



## CHURCH *of the* HOLY CROSS

EPISCOPAL

### **Our Story**

In 1942 a small group of Episcopalians began to meet in Trussville, holding their first service in April at Mt. Nebo Presbyterian Church, now the First Presbyterian Church of Trussville. The following month, 15 of the group petitioned Bishop Charles Carpenter to allow the formation of a mission congregation. After favorable response, an organizational meeting was held on May 31, which elected officers and chose the name Mission of the Holy Cross.

During the next 13 years, the mission's members met in the Presbyterian Church, at members' homes, in the Community Center and in the high school. Trussville was still a small town then, with a population of about 2000, and those early years were challenging.

Land was purchased, and worship space (now known as the Genesis Room) plus some adjoining smaller rooms were erected in 1955. Used bricks were donated for that first construction, and parishioners cleaned them by hand. The first service in the new building was held by candlelight—electricity not having been turned on yet—on Christmas Eve of that year.

For many years the church shared the services of various vicars or rectors with other small congregations in the area. It was not until 1980 that the Church of the Holy Cross, by then a parish church, acquired its first full-time Rector, the Rev. Ronald DelBene. Four years later the church built its current worship space and additional rooms.

The 1980s and 90s brought significant growth for Holy Cross, and the city was also growing. From Fr. DelBene's arrival until the end of Fr. James Elliott's tenure as Rector a decade and a half later, Trussville's population approximately tripled to a total over 10,000.

In 1997 the Rev. Stephen Rottgers joined Holy Cross as its Rector, a position he would hold for nearly a decade. Among the events of this period was establishment of a Tuesday morning Bible Study, which successfully continues to the present. Another enduring accomplishment was the establishment, with Holy Cross leadership, of the Trussville Ecumenical Assistance Ministries (TEAM). Through this, instead of having “food closets” in each church, area churches now contribute food, clothing and money to a central TEAM location which distributes to the needy.

In 2007 the Rev. Aaron Raulerson joined Holy Cross as its Rector. During that first year the Tuesday Bible group was complemented by establishment of an early Friday morning Men’s Bible Study, and this also continues to thrive. Aaron served the church as Rector for 7 years.

From 2014-2016, Holy Cross went through a period of transition where interim rector The Rev. Joe Gibbes served at Holy Cross from November 2014 until October 2015. During this period of time, plans went underway to expand the current facilities to include larger restrooms for both men and women as well as the establishment of a handicap accessible restroom. That renovation was completed in September of 2016. The Rev. Steve DeGweck served Holy Cross as interim from Christmas Eve 2015 till October 2016. Both interim periods helped to stabilize the church during a time without a full time priest in place.

In October 2016, Holy Cross extended a call to The Rev. Wes Sharp to be the new Rector of Holy Cross. Wes and his family began their time at Holy Cross on November 1, 2016 preaching for the first time on November 6, 2016. In August 2017, Church of the Holy Cross celebrated 75 years of serving and caring for each other and the Trussville community, guided by our commitment to serving God. In March of 2020, Father Wes Sharp helped this parish navigate the Covid-19 pandemic. He implemented prerecording sermons that were available every Sunday. Later, he implemented outdoor services each Sunday. The Rev. Wes Sharp served through August of 2020.

In fall of 2020 we were able to return indoors with social distance and masks being implemented. The Rev. Massey Gentry served as interim rector from September 2020 until May 2021. The Rev. Clark Hubbard served from June 6, 2021 until Easter Sunday, April 17, 2022. Currently, we have supply priests from around the diocese who serve each Sunday.

The church’s doors are always open for newcomers to experience the Church of the Holy Cross and the family community that exist within.