is on display at community events such as Brightwood Day (an annual summer festival).

The community does not have a commercial strip, although many small businesses, retail shops, and restaurants are scattered along Georgia Avenue. Most of the small business owners have roots in the neighborhood and share a commitment to the community, but changes are in store.
In the past few years, after development plans for an area close to Holy Comforter Church failed to materialize, Wal-Mart built a department store on the site. Other plans are being considered by government and private industries for the redevelopment of the large Walter Reed Army Medical Center complex, which was vacated by the federal government in 2011. If all or even some of the proposed plans are realized, there will likely be further significant impact on the neighborhood.

Parks in the Brightwood neighborhood provide residents the opportunity to reflect and soothe their spirits through meditation on the beauty of nature. The National Park Service manages the grounds and recreation center at Fort Stevens and the nearby Rock Creek Park, which is one of the largest urban parks in the world.

Several bus routes provide access and convenience to the community of Brightwood, but there is no Metrorail station within its boundaries. Parking is ample in this neighborhood, and that is especially important for members of Holy Comforter, most of whom do not live in the immediate vicinity of the church. We hope that our new Rector will help us to reach into the neighborhood and include more of our neighbors into our parish.

Our Building and Property
The Church of the Holy Comforter is located at 701 Oglethorpe Street, N.W. The brick structure occupies the northwestern corner of 7th and Oglethorpe Streets and comprises the church and the Walker Center.

The church is located on a site that is made up of four lots across one half of a city block. The entire structure originally contained approximately 4,514 square feet of floor space, including the basement Sunday School room. The total seating capacity was 163. Until 1992 there were no major renovations or upgrading of the facilities. Outside improvements included only a fenced play area. Internal modifications consisted of repairs, painting, and the addition of air conditioning.

The church’s decision in 1992 for expansion included increasing the seating capacity of the church building, renovating the undercroft, and providing entirely new interior furnishings (including pews, cabinets, kitchen appliances, and office furnishings). The existing structure was expanded and renovated to include modest upgrading of the open, large Sunday School area and kitchen facilities in the Undercroft. On the first floor, the walls in the wings of the church were removed to increase seating capacity to 260. An addition of approximately 675 square feet of floor space to the first level included a well-appointed sacristy, a rector’s office, and a handicap-accessible restroom. Stairs with the capacity to meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements led to a new vestry office room, two choir changing rooms, and two restrooms. The exterior was upgraded to provide an improved entry to the Undercroft and parking spaces for nine automobiles.
Pledges and donations supported the initial funding drive for the $650,000 expenditure. Three loans were secured to cover the remaining debt. All loans for the 1992 expansion were repaid ahead of schedule.

In 2007 Holy Comforter was given approval to seek funding for the Walker Center, which was named in honor of the first African American Bishop of Washington (1978-1989). The mortgage for the Walker Center was $1,415,000. The program for the Ground Breaking Ceremony stated that its goal was to support the surrounding community and others who might affiliate with the Center, wherever they may live, in strengthening themselves academically, economically, spiritually and socially. The Walker Center has approximately 7,729 square feet of space on two levels, fully equipped with communications systems. The lower level includes a large fellowship hall and a kitchen. The upper level includes: a conference room; a Bishop John Thomas Walker Library; a Rector’s Office; four classrooms; a computer lab; a media center; and two offices.

We look forward to our next rector helping us to use all of our parish space creatively, communally, and well.
Our Worship Services

Our Parish follows Rite II and liturgies for special occasions as set out in the Book of Common Prayer. We have a variety of worship services and music. On Sundays, we have two services, at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. The 8:00 a.m. service is a low Mass without music or singing, except on Easter Day. The 10:30 a.m. service is not a regularly sung Mass, but it always incorporates music and singing. We use incense at the 10:30 a.m. service on special occasions, including Christmas Eve, Palm Sunday, Easter, and Pentecost. Acolytes serve at both services.

Our Junior Church (Sunday School) has its own liturgical format. Each Sunday, members of the Junior Church conduct their own Morning Prayer Service and receive their Sunday School lesson for the day before joining the congregation for Holy Communion. Presently, Junior Church is using “Lesson Plans That Work” from the Episcopal Church Library. This curriculum follows the Revised Common Lectionary.

During our liturgical calendar year, we have special celebrations and activities that may become part of the service. In December, we celebrate Kwanzaa with a special service in which our youth take a prominent and active part in presenting the seven principles of Kwanzaa. At the start of each new calendar year in January, we set aside one Sunday for a healing service, when members of the congregation are invited to come to the altar for anointing and blessing. We have guest speakers on Mothers’ Day, Fathers’ Day, Women’s Day and other occasions, as well as Education Sunday, when the academic and extracurricular accomplishments of all of our students, both youth and adult, are recognized and rewarded.

The first Sunday of each month is designated as Youth Sunday. On that day, the readings, element bearing, and ushering are performed by the youth. In February, Black History Month, the youth incorporate black historical information during all of the services. They also perform annual Christmas and Easter pageants, which are included in the services.

Music is a very important part of the 10:30 a.m. service. Except for the third Sunday of each month, we sing traditional Anglican hymns from The Hymnal 1982. The Sanctuary Choir sings on those Sundays. We celebrate the third Sunday as Gospel Sunday and sing from the African American Heritage Hymnal or Lift Every Voice and Sing II. The Gospel Choir sings on the third Sunday. We are looking for a rector who loves and appreciates good music and who is willing to explore other forms of music with us.
Holy Comforter hosts a number of independence anniversary celebration services for various Caribbean nations. These services are inspired by those national cultures, including some steel band music and liturgical dances. Holy Comforter also has its own Steel Orchestra, which performs selections on occasion. For some special 10:30 a.m. services, the trumpet and drums are used. On Christmas Eve night, the prelude to our service includes carols sung by the choir and congregation, trumpet playing, and a performance by our Steel Orchestra.

Average Sunday worship attendance for 2013 and 2014 were 125 and 115, respectively. Attendance during the past 12 months of transition has been lower than usual, with an average of 25 persons at the 8:00 a.m. service and 70 persons at the 10:30 a.m. service. The typical breakdown at the 10:30 a.m. service is 65 members and 5 visitors. In 2014 there were 3 baptisms and 2 funerals.

As shown by responses from our Member Profile Survey, our congregation finds that worship at Holy Comforter is personally meaningful, vibrant, and joyful. In order of priority, the most meaningful aspects of worship to us are sermons, fellowship, music, spiritual atmosphere, and children’s programs.

Our Parish Life and Culture

The members of our Parish are divided into seven Cells (member groups) named after the following New Testament epistles: Colossians; Corinthians; Ephesians; Hebrews; Philippians; Romans; and Thessalonians. The Cells are a vital part of the life-line of the church. They are responsible for: attending to the welfare of their members; keeping the rector informed of illnesses, births, deaths, or other events affecting their members, assisting in the dissemination of information, preparing the Sunday Coffee Hour; and providing other assistance as necessary.
We enjoy a very active church life and culture at Holy Comforter. We hold Bible Study classes on Sundays at 9:20 a.m. and on Wednesdays at 12:00 noon. During Lent, we hold a five-part Lenten Program on the five Wednesday evenings following Ash Wednesday. The program generally includes a DVD presentation on a Christian educational subject of interest followed by a lively discussion. Each session of the program is preceded by a light supper. We also have a silent Lenten Retreat, either a one-day event on the premises or a weekend away at a retreat facility. The retreats are open to members of the church and their guests. The youth attend a separate annual retreat. In addition, in the fall of each year, the Evangelism Committee sponsors a one-day workshop at an off-site location. The workshop is centered around a preselected theme and is led by a guest presenter. Attendees are divided into groups for sharing and discussion and then reassembled to interact with the whole group.

We have a Telephone Prayer Ministry with separate lines for women and men. Women dial in on Tuesday mornings, and men on Wednesday mornings, for 15 to 30 minutes of prayer and the reading of psalms or passages from the scriptures. Our Order of the Daughters of the King is a “spiritual sisterhood of women dedicated to a life of Prayer, Service, and Evangelism.” The Daughters attend corporate communion on the third Sunday of each month.

Each Sunday, our church collects a basket of dry food, which we package and deliver to homeless shelters. Our Slice of Life Ministry meets once a month to make sandwiches for distribution to the needy at Martha’s Table.

Our Senior Ministry is composed of a group of seniors, both from the church and the community. They gather once a month over lunch to listen to a speaker on a topic of interest to them or to simply watch a movie and socialize.

Holy Comforter has an Episcopal Church Women (ECW) chapter and a Men’s Fellowship group, both of which are very active in church programs and outreach. The Men’s Fellowship undertakes clothes and food drives to assist victims of natural disasters and the needy. It also donates turkeys and hams for Thanksgiving and Christmas. The ECW identifies and assists disadvantaged families, collects Christmas gifts for the needy, organizes the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, and donates vestments, linens, and vessels to the church. Both the Men’s Fellowship and the ECW engage in fundraising.
Our Education Committee works with the youth and provides scholarships, blankets, and gift baskets to the college-bound students. It keeps in touch with students and provides assistance as necessary.

Our congregation is composed of members from the African American, African, and Caribbean communities. Each culture contributes its own unique richness. In the spring of each year, Holy Comforter hosts a Multicultural Fiesta day, which showcases food from the various cultures, music, and entertainment. Other major events include the annual Crab Feast in the summer and the Dinner Dance in the fall.

On Mothers’ Day, the men of the church host an elegant luncheon for the women. They provide a much appreciated day of relaxation for the women by organizing, preparing, and serving the food. They also clean up. The male youth participate in the effort. On Fathers’ Day, the women return the favor.

Our church is open to several outside groups for meetings. Currently, Overeaters Anonymous, community organizations, foreign nationals’ associations, fraternities, and sororities utilize the facility. Also, the Walker Center hosts various international group functions that provide educational presentations and the sharing of music, dancing, and other cultural information. It is a venue for workshops, conferences, college preparatory classes, and classes on etiquette and preparation for the job market, as well as baby shower, birthday, graduation, and anniversary receptions.

Who We Are

We are a joyous, lively congregation, and we genuinely like to interact with each other. Our church environment is warm and friendly. We see our church as a family and community of friends who are supportive of each other.

Over the past 21 months of transition, we have experienced anxiety, uncertainty, and conflict in moving on after the departure of our two long-serving rectors. We also experienced some loss in membership. We have had time to grieve and reflect and are now ready to move forward into the future.

Approximately 85 percent of members fall between the ages of 42 years and above. Worship services are very important to us, and they take priority over daily ministries. Our congregation is informal, relaxed, and open in our dealings with our leaders. We like to be able to approach
and speak with them without always having to make a formal appointment. We prefer to be informed, persuaded, and encouraged rather than be told what to do. We expect our leaders to interact socially during Coffee Hour and functions. We express ourselves freely. Feeling that we are being heard is very important to us.

Volunteers perform most of the work in our church. Because our congregation is relatively small, some volunteers are responsible for more than one leadership function. However, while we would welcome more volunteers in leadership positions, we do not feel overworked because those who prefer not to lead contribute their support to our efforts.

**Our Future Needs and Goals**

Our congregation believes that the church has a clear sense of mission, which is: “to be a congregation where we joyfully grow together in Christ through worship, education and spiritual discipline; and to be a Christian fellowship where our gifts are used, together with other churches and organizations, in sustaining a common network for meeting human needs and promoting God’s justice in our community.”

In meeting our church’s mission, a growing congregation is important to the life of the church. As indicated by responses to our Member Profile Survey, an overwhelming number of those who participated believe that we are living out our mission. However, we need to do more. We must improve membership with a welcoming committee that follows up with newcomers during the Coffee Hour and afterwards. Individually, we can make a greater effort to reach out to more visitors and new members and to encourage members to become involved in ministries. We must sense the congregation’s need for change and be more receptive to new ideas and people. Our church lacks a significant presence in the 25-40 age group. We must incorporate programs and activities to attract them.

As to the surrounding Brightwood community, we must improve our responsiveness to changes in demographics and needs and provide more extensive outreach activities. We need a greater presence in the community. It has been suggested that we engage in fellowship and friendship with neighbors, reach out to the elderly and youth, let the community know that the church and its facilities are available for use, and invite members of the community to join the choir.

We are working on improving communication in our Parish and keeping our members informed of church matters as appropriate. In addition to oral announcements during services, we rely on the Sunday Bulletin, Cell Leaders, automated telephone calls, and the Listserv to disseminate information. We are also enhancing our website to share programs and events for our church family and the community, as well as to improve the donation efforts of the church.

The Walker Center is a new, modern, state-of-the-art, telecommunications-equipped conference and meeting facility. Our challenge in the future is to find a way to promote the Center so that it becomes more fully utilized and economically self-sustaining.

In meeting our future goals and needs, our new rector must be energetic and able to help us grow our congregation, especially in the young adult age group. Our rector must assist us in becoming
more involved with our community. Our rector must also be business-minded and have the skills necessary to guide us in our efforts to maximize the use of the Walker Center to meet its goals and obligations.
What We Hope for in a New Rector

We are looking for a Rector who is:

• a visionary
• an inspiring preacher
• a good communicator
• inter-culturally sensitive
• flexible
• youth-oriented

Contact Information for Potential Candidates

We trust that this profile has provided a clear picture of who we are at the Church of the Holy Comforter. If you are interested in our rector position, we invite you to apply. Please submit your résumé/CV and OTM Portfolio electronically to:

The Rev. Canon Paula Clark
Canon for Clergy Development
and Multicultural Ministries
Diocese of Washington
E-mail: pclark@edow.org
### Financial Summary

**2015 Budget**
- Total Income: $311,072.00
- Total Expenses: $311,072.00

**2014 Budget (Actual):**
- Total Income: $392,555.00
- Total Expenses: $375,075.00
- Excess income over expenses: $17,480.00

**2013 Budget (Actual)**
- Total Income: $439,572.93
- Total Expenses: $457,512.87
- Excess expenses over income: $17,939.94

### Rector Financial Package

- Stipend: $61,664
- Allowance: $4,800
- Pension: $13,536
- Group Health Insurance: N/A
- Life Insurance: N/A
- Total Package: $80,000
Wardens and Vestry

Steven E. Taylor, Sr., Senior Warden
Genevieve Barrow Gongar, Junior Warden
Chidi Agbaeruneke, Sr.
   Angela Atkins
   John Chinkhota
   Maisie Dunbar
   Margaret Forde
   Allison Hinds
   Tiffany Ragin
Ann Marie Waterman, Treasurer

Search Committee

Byron Smith, Chair
Monalie Bledsoe
Patricia Braxton
Gwendolyn Holmes
   Annette Palmer
   Jeffrey Swilley
   Laura Vault
Welcome to the Church of the Holy Comforter
701 Oglethorpe Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20011
Tel: 202.726.1862
Website: holycomforterdc.org  Email: holycomforterdc@gmail.com

❖ Holy Comforter Episcopal Church has been in existence since 1900 and has been at its present location since 1938.

❖ The Bishop John Thomas Walker National Learning Center (BJTWNLC) was opened in 2009.

❖ Church Ministries/Activities:
  Acolytes: Chidi Agbaezeke, Jr./Margaret Lewis  Junior Church: Patricia Braxton/Cynthia Carrette
  Adult Sunday School: Annette Palmer  Lay Readers: Patricia Braxton
  Adult Bible Study - Mid-Week: Sue Riley  Lenten Program: Monalisa Bledsoe
  Altar Guild: Lois Jackson  Men's Fellowship: Steven Taylor, Sr.
  Church Sunday Service Bulletin: Dr. Audrey Byrd  Music Ministry: Renee Harper
  Daughters of the King: Ernestine Wright  Steel Orchestra: Monalisa Bledsoe
  Education/Youth Committee: Laura Valt/Julie Taylor/Patricia Braxton  Usher: Ivor Yearwood
  Episcopal Church Women: Gwendolyn Holmes  Community Outreach: John Chinkota
  Flower Guild: Geraldine Bead  Prayer & Evangelism Ministry: Sue Riley
  Women's Telephone Prayer Ministry: Heather Benjamin Alexis  Senior Ministries: Lois Jackson
  Forward Day-by-Day: Lois Jackson  Slice-Of-Life Ministry: Ethel Woodard
  Men's Telephone Prayer Ministry: Ivor Yearwood

❖ Sunday Services
  8:00 a.m.  Holy Eucharist
  10:30 a.m.  Junior Church
  10:30 a.m.  Holy Eucharist

❖ Special Events
  Homecoming Sunday & African Liberation Celebration
  Fall Dinner Dance
  International Independence Anniversary Celebrations
  Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
  Black History Month Program
  Mother’s Day Program
  Women’s Day Program
  Education Sunday
  Father’s Day Program
  Multi-Cultural Fiesta
  Summer Crab Feast
  Ocean City Trip
  Christmas/Easter Poinsettia Remembrances
### Holy Comforter Church Operating Budget 2015

#### Receipts
Income (Direct and Supplemental)
- Pledge
- Walker Center Covenant
- Building Maintenance Fund
- Plate Offering
- Youth Ministry
- Music Ministry
- Fundraisers
- Rental Income
- Flowers
- Other income/Other Misc.

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#### Disbursements
Operating Expenses, Programs, Salaries, Diocesan Yearly Giving
- Church/Worship Supplies
- Flowers
- Music Supplies
- Discretionary Fund
- Receptions/Coffee Hour
- Church Utilities
- Maintenance/Repairs
- Landscape/Snow Removal
- Telephone (Church)
- Postage
- Office Supplies & Materials
- Church Insurance
- Fixtures/Furnishings
- Auditor
- Bookkeeper
- Bank Charges
- Printing and Reproduction
- Walker Center Mortgage
- Other Walker Expenses
- Other Expenses (Miscellaneous)
- Youth Ministry
- Senior Ministry
- Christian Education
- Outreach
- Lay Training
- Emergency Fund
- Rector
- Director/Christian Education
- Official Allowance
- Clergy Pension
- Supply Clergy
- Sexton
- Administrative Services
- Organist/Choir Director
- Supply Musicians
- Yearly Giving

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