

~ News From Around the Diocese ~



CLERGY NEWS: THE VERY REV. MICHAEL SHAFFER

The vestry and leadership of St. Mark's, Charleston, announced Sunday, May 25, that the Very Rev. Michael Shaffer has accepted the call to serve as their 23rd rector. In September 2023, Bishop Ruth Woodliff-Stanley called Father Michael to serve as interim rector for what was intended to be a transitional season, during which St. Mark's would undertake the work of discerning its new call, mission, and ministry. During his time as interim rector, the parishioners were energized and reinvigorated, living into the hope and promise of resurrection. Under his leadership, new vision and mission statements were adopted, clearly articulating St. Mark's call: "Living Inclusively, Promoting Justice, Sharing Hope." During this intended transitional time, it became clear both to members of St. Mark's and Fr. Michael, that their work together was not done, and they asked the bishop to call him as their next rector.

Of the call, Bishop Woodliff Stanley said, "The Rev. Shaffer brings the gifts most needed at the beginning of this exciting new season at St. Mark's. A seasoned priest and tireless advocate for justice, Michael has already inspired the congregation and diocese to take wise risks for the sake of the gospel. I am delighted he has accepted the call to serve as rector at St. Mark's."

Father Michael shared his thoughts on the call after the announcement. "I remember preaching a sermon at St. Mark's in December 2023 in which I said that God's will for us might not be what we will for ourselves," said Shaffer. "God's plan for us, God's call on us, may not be what we think it is. And then I asked the question, 'Are you willing to change in order to experience God's will for you?' Well, during my interim time at St. Mark's, it became clear to us that God's will at St. Mark's is that we deepen our committed relationship with one another to continue not only the important work of this parish, but also the work of justice so desperately needed in our country today, in collaboration with other parishes within our diocese, becoming Beloved Community for All. I am humbled, honored and proud to serve as rector of this historic parish, which understands that diversity, equity and inclusion are not political talking points, but rather Christian values."

Located in the Radcliffeboro neighborhood of downtown Charleston, St. Mark's was founded on Easter Day in 1865 by a group of devout free Black Episcopalians who found themselves without a place to worship at the end of the Civil War. The church is located at 16 Thomas Street.