



March 12, 2020

Dear One,

It is with profound sadness – and also a sense of hope - that I share with you that last week, the decision was made to close Trinity Episcopal Church (also known as Spirit of Hope) at 1519 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Detroit, due to financial unsustainability. You may read a more detailed rationale of the closure in the enclosed letter, which Bishop Bonnie Perry wrote and sent to our diocesan governing bodies last week. You may also read, enclosed, the letter that Father Anthony Estes, diocesan missionary at Trinity, wrote to his congregation. The final service at Trinity will take place on or around Easter Sunday, April 12 (pending any changes or precautions that the COVID-19 outbreak may bring in these next weeks).

This news lands with particular pain for many of us here at Christ Church. For forty years, Christ Church has engaged in partnership with Trinity, sharing in ministry together here in Detroit, sometimes sharing clergy and administration, publishing directories together for several years, helping regularly to clean and repair Trinity's building, funding the Montessori preschool program that ran for many years, founding and continuing to participate in the Spirit of Hope soup kitchen (begun in January 1982), and most recently, shaping and participating in liturgies together, such as the Advent Vespers series in December 2019.

While occasional joint services and projects between Trinity and Christ Church had been occurring since the 1930s, if not earlier, it was in June of 1980 that the Christ Church Vestry, continually seeking to make a difference here in Detroit, decided to build intentional partnership with Trinity, "sharing in worship services, joining in neighborhood improvement projects, simply doing with another parish, the kind of activities we've always done. In short, we'll be companion churches; companions in God's work," as it was recorded in the newsletter at that time.

When the 15th Rector of Christ Church, the Rev. Erv Brown, and his family arrived in 1981, his installation service in September 1981 included the signing of a Covenant of Mutual Ministry between Christ Church and Trinity. A couple of years later, when Trinity's rector moved to another call and its vestry determined that it could not afford another full-time rector, the vestries of the two parishes entered into a new, expanded covenant, in which Erv became the rector of Trinity as well, Christ Church's then-assistant the Rev. E. Michaella Keener became the part-time vicar of Trinity, the Trinity Vestry continued to direct its temporal affairs, Trinity maintained its independence as a parish, and both congregations "pledged to work together in ministry and for

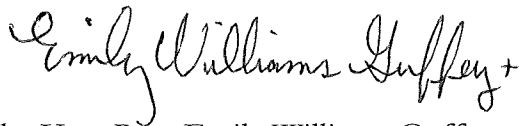
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their mutual benefit in all ways possible” (as recorded by Erv in the parish history that he wrote, *Christ Church Detroit: A Beacon of Hope*, p. 295). In the years since, this partnership has waxed and waned as the two congregations and their leadership have changed - and as the city itself has changed - yet it always has been there.

In light of this history, Bishop Perry has reassigned Father Anthony to Christ Church, where he will begin as our full-time Associate Rector on Sunday, April 26, supported fully by the diocesan McElroy Fund, which provides funding to priests in their first 2-3 years of ordained ministry. Beloved, know that this is both an investment in Father Anthony’s continued development as a priest, and also an investment in us, as we dedicate ourselves again – always – to expanding our mission and ministry here in Detroit.

Because we long have been and continue to be in this together, I invite your full participation in the closing events at Trinity (TBD, more information coming soon) and in welcoming Anthony into his new capacity, as together we enter our next chapter.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Williams Guffey +". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

The Very Rev. Emily Williams Guffey
XIX Rector, Christ Church Detroit