

# ASSOCIATE RECTOR FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Calvary Episcopal Church, Memphis



Calvary Episcopal Church  
102 N. 2nd St., Memphis, TN 38103  
[www.calvarymemphis.org](http://www.calvarymemphis.org)

# ASSOCIATE RECTOR

## FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

**WHO IS CALVARY?** Calvary Episcopal Church is a vibrant, downtown parish in Memphis. We have a rich history and a modern sensibility that engages the entire Mid-South region. Our members come from three states and over 40 zip codes to participate in Christian practice that feeds us and our neighbors deeply.

During its 180-year history, Calvary has built innovative outreach ministries with lasting impact, because needs are great and because involved and generous parishioners want to serve. We have a strong tradition of glorious worship, because open doors and welcoming hearts bring God's love to many people. Calvary has built a commitment to leadership and to maintaining its presence in downtown Memphis, because we are part of this city.

**OUR CITY.** Memphis is tucked into the southwest corner of Tennessee on bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. Memphis has long been the Mid-South's urban center, shaped by the powerful and ancient river and the energy that flows both from Memphians and from those who flock here, whether to seek a career, to pursue an education, or to enjoy city life Memphis style. People relocate from all over the country and abroad to work at FedEx, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, or other international organizations based here.

Geographically, Memphis stretches east from the river along Poplar Avenue in a patchwork of affluent and poor neighborhoods, through Midtown, East Memphis and into suburbs that continue to expand. Nearly 85% of Calvary parishioners live in the eight zip codes along the Poplar corridor. These zip codes are diverse in terms of race, income, and lifestyle, and include or border distressed neighborhoods (those with longterm poverty and blight) or swing neighborhoods (those with measurable decline). Parishioners also come from other suburbs, and from Mississippi and Arkansas.

Memphis traditionally is deeply Southern, with the hospitality, laid-back ambiance, and religious devotion associated with the South—even if those qualities are being leavened by outside influences and more modern sensibilities. Newcomers are often stunned with how “churched” Memphis is. There are hundreds of churches, from modest storefronts to mega-churches, and church plays a significant role in the life and identity of many Memphians. Here, one's religious affiliation is less likely to be private and more likely to be emblazoned on a t-shirt. Other faiths are active here, including several significant Jewish synagogues and Muslim mosques. Faith leaders across the city—with Calvary often in a leading role—have a history of working together to help address problems such as hunger, racism, and poverty.

This is also a city with plenty going on in terms of culture, sports and recreation. Memphis has a lively arts scene, with professional ballet and opera troupes, fine-arts museums, and numerous art galleries. It's saturated with music—from the two professional symphonies to Beale Street blues, from contemporary homegrown sounds to hip-hop. We boast a rapidly expanding culinary scene that rivals any city in the country with fine-dining opportunities, farm-to-table restaurants, barbecue, and microbreweries.

Sports include the Memphis Grizzlies professional basketball, the Redbirds Triple-A baseball, and NCAA sports: The University of Memphis Tigers play here, and Southeastern Conference teams enjoy the support of the many local alumni. Numerous parks, the award-winning Memphis Zoo, and bike paths contribute to outdoor opportunities.

**OUR DIOCESE.** The Diocese of West Tennessee is small, both geographically and in membership, but size has never limited its vision. Created in 1982, when the state-wide Diocese of Tennessee was divided into the dioceses of West Tennessee, East Tennessee, and Tennessee, our diocese numbers about 9,000 baptized members within 32 parishes and missions—19 located in the Memphis metropolitan area. The diocesan seat is St. Mary's Cathedral, organized as a mission of Calvary Church in 1857 and located at the edge of downtown Memphis

### **WHO WE SAY WE ARE.**

We are a parish poised for new beginnings. We are *optimistic* and forward-thinking. We are *traditional* in our views about the function and style of worship but *progressive* in thought, inquiry and our approach to social issues.

We seek strong *faith-formation* and substance in our sermons.

We act on our responsibility to provide leadership and support to the *Memphis community*. We share our talents through gifts to the city and caring for fellow parishioners when they need us.

While we are an important and historic church in Memphis and the Diocese, our energetic parishioners are both *young in age and young at heart*.

We are here *intentionally*. Many of our new adult members grew up in other churches and many of us drive great distances to worship at Calvary.

We expect to be *involved* in the life of our church and many of us would like to do more, but wait to be asked.

**WHAT IS SPIRITUAL GROWTH?** We want to create a comprehensive spiritual growth program rooted in the Good News of Jesus Christ, incorporating worship, Bible study, and spiritual disciplines, as well as local and international pilgrimages to build upon our existing programs. We envision great Sunday experiences, workshops, and retreats. With an eye toward an increasingly mobile congregation, we also envision a program that fully utilizes website and mobile applications to meet people where they are when they are not in church.

We are blessed to have tremendous resources, including our Lenten Preaching Series, which features dynamic speakers from diverse spiritual backgrounds, drawing an audience of thousands each season, with tens of thousands online. We would like to harness the energy of this program, along with many others, and create opportunities for our parishioners, the Memphis community, and the larger global community that engage and explore ideas of depth and meaning.

**WHO WE SEEK.** We are looking for someone who will take the lead in imagining and leading classes, retreats, and pilgrimages, as well as expanding our vocabulary of spiritual practices and deepening our spiritual vitality; a worship leader who is comfortable in a variety of styles and settings who can help us expand our worship life into other forms yet to be identified that will help us draw close to God in new ways; and someone who will help us constantly reflect on our work together: What are we doing now? What aren't we doing? What's missing?

We are looking for someone who is energetic and creative and deeply cares for the spiritual growth of others, as well as someone who will help deepen relationships between all our members and those who have yet to find their way to Calvary.

**OUR VISION.** Calvary is already an important resource in our diocese, but we want to be an important resource to the church at large. Calvary is positioned in a city with amazing opportunities to care for those in need and spread the hopeful message of the Gospel. Our considerable resources provide a solid foundation upon which a spiritual growth program can be developed that can become a model for the wider Episcopal Church. We want our efforts to benefit the people of Calvary along with people in churches around the country, and Calvary has the capacity to support that work.

The church of the future will look very different than the church of today, and we want someone who can help us imagine and manifest that future today. We are a community of faith and action, and we want our new associate to help us live out that commitment in our daily lives. We invite you to visit our website at [www.calvarymemphis.org](http://www.calvarymemphis.org) or our Facebook page at [facebook.com/calvarymemphis](https://facebook.com/calvarymemphis) to learn more about Calvary.

**QUESTIONS.** If you have questions or would like to know more about this position, please contact the Rev. Christopher D. Girata at [cgirata@calvarymemphis.org](mailto:cgirata@calvarymemphis.org) or 901-312-5201.

**HOW TO APPLY.** Please send an updated OTM portfolio; a resume; an sample of your writing other than a sermon (an article, a seasonal reflection); an audio file/podcast of a recent sermon; and a letter of interest explaining why you feel called to Calvary. These materials may be addressed to Ebet Peoples at [epeeples@calvarymemphis.org](mailto:epeeples@calvarymemphis.org).