



The Episcopal Diocese of Georgia

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Growth at Christ Church Cordele

The Episcopal Church in Cordele is enjoying significant growth. Building on the hard work of the congregation's lay leadership and the Rev. Dr. Larry Williams, who the church called in 2014, the mission is growing numerically and spiritually.

More than 15 years ago, Bishop Louttit and Diocesan leaders chose to end all direct support to mission congregations. Some in Cordele recall it as a "sink or swim" moment. They decided to swim. More than a decade ago, the mission began Worship on the Water (WOW) each summer on the resort dock at the state park on Lake Blackshear.

Today Christ Church, Cordele, consists of 150 baptized persons. So far this year, the church celebrated six baptisms and on June 7, 8 adults were confirmed or received. The Operating Budget in 2014 was \$95,260, and this year it is \$143,792.

This year the church moved to two services on Sunday, one at 9 a.m. and the other at 11 a.m. During the summer, the 9 a.m. is hosted on the water and the 11 a.m. in town. Since April 12, the average attendance for both stands at 90, up from 71 in 2013.



Christ Church member Robby Stripling said, "WOW and our outreach are probably the key ingredients to our success." Further explaining the growth, he said, "Father Larry has brought new

energy. Allowing for two services and having Larry preach at both has increased engagement at services and with the church."

Williams said, "Growth can be messy. It is not all about the numbers." He added, "Our goal is to balance our commitment to tasks with an equal commitment to relationships." Stripling added, "I'm extremely proud of the church. We made a committed effort to grow and we have grown."

Diocesan Council approved Christ Church Cordele for a grant from the Campaign for Congregational Development. Since giving to the Campaign has not yet permitted fully funding that grant, the Diocese has partnered with Christ Church by paying for the cost of insurance for the Vicar to enable the congregation to bring Williams on board. This relatively small amount of support from the Campaign has leveraged the strong foundation created by the lay leadership to foster further growth. For more information about the Campaign for Congregation Development please visit our website: convention.georgiaepiscopal.org