

Abstract

“WE DID IT WRONG – THE UNEXPECTED SUCCESS OF SOUTHSIDE ABBEY”

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This thesis project details the founding and first three years of ministry at Southside Abbey – a nontraditional worshipping community in the Episcopal tradition and a new church start in the Diocese of East Tennessee. This project exists so that others might learn from the mistakes of Southside Abbey but also come to see the ways in which such mistakes have led to unimagined successes. Chapter 1 explores the contexts in which Southside Abbey's founding took place – the world, the Episcopal Church, and the Southside neighborhoods of Chattanooga, Tennessee – including the ways each of these contexts necessitated a worshipping community such as Southside Abbey.

Chapter 2 details the community and corporate life of Southside Abbey. A timeline outlines the developments of the community in its attempts to be emergent in ethos while institutional in affiliation. At times, this juxtaposition led to conflicting expectations. Especially through the use of community organizing tactics, Southside Abbey discerned with members of Southside neighborhoods of Chattanooga the felt needs of the broader community. In short, Southside Abbey's success is intertwined with the poor who make up the worshipping community.

Chapter 3 presents the theological underpinnings of this work in an applied, pastoral, or practical setting. On large theological issues, the Creed is a sufficient statement of faith. *Lex Orandi* is reinterpreted in broadly inclusive ways. Missiology, Ecclesiology, and Stewardship are viewed through the theological lens of Southside Abbey. Missiology is shaped by those who are a part of the community, namely the poor. In so doing, “outreach” ministry becomes more like ministry of the community, as distinctions of insider and outsider dissolve. Ecclesiology is similarly tied to the community. As a church without a dedicated building, Southside Abbey is easily able to see church as assembly. Stewardship with a community of the poor and working poor is broadened to understand stewardship of one's being, one's time, and creation.

Chapter 4 provides examples of Southside Abbey's practice, especially the ancient church practices of hospitality, liturgy, and formation. Hospitality is paramount to the work of Southside Abbey. As those who have been wounded by the church find that this is a safe space, their inclusion allows for a richness of sharing and expression. Liturgy is the “people's work,” tied to context, in the elements that are shared but also in holy conversation that honors the thoughts, opinions, and experiences of those present. Formation is richly liturgical, but accessible. In Chapters 3 and 4, historical precedent

comes from Richard Hooker and the Oxford Movement, champions of institutional churches in un-institutional ways.

The project's conclusion points to Southside Abbey as an authentic Anglican worshipping community, in being locally adapted to the community's context. As the worshipping has gracefully received the poor who the Holy Spirit has brought to Southside Abbey, the community has shifted from seeing numbers as indicators of success to Southside Abbey, o relationship-based ministry. As success is redefined, walls break down and dichotomies coalesce around sacred story. Emergent and institutional, high and low, liberal and conservative are engaged in ministry of, by, for, and with the poor, and the biblical stories take on flesh. While these successes might not have been what the diocesan or other institutional church bodies may have had in mind, they are nevertheless successes that showcase the richness of those not often found doing ministry in the church. In this regard, this project serves not as a cautionary tale, but as a guide for doing similar work in other contexts.

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We Did It Wrong – The Unexpected Success of Southside Abbey

by

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Introduction

The thesis statement for this paper – “Southside Abbey is a success; not in the ways we had hoped, but in the ways we needed” – is a boldly honest expression of the ways in which this author needed to have his field of study upended before him. My initial thesis was, “Southside Abbey has much to share with the wider Episcopal Church, based on our efforts to create a missional Episcopal worshipping community on the Southside of Chattanooga, Tennessee.” This initial thesis is true, but could avoid a discussion of the transformation that has taken place in those involved with Southside Abbey. In a word, that is what Southside Abbey is: transformative. Southside Abbey is a community being transformed by acting as the Body of Christ in a particular context. The Southside Abbey community has been transformed by journeying with those to whom Jesus entrusted the Gospel, the poor. This transformation occurs by sharing in meals and missional projects with those experiencing hunger and homelessness. These transformations have allowed us to see the various successes of Southside Abbey.

A introductory preamble of note addresses the topic of why such a treatise is necessary. Among the reasons, this document is a requirement for the Doctor of Ministry at the School of Theology at Sewanee. Hopefully, someone might read this work or some future form of it and make use of a portion of the content to build up the Body of Christ.

Finally, this is a testament of necessity. Southside Abbey's story is one that merits telling. Ideally, this story could be told by the voices who experienced it, but such a crowdsourcing would not be appropriate for this work. That being said, many of the ideas and practices, and much of the theology found in this paper stem from the author's experience with the community of Southside Abbey.

Southside Abbey began three years ago with funds from the Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee's Mission Growth Fund. As he handed over the proverbial keys, Bishop Young said, "See what happens." Southside Abbey has seen a lot and not always the expected. This project, which represents the culmination of those three years, reflects on the action of these experiences and shares the lessons learned along the way. Optimistically, these reflections and learnings will be of help to anyone in the Episcopal Church considering starting something similar in their context.

The action and reflection model of this project allows for this work, detailing what Southside Abbey set out to do and the assumptions that work was based upon; what Southside Abbey has done and continues to do: the involvement of the Southside communities; and how what Southside Abbey is doing compares to what was set out to do. This thesis presents the results growing out of direct engagement within a context of ministry coupled with coursework done in the Advanced Degrees Program (ADP) at the School of Theology in Sewanee, Tennessee. The progress of this work informs and shapes the intentional leadership development done at Southside Abbey with Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF).

At the heart of this investigation are the criteria by which Southside Abbey judges

and measures our success. In terms of conventional metrics employed by the Church for measuring success – membership, finances, sustainability, etc. – Southside Abbey has not been very successful. Instead, Southside Abbey is rethinking metrics to measure success through relationships. It is through relationships that Southside Abbey is successful.

Relationships such as those found at Southside Abbey challenge preconceptions about worshipping communities, the Episcopal Church, and participating in a church of, by, for, and with the poor.

Further, underlying the work of this project is the Episcopal Church's relationship to those experiencing homelessness and hunger, especially as a worshipping community and not just as an outreach undertaking. Building on the coursework done at the School of Theology, this work applies the missiology, ecclesiology, hospitality, liturgy, formation, and stewardship learned in the Advanced Degrees Program. This project lies at the junction of theory and practice. The primary research method of the thesis is engagement with readings suggested by these courses and the first and second readers, coupled with a congregational analysis of Southside Abbey through the first three years. As a storyteller, I also share a few stories as they relate to this work. This project describes how Southside Abbey works as a missional church plant of the Episcopal Church and how it does not; how successes and failures are measured; how these criteria are tied to the Southside of Chattanooga's context; and how our work might be of use to the wider Episcopal Church. In regards to this last point, this project is a way to share what Southside Abbey has learned – mistakes made and blessings received – to those who might be called to start something new in the Episcopal tradition. In this way, the

project will continue to contribute not only to Southside Abbey's ongoing practice of ministry, but also to ministries yet undreamed.

At Southside Abbey, leadership development is paramount. Southside Abbey is constantly lifting up the next leaders, as so many of Southside Abbey's communicants have gone on to seminary, Episcopal Service Corps sites, diaconal formation programs, or lay leadership roles that take them away from the community. Southside Abbey forms disciples who form disciples. Part of that ministry means saying goodbye to those called to lead elsewhere. The ever-changing cast of characters compounds the complexity of evaluative efforts, which are viewed in this paper through multiple lenses.

The first chapter is entitled, "Setting the Stage." It delves into the specific contexts – the World, the Episcopal Church, the Southside of Chattanooga, and Southside Abbey's initial stirrings – that allow Southside Abbey to exist. The chapter explores the present socio-cultural context of the Episcopal Church, as well as how such a context creates opportunity for missional church plants such as Southside Abbey. Next, the chapter wades into the waters that are the Southside Neighborhoods of Chattanooga, Tennessee, examining how the unique wave of entrepreneurship crashed into neighborhoods relatively forgotten by many Chattanoogaans. The next section of this chapter details many personal assumptions in coming to the Southside Abbey project. Namely, I am a product of the institutional church, enamored of the emergent church. I hold fealty to Christ who moves in both theaters, but I am formed by my learnings and experiences. In this section, these assumptions are unpacked by outlining the metrics at work for measuring "success." Before Southside Abbey began, there was relative clarity

about what a successful new church startup might look like. As Southside Abbey continued, it seemed more and more that the Church does not currently have the metrics to measure relationship-driven ministries like Southside Abbey. Stories of transformation are among the best metrics that we have for sharing Southside Abbey's successes.

The second chapter, "Southside Abbey's Corporate Life," details the developing ecclesiastical life of Southside Abbey after its founding. This chapter provides a necessary transition from "Setting the Stage" to the work that is happening now that is justified in chapter three, "Theology." Additionally, chapter two provides some of the impetus for Southside Abbey, as well as detailing some of the changes that have taken place in Southside Abbey and among its congregants. Perhaps the most important part of Southside Abbey's corporate life is our setting in both the institutional church and the emergent church. This is a central theme to this chapter and to the whole work of this paper.

The third chapter is entitled, "Theology." This is an opportunity to share where the Holy Spirit has led Southside Abbey to reflect theologically upon the sort of work undertaken by the community. The first section describes our missiology. Namely, we endeavor to be Incarnational, Eucharistic, and led by the Holy Spirit. We also strive to avoid the "us-and-them" model that plagues many efforts at "outreach." Southside Abbey's ecclesiology is Anglican. Questions like, "What is the Church?," and, "Who is the Church?," are answered inclusively. Thoughts on stewardship are likewise expansive. Spaces are borrowed, leaders are creatively compensated, and membership is comprised of those who show up. Southside Abbey's theology is living and alive, as maintained

since its founding, though the work is not always done perfectly. In some ways Southside Abbey has been a “build-the-ark-as-the-rain-is-falling” approach.

The fourth chapter is entitled “Practice.” This chapter views practice in the areas of hospitality, liturgy, and formation through the lens of Southside Abbey. At Southside Abbey, hospitality is central. As we welcome the stranger, we welcome – and are welcomed by – Jesus. Our liturgies follow the model of hospitality. Worship is accessible, even for those unfamiliar with the liturgical church. The liturgy changes seasonally and is produced by a team of lay leaders in consultation with clergy and our bishop, being “the work of the people”¹ before the first prayer is read. Some have come to translate liturgy, “public work,”² which still fits with Southside Abbey's attempt to make liturgy accessible, inclusive, and created communally. As literacy is a challenge for some in the community, Southside Abbey explores other ways to do this work, including call and response and story-centered eucharistic prayers. Finally, formation is examined. We hold the dictum, *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi* (how we pray shapes what we believe).³ In recent years, the translation of this phrase and even the phrase itself has been nuanced for the sake of an expansive, ecumenical ecclesiology,⁴ which fits perfectly with Southside Abbey's ecclesiological stance toward liturgical inclusion and formation. Much

1 Marion Hatchett, *Sanctifying Life, Time and Space: An Introduction to Liturgical Study* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 4.

2 Maggi Dawn, “Liturgy – it's *not* the work of the people” *Maggi Dawn* (blog), September 21, 2014, <http://maggidawn.net/2014/09/21/liturgy-its-not-the-work-of-the-people/>.

3 Leonel L. Mitchell, *Praying Shapes Believing: A Theological Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 1985), 1.

4 Paul V. Marshall, “Reconsidering 'Liturgical Theology': Is there a *Lex Orandi* for All Christians?” in *Studia Liturgica: An International Ecumenical Review for Liturgical Research and Renewal* 22, no. 2 (Stockholm: Societas Liturgica, 1995), 140.

formation takes place in the process of worshipping as a community. The sermon at Southside Abbey is a holy conversation, including and embracing the richness of the community that is gathered. Additional formation is done through leadership development of the laity and through small groups, such as Education for Ministry (EfM).

The last chapter, “Conclusion,” examines how Southside Abbey as a community-based missional church startup has done in light of all it set out to do and be. Southside Abbey's growth has occurred in the process of being who the community is called to be, correcting course while blazing a trail. Southside Abbey has been part of and party to good and bad, up and down, and right and wrong as our landscape has wildly shifted. A traditional “mission statement” might call into question the success of Southside Abbey. However, Southside Abbey, as a community, is learning to follow the Holy Spirit into context and community, and in that regard, is a communal success. A congregational analysis, charted through the three years of Southside Abbey's history, illumines these realities, concluding with a return to the present context of the Episcopal Church. Some of what Southside Abbey, as an Episcopal worshipping community, may have to teach the Episcopal Church is outlined. Current Episcopalian thinkers and authors are saying now is the time try Episcopal expressions like Southside Abbey, connecting to a brief discussion of leadership in the Episcopal Church. Thankfully, further study is already before me. As a 2015 fellow in the Episcopal Church Foundation's Fellowship Partners Program, I am part of assembling a network of missional leaders engaged in this work all over the country so that the Southside Abbeys of the Episcopal Church can learn from

one another. In conclusion, some opportunities for enabling and emboldening these missional communities are described.

Chapter 1 – Setting the Stage

Researching this paper (and the several iterations that came before it), required a lot of reading. J. Louis Martyn's *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, kept resurfacing. In that work, Martyn argues that the Gospel According to John allegorically and simultaneously describes both the earthly and the divine. This is done with the metaphor of theater, cast, as Martyn describes it, in the drama “taking place both on the heavenly stage and on the earthly stage.”⁵ This theatrical metaphor guides this chapter. This chapter sets the stage for what was to become Southside Abbey, both as a temporal and ecclesiastical hypostasis. The contexts of the world; the Episcopal Church; Chattanooga's Southside; and Southside Abbey described in succession show the need for the ongoing work at Southside Abbey.

The World

Much has been written on the “Secular Age.” One of the books that led to Southside Abbey is *A Secular Age* by Charles Taylor. In this tome, Taylor describes the modernist effort: “The colossal success of modern natural science and the associated technology can lead us to feel that it unlocks all mysteries, that it will ultimately explain

⁵ Louis J. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* 3rd ed. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2003), 130.

everything, that human science must be developed on the same basic plan, or even ultimately reduced to physics, or at least organic chemistry.”⁶ Richard Rohr concisely ties Taylor’s analysis to modern Christianity in one of his recent daily emails: “Atheism is actually a product of Western Christianity, which has promoted a spirituality of individual advancement – perfectibility, achievement, performance, and willpower.”⁷ The logical extension of the Protestant work ethic, “pull yourself up by your own bootstraps,” might mean there is need for God. The meta-narrative of “I earned this,” has led to an American Society that simultaneously promotes “Christian Values” while being ill-equipped to live into them; a society where it is acceptable to talk about being “Christian,” but dangerous to act like one.

A brief discussion of postmodernism – or that which has made modernism itself feel amiss – is necessary. In his book, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?*, James K.A. Smith offers a historical definition of postmodernism: “postmodernism has been variously described as a kind of *post-* (after-) modern condition and is sometimes even linked to particular historical events.”⁸ It has its roots in French philosophy, which has its roots in broader continental philosophy.⁹ Smith boils postmodern philosophy down to three philosophers represented by representative slogans:

6 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2007), 548.

7 Richard Rohr, “Twelve Step Spirituality: Week 2: Step 3: Turning Over Our Lives” *Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation* (blog), November 24, 2015, <http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?ca=9677b259-1b16-47ba-9a4d-d7418056f907&c=a3990ac0-f8e6-11e4-bdcb-d4ae52754b78&ch=a39e3ae0-f8e6-11e4-bdcb-d4ae52754b78>.

8 James K. A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 19.

9 *Ibid.*, 19.

“There is nothing outside the text” (Derrida)¹⁰

Postmodernity is “incredulity towards metanarratives” (Lyotard)¹¹

“Power is knowledge” (Foucault)¹²

Smith additionally offers, “Generally, these three slogans are invoked as being mutually exclusive to confessional Christian faith,” but that is because they are often viewed “without a context.”¹³ Independently of this exclusivity, Lyotardian postmodernism's “incredulity toward metanarratives” includes the secular metanarrative of progress, which, can define the modern age. This calls to mind the black and white (or worse rusted-sepia-toned) film strips from the first half of the last century generations of children were made to watch in school (as late, in this author's case, as the mid-1980s), with titles like “Developing Responsibility,”¹⁴ “Social Acceptability,”¹⁵ and “Wheels of Progress.”¹⁶

If the 1950s of these film strips return, mainline churches will be ready. There will be progressive social programs (and the committees to steer them) addressing social ills of all kinds. But according to our Presiding Bishop, the Episcopal Church is being

10 Ibid., 21.

11 Ibid., 22.

12 Ibid., 22.

13 Ibid., 22.

14 Boomer Day, “Developing Responsibility - Vintage Education Film.” Filmed [1949] (YouTube video, 10:05) Posted [December 2012]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YN8z-Ye7J_I&list=PLoK35v0ms9AHaH9fqI2EhATjnAowC9z2u.

15 I Want More Retro, “Social Acceptability (1957).” Filmed [1957] (YouTube video, 19:09) Posted [June 2012]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdIHkjpEIQ&index=5&list=PLoK35v0ms9AHaH9fqI2EhATjnAowC9z2u>.

16 US Auto Industry, “Wheels of Progress (Ca 1927).” Filmed [c. 1927] (YouTube video, 14:12) Posted [September 2009]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hImMnUB_OGE&index=31&list=PLoK35v0ms9AHaH9fqI2EhATjnAowC9z2u.

called into the Jesus Movement.¹⁷ It would seem the 1950s are not coming back, as we are seeing once unquestioned binaries – gender, sexuality, political affiliation – break down before our eyes—so why not the sacred and the secular? Or, at least the missional and the institutional? This fits with Southside Abbey's Tagline: “A non-traditional worshipping community in the Episcopal tradition.”¹⁸

Within postmodernism, binaries are broken down. James K.A. Smith deftly observes: “Postmodernism tends to be something of a chameleon, portrayed as either monster or savior – either the new form of the enemy or the next best thing to come along.”¹⁹ He goes on to suggest that “the phenomenon of postmodernism poses [some questions for the church] and suggests a strategy for engagement that avoids simple dichotomies of either demonizing or baptizing postmodernism.”²⁰ Rather than jumping on or off the *S.S. Po-Mo*, now is the time to sit, remain, dwell²¹ where we are, because this is not something that is coming – it is already here.

Reading Taylor's tome, and Smith's parsing of the themes of that tome,²² imparts knowledge and appreciation of these realities, but it might not change behavior. If the

17 Michael B. Curry, “This is the Jesus Movement, and we are The Episcopal Church, the Episcopal branch of Jesus’ movement in this world,” video, 3:43, November 2, 2015, <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/publicaffairs/presiding-bishop-michael-curry-jesus-movement-and-we-are-episcopal-church>.

18 Missional Voices, “Bob Leopold: Missioner, Southside Abbey, Diocese of East Tennessee,” (2015), <http://www.missionalvoices.com/people/bob-leopold/>.

19 James K. A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?*

20 Ibid., 15.

21 The Hebrew Word יָשָׁב (*yashav*) captures this idea well. Bonnie Pedrotti Kittel, Vicki Hoffer and Rebecca Abts Wright, *Biblical Hebrew: A Text and Workbook* 1st ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 411, #34.

22 James K. A. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014).

Episcopal Church is driven by results – how many souls saved, how many children baptized, how many confirmands confirmed – one could easily lament the numbers like those given by the Pew Research Center on Religion and Public Life's “America's Changing Religious Landscape,”²³ if they are taken at face value.

In the seven years between 2007 and 2014, Americans who self-identified as Christian fell from 78.4 percent to 70.6 percent; Mainline Protestantism fell from 18.1 percent to 14.7 percent; those Unaffiliated with any religion, “the nones,” increase from 16.1 percent to 22.8 percent.²⁴ In the seven years between 2007 and 2014, the religiously unaffiliated, the nones, are “more numerous than either Catholics or mainline Protestants... The unaffiliated are now second in size only to evangelical Protestants among major religious groups in the U.S.”²⁵ “The nones” are most prevalent among the Millennial Generation. The Pew study divides the Millennials into Older Millennials (born 1981-89) and Younger Millennials (1990-96).²⁶ Among both of these two groups, the religiously unaffiliated make up greater than one third of those participating in the study; with the Older Millennials at 34 percent and the Younger Millennials at 36 percent.²⁷

The Episcopal Church

²³ Pew Research Center, “America's Changing Religious Landscape,” *Religion & Public Life* (May 12, 2015), <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

The average Episcopalian could read these statistics and reasonably conclude things are bad, or worse, hopeless. Some traditional parishes are bucking these trends, but by-in-large something about our branch of the Institutional Church is breaking. According to the “Episcopal Domestic Fast Facts Trends: 2010-2014,” in the years between 2010 and 2014, the Episcopal Church has declined in “Active Baptized Members” from 1,951,907 to 1,817,004, or nearly seven percent.²⁸ Without another Great Awakening, the Episcopal Church is in trouble.

Taken as a microcosm of the whole, campus ministry provides an excellent look at the present state of the Episcopal Church, especially among the so-called “Young Millennials.” According to the Diocese of West Tennessee's “150 Days – Engaging Students in Episcopal Campus Ministry,” published August 2007,²⁹ drawing on the most accurate demographic data available, the “Best Third with Highest Student Engagement” of Episcopal Campus Ministries attract between 0.16 percent to 0.06 percent of the student population.³⁰ This means that a campus of 30,000 students would have an Episcopal Campus Ministry at the very top of Episcopal Campus Ministries (in terms of number) if they were engaging at least sixteen students. For the Church that invented tracts, commissioned the King James Bible, wrote “Amazing Grace,” can claim twelve U.S. Presidents if wikipedia is to be believed,³¹ and is part of the third largest worldwide

²⁸ The Episcopal Church, “Episcopal Domestic Fast Facts Trends: 2010-2014,” *Research and Statistics* (2015), http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/domestic_fast_facts_trends_2010-2014.pdf.

²⁹ The Diocese of West Tennessee, “150 Days - Engaging Students in Episcopal Campus Ministries,” (The Diocese of West Tennessee, 2007).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

³¹ Various Authors, “List of Presidents by religious affiliation,” *Religious affiliations of Presidents of the United States* (February 2016), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_affiliations_of_Presidents_of_the_United_States#List_of_Presidents_by_religious_affiliation.

church family, better can be done for and with an entire generation.

Belaboring this point is not meant to seem negative or anti-institutional. In her article on Southside Abbey, “Putting Away the Silver,” in *Christian Century*, Carol Howard Merritt writes, “If I’m portraying Leopold as a cynic, he’s not.”³² The real point of this article is a prescription not to get distracted by the *accoutrement*, be they silver chalices or parochial reports. Southside Abbey’s canon (read: measuring rod) is the Canon of Scripture, the holy story of Jesus, where God uses the least to accomplish the greatest. If we measure ourselves according to worldly calculus, we are already failing.

Some within the Church are choosing to view these changes as Godly and good. Perhaps we are primed for something great. Episcopalian Phyllis Tickle writes in her book, *The Great Emergence*, that something new is coming to replace the current way of doing and being Church, or even being religious. Notice “the nones” are religiously unaffiliated; the Pew study did not ask about “spirituality.” Tickle tells of The Right Reverend J. Mark Dyer, advisor to my Master of Divinity’s Honors Thesis and my spiritual director, calling him, “an Anglican bishop known for his wit as well as his wisdom.”³³ In an example of that wit and wisdom, Dyer “famously observes from time to time the only way to understand what is currently happening to us as twenty-first-century Christians in North America is first to understand that about every five hundred years the Church feels compelled to hold a giant rummage sale. And, he goes on to say, we are

32 Carol Howard Merritt, “Church in the Making: Putting Away the Silver,” *The Christian Century*, vol. 131, no. 21. (October 15, 2014).

33 Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), 16.

living in and through one of those five-hundred-year sales.”³⁴ Tickle maps Dyer's rummage sale thusly.

The first five hundred years of Christianity, culminating in the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451 marks the end of the first rummage sale.³⁵ The Great Schism of the Eastern and Western Church in 1054 marks the second rummage sale.³⁶ The Protestant Reformation, often dated to Luther's posting of the *Ninety-Five Theses* on the Wittenburg Cathedral door in 1517, marks the third rummage sale.³⁷

Add five hundred years to 1517 and we arrive at roughly the year of this manuscript. Further, Dyer “observes, about every five hundred years the empowered structures... become an intolerable carapace that must be shattered in order that renewal and new growth may occur.”³⁸ The remainder of Tickle's work is concerned with just that possibility for renewal and growth.

The “Task Force for Reimagining the Episcopal Church” (TREC)'s report “Engaging God's Mission in the 21st Century: Final Report of the Task Force for Reimagining the Episcopal Church” finds that “structural and technical changes... are essential to progress – even at the local level.”³⁹ TREC's report's insistence to change structures and try new things was written after Southside Abbey was well underway. Preempting this report, Southside Abbey has made structural and technical changes, especially at the “local level.”

34 Ibid., 16.

35 Ibid., 23.

36 Ibid., 28.

37 Ibid., 31.

38 Ibid., 16.

39 Task Force for Reimagining the Episcopal Church, “Engaging God's Mission in the 21st Century,” (2015): 1-73, <https://extranet.generalconvention.org/staff/files/download/12219.pdf>, 1.

Present trends in the Episcopal Church could be seen as both good and bad. “It is the best of times, it is the worst of times.” This paraphrase comes from Charles Dickens' opening lines to *A Tale of Two Cities*,⁴⁰ which continues: “it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity.”⁴¹ Perhaps the title of another Dickens novel is more appropriate: *Hard Times*. The work of reconciling of the seemingly irreconcilable – wisdom and foolishness, belief and incredulity – is difficult, but it is important and rewarding. It would seem that our time shares some of the dichotomies of Dickens' time. The troubles of the present age may not be troubles after all, but a necessary, Holy Spirit-led reincorporating of the Reign of God, just as the Church experiences through all ages. In faith we can stand with Paul who writes in Romans: “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.”⁴² Is this truly a “Secular Age,” a postmodern age, or something else? This paper tends toward the “something else.” Perhaps this is the age where we break down these forced binaries – an age where we are able to see that our God is bigger than the walls we put up to separate ourselves. The good news is that the whole church has power by the Holy Spirit.⁴³

The Southside of Chattanooga, Tennessee

“Where are we?” is a question often pondered by the Southside Abbey

40 Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999), 1.

41 Ibid., 1.

42 Romans 8:18.

43 Acts 1:8.

community. This question is asked in reference to our location in the lectionary, scripture readings, Season of the Church Year, and, of course, geography. Southside Abbey could not exist outside of the Southside of Chattanooga. The Southside neighborhoods represent some of the best and worst about urban revitalization in the “New South.” Living in this neighborhood for more than seven years has given this author firsthand experience and fodder for many stories in conjunction with work being done toward a Master of Reading with an emphasis in Storytelling. Followers of Jesus are people of a shared story; similarly, the story of Chattanooga's Southside is complex, with many sides.

When a small group of Episcopalians began to dream about what the Holy Spirit was already doing in the Southside of Chattanooga and ways in which this proto-community might jump on board, one of the first things done was to ask people in the neighborhood to share their story. This process of going door-to-door to ask people to share their story is part of the community organizing model, called a “one-on-one.” In his book, *Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing*, Dennis Jacobsen calls one-on-ones, “the primary tool of organizing.”⁴⁴ He continues: “The one-on-one interview is a means of initiating or building relationship. The primary (and usually only) agenda of a one-on-one is to get to know the other person. It is not a sales pitch.”⁴⁵ Southside Abbey's primary objective in one-on-one interviews was to build relationship, not get people to join a worshipping community. There were many ways to get to know the newly-arrived and mostly-affluent businesses and neighbors. The businesses were literally trying to sell us something.

44 Dennis A. Jacobsen, *Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 59.

45 Ibid., 59.

The story of Chattanooga's downtown revitalization is ubiquitous. This story is lifted up as a model for other Southern cities, but Southside Abbey yearned to hear from those who heralded a history many Chattanoogaans might rather forget: a history of institutionalized racism and unofficial segregation, told by those who lived it. This paper could be filled with these stories, but some highlights need suffice.

This discerning community that would become Southside Abbey heard from Calvin Yearby, the Sexton at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in downtown Chattanooga. Calvin “kicked around” the Southside, “before it was cool.”⁴⁶ He told about how the neighborhood changed as the drugs changed. In the seventies “it was grass, but you had some harder stuff too;” in the eighties it was cocaine; and in the nineties, “crack took over.”⁴⁷ He told of “Hot Houses” where you could buy these drugs and women too.⁴⁸ Calvin played music in these places and shared that he had, “seen things you would not believe.”⁴⁹

Southside Abbey heard from “Mama T” Jones, who has run a boarding house for as long as anyone can remember around the corner from the building where Southside Abbey usually gathers to worship. According to her son, John, Mama T was given her monicker in the 1980s, because she was a surrogate “mama” to many of those who lived in her house but also because she was as tough as Mr. T.⁵⁰ Mama T talked about a

46 Calvin Yearby, Interview by Author, Chattanooga, October 15, 2012.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 John Jones, Interview by Author, Chattanooga, September 24, 2012.

neighborhood before “whites moved back in.”⁵¹ She talked about failing schools and troubled kids.⁵² Mama T put it bluntly: “no one cared about the neighborhood until the white people moved back in.”⁵³ Southside Abbey has a great relationship with Mama T: she understands the work being done. In one conversation, she was pressed, who was the “no one” who did not care about the neighborhood? She said, “No one. Not the city, not the Church, not the community. No one.”⁵⁴ The author, his family, the church, and the community were all indicted. No one had showed Mama T Christlike love.

Not all of the stories were heard, and some unfolded before the eyes of the community. Down the street from the building where Southside Abbey often worships is a motel called the Country Hearth. One of the managers of the Country Hearth, Joyce Woodard, shared that of their 140 rooms, “130 of them are people's homes and over fifty have been occupied by the same people for more than three years,”⁵⁵ including families whose children go to school in our neighborhood. I had never thought about a motel room being zoned for school before. At the Country Hearth lots of people are just trying to survive, but there is crime too. One of Southside Abbey's members saw the following scene at a nearby gas station. As he filled his tank, he saw cars pull into parking spaces facing the Country Hearth's second story balcony. Cars idled in the dark with their lights off. Sporadically, young ladies walked along the balcony. Sometimes a car would flash its lights. When this happened, the woman who was illuminated, got into the car as the

51 Mama T Jones, Interview by Author, Chattanooga, September 24, 2012.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Joyce Woodard, Interview by Author, Chattanooga, November 8, 2012.

car drove off. Despite the urban renewal, sexual exploitation is on Chattanooga's Southside.

These stories reveal a picture of Chattanooga's Southside painted with more realistic colors than the one often displayed. For many in Chattanooga, the Southside, and specifically the Main Street corridor between Broad Street and Central Avenue, means growth and life. This is true. There is a youthful entrepreneurial spirit, as evidenced by several new startups. Chattanooga is called the “Gig City,” for having one of the fastest internet connections available on the market.⁵⁶ It is so fast that the New York Times calls this speedy access, “Chattanooga's New Locomotive.”⁵⁷ Chattanooga has drawn young startups and big companies, like Volkswagen, to do business here. Housing in the Southside is on the rise, including “non-subsidized” housing, which is built without taxpayer help, and not just more “subsidized housing,” namely housing that is affordable to the poor by being subsidized in some way.⁵⁸ The Southside's Real Estate Market has been called a “Hot Spot,” by Developers, in late 2015.⁵⁹

The Episcopal Church Center's office of New Church Starts and Missional Initiatives prepared several ExecutiveInsite [sic] Reports (demographic studies) of the zip

56 Edward Wyatt, “Fast Internet is Chattanooga's New Locomotive,” *The New York Times*, February 3, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/04/technology/fast-internet-service-speeds-business-development-in-chattanooga.html?_r=1.

57 Ibid.

58 Ellis Smith, “New nonsubsidized downtown Chattanooga housing on the rise,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, August 5, 2014, <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/business/aroundregion/story/2014/aug/05/developers-building-or-pursuing-plansto-add-more/263556/>.

59 Mike Parr, “Chattanooga's Southside is hot spot, developers say,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, October 25, 2015, <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2015/oct/25/southside-hot-spot-developers-say/332389/>.

codes we are called to serve.⁶⁰ In the zip code 37408, where Southside Abbey worships and the author lives, there are some seemingly good trends. This report was completed near the end of 2013 and reveals several things. First, the area is growing in terms of the number of people and number of households.⁶¹ Even through the slump in the housing market begun in 2008, construction on the Southside never stopped. Second, the area is diverse and getting more diverse.⁶² What “diversity” means for this once predominantly African American neighborhood is that white Americans are moving in. Growth rates and diversification of the area are not reconciled in the report. The area is growing too slowly for the rapidly changing demographic. The area's diversity is increasing (from a predominantly African American neighborhood to a mixed neighborhood), not exclusively by new people moving in, but also by some people being priced out of the area. This manifests itself along ethnic, age, and economic lines, as the area is also getting wealthier.⁶³ Similarly, the area is getting younger.⁶⁴ Younger people are moving to the area while older people are moving out or passing away. Most importantly for the work of starting Southside Abbey, only eighteen percent of the population in this zip code considers it, “important to attend religious services.”⁶⁵ This means that at the time of publishing the ExecutiveInsite [sic] Reports in late 2013, only 235 people in the 37408 zip code say it is “important to attend religious” services, never mind how many actually

60 See Appendix 1: “ExecutiveInsite Report: Prepared for Episcopal Church Center of Study area: ZipCode: 37408.”

61 Ibid., 2.

62 Ibid., 3.

63 Ibid., 7.

64 Ibid., 4.

65 Ibid., 15.

do so. The Southside of Chattanooga is the mission field.

There are a few problems with the ExecutiveInsite Reports. First, it does not take into consideration the lives of those experiencing homelessness. When I inquired as to the methodology of the report, it came from U.S. Census data, which is primarily based on households.⁶⁶ As of the 2010 census, the U.S. Census Bureau includes in its count and accompanying published report “Emergency and Transitional Shelter Population: 2010” report.⁶⁷ Further, “The Census Bureau stresses that this special report presents statistics for people enumerated at emergency and transitional shelters only, and should not be misconstrued as a count of the entire population experiencing homelessness.”⁶⁸ While an attempt is made to include immigrants to this country, both so-called “illegal” and “documented,” there is often a distrust of governments officials and documentation among these populations, many of whom have fled their country of origin because government officials were corrupt and not to be trusted. This has been my experience in working with immigrants to Chattanooga's Southside neighborhoods from Sudan, South Sudan, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

Southside Abbey: The Birth of an Idea

Setting the stage for what was to come was necessary to see just how contextual

66 United States Census Bureau, “Popular tables for this geography,” *2010 Census*, 2014, http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.

67 United States Census Bureau, “The Emergency and Transitional Shelter Population: 2010,” *2010 Census Special Reports*, September 2012, <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/reports/c2010sr-02.pdf>.

68 United States Census Bureau, “Census Bureau Releases Report on 2010 Census Emergency and Transitional Shelter Population,” September 27, 2012, <https://www.census.gov/2010census/news/releases/operations/cb12-183.html>.

Southside Abbey is to the Southside of Chattanooga, with its unique set of struggles and joys. What follows is a brief sketch of what Southside Abbey as institution and community hoped to be when some members of the community began having the earliest conversations about its origin in mid-2012. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact moment when Southside Abbey began. It was first an idea, something people talked and prayed about. The idea for Southside Abbey had been percolating in Chattanooga for some time. As early as 2007 there was a small group comprised of lay people, retired clergy, and myself, an active clergy-person, who met in an artisan bread bakery called Niedlov's. Niedlov's is so named not because of some Eastern European heritage or connection, but because of the phonetic connection that we “need love” and that the bakers “knead love,” a wonderfully eucharistic image. This group discussed many of the authors found in the bibliography of this paper; one such author is a writer (blogger at that time) named Rachel Held Evans. Evans lives near Chattanooga and has written blog posts and books about leaving and then returning to the institutional church. Among the “Fifteen Reasons [She] Returned to the [Institutional] Church” are: Jesus, the Book of Common Prayer, Anne Lamott, Communion, [a sermon delivered by a woman], Liturgy that reads like poetry, Madeleine L'Engle, and Grace.⁶⁹ Evans has not just returned to any institutional church, but to the Episcopal Church, as the above list might lead a reader to believe. Evans was a very briefly part of a Sunday School class I led that met at St. Paul's in Chattanooga.

The idea that something would happen was on the tips of the tongues of the

⁶⁹ Rachel Held Evans, “15 Reasons I Returned to The Church” *Rachel Held Evans* (blog), March 21, 2012, <http://rachelheldevans.com/blog/15-reasons-i-returned-church>.

Niedlov's discussion group, but never explicitly spoken, almost like reverse *glossolalia*. It seemed the Holy Spirit was calling this group to act in this way on Chattanooga's Southside. Thoughts did not become action until tragedy struck. On his forty-fourth birthday, my dear friend, Phil Pollard, collapsed of a pulmonary embolism. He left this earth with a wife and three school-aged daughters and many friends in his wake. As the resident religious professional of our circle of friends, I was blessed with the responsibility of planning a funeral for my friend and frequent music collaborator. To say Phil was well-loved would be an understatement. His funeral⁷⁰ had roughly 700 in attendance, including a chartered bus full of friends who made the seven-hour trip to celebrate his life. The order, if not explicit form of the *Book of Common Prayer 1979*⁷¹ was used. After the funeral people shared one of two things: "I am so glad someone was here who knew what to do," and, "if church were like this, I would go to it." These words are haunting: "if church were like this, I would go to it." The Episcopal Church has so much to offer – our liturgy, our theology, and how we allow for love – but something is not connecting with those who said these things. Did they not know about the Episcopal Church? Maybe this is a case of having the "best product," but the "worst marketing."

The Episcopal Church has a deep connection to what has come before. We have a spiritual and metaphoric, if not literal, connection to those early converts who "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."⁷² An image that typifies the Episcopal Church's underutilization of the gifts we

70 James Parrish, Phil Pollard Memorial Service 11-1-11." Filmed [November 1, 2011] (YouTube video, 1:24:22) Posted [November 3, 2011]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=geSqlV2C9AE>.

71 *Book of Common Prayer 1979*, 423.

72 Acts 2:42 and "Baptismal Covenant" from *BCP 1979*, 293, 304, and 417.

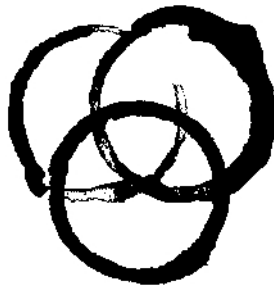
have been given through the Apostles' Teaching is the Fisher Space Pen. When speaking about the “future” of the Episcopal Church at conferences or other gatherings, I take my Fisher Space Pen with a pressurized cartridge to illustrate this point. According to company lore,⁷³ a Fisher Space Pen is the design used at the height of the United States space program so that NASA astronauts could write in zero gravity. Years of research and development and untold money went into creating this solution to the seemingly new problem of writing in zero gravity. Soviet cosmonauts solved the same problem with a pencil. The Episcopal Church has been proceeding as if the church needs to create more metaphorical Fisher Space Pens for the seemingly new problems of this age – as if time and money are no constraint – but now is the time to be using the dozens of perfectly good metaphorical pencils already at our disposal.

New ventures in the Church usually start immediately with changing the content, when they might be better served by changing the structure, as cleverly observed by Lisa Leopold. To wit: so many new worship services begin by changing the music. As Southside Abbey, the community wanted to ask questions of structure that it had not heard asked in Chattanooga before. For the moment, the group would stick to our inherited content – the biblical message of Jesus and Christ's present in Holy Eucharist – pretty closely.

A structural change the early Southside Abbey community made was to use the Trinity symbol as Southside Abbey's logo. In this land of Jesus as “personal Lord and Savior,” the Southside Abbey group liked the idea of starting with the Trinity, as in the

⁷³ Fisher Space Pen Company, “Here's a little history about the Fisher Space Pen Company,” (2008), <http://www.spacepen.com/about-us.aspx>.

Creed attributed to Saint Athanasius of Alexandria exhorts: “Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith... and the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.”⁷⁴ God exists in relationship as Holy Trinity. The image of three intertwined circles, in Southside Abbey's case drawn in spilled wine from the chalice –



– allowed this group of followers of Jesus to begin conversations in terms we loved to talk about: Incarnation, relationship, and Eucharist.

Framing the conversation from individuals within the community's point of view was another structural change. Chattanooga sits firmly in the Bible Belt, and while eighty-two percent of the Southside might not find it “important to attend religious services.”⁷⁵ Conversations with people reveal that this decision comes from a perception of being either personally or peripherally hurt by what they think the Church is, says, and does. Part of this research occurs at the public library, where one can begin an internet search with words like: “the Church is...” or “Christians are...” Then Google will fill in

74 Athanasius of Alexandria (attr.), “Quicumque Vult,” *Book of Common Prayer*, (New York: Church Publishing, 1979), 864.

75 Appendix 1: “ExecutiveInsite Report: Prepared for Episcopal Church Center of Study area: ZipCode: 37408,” 15.

the results based upon what others have searched locally and based on broader search trends. This author cannot imagine how to cite this phenomena, but local library computer terminals uncover that the Church is “judgmental” and “homophobic,” and Christians are “hypocrites” and “annoying.”

Controlling how issues are framed is so important because, it allows Southside Abbey to be a movement for something, instead of a movement away or against something. Southside Abbey is excited about the Jesus Movement (Southside Abbey's word for the “big 'C” Church), the Beloved Community (Southside Abbey's word for worshipping communities), and followers of Jesus (Southside Abbey's word for Christians). The Southside Abbey community shies away from “churchy” words at Southside Abbey and, for good measure any language that is “judgmental, homophobic, hypocritical, or annoying,” is also discouraged. Churchy words are not prohibited, though a few words did eventually get banned: “help,” “outreach,” and “the-less-fortunate,” among them. When someone starts to speak in the coded language of the Church or the Episcopal Church, that person is encouraged to decipher the code without using more code. Defining words like “grace,” “sin,” or “sacrament” without relying on familiar definitions often turns out to be a helpful exercise in theological reflection.

The name of the worshipping community, Southside Abbey, allows the community's leaders to frame conversations in positive ways. The name, “Southside Abbey,” is a gift from the Rev. Zack Nyein, a current seminarian at Berkeley Seminary at Yale Divinity School and a new deacon in the Diocese of East Tennessee. Southside Abbey's earliest members wanted something that hearkened to deep Anglican roots but

also could be grounded in a present-day context. “Southside Abbey” fit the bill perfectly. “Southside” locates the worshipping community in a particular time and place, the Southside of Chattanooga. Historically, an “Abbey” was a place that touched the lives of many in the community. The Abbey included everyone, from those who prayed there multiple times a day to those who saw the monks once a year for a jar of honey. While the abbeys of old were cloistered places, rooted in stability, Southside Abbey is repurposing this word, attempting to see the urban location as cloister. Such a repurposing of the word “abbey” has fit so well that similar non-traditional, but still Episcopal, ventures that have started since we founded Southside Abbey are using it too: Bushwick Abbey in Brooklyn, New York; The Abbey in Birmingham, Alabama; and Cuthbert Abbey in Memphis, Tennessee. Like our namesakes of the past, contemporary “abbeys” share with one another and pilgrimage to see one another.

Abbeys were, and are, refuges providing sanctuary and concerned with the needs of the poor. Southside Abbey does not call those with whom we journey “the homeless,” rather, we strive to speak and write about “those experiencing homelessness.” This broadening allows for consideration of artists, dreamers, followers of Jesus, mothers, children of God, who happen to live in a way that many in the Episcopal Church do not. “The Homeless” is different than “the poor.” Jesus talks and teaches about “the poor” in a way that makes poverty, as harsh as it may seem to our western, capitalist ears, a good thing. In the article about Southside Abbey, “Heading Out Into Mission,” in the “Answering Jesus' Call” November 2013 issue of Episcopal Church Foundations *Vestry Papers*, Southside Abbey's then theologian-in-residence, the Rev. Nik Forti, opens the

communally written article with deliberately provocative statement that points to the Godly goodness of poverty: “The Church isn't called to serve the poor. The Church is called to be the poor.”⁷⁶ Eventually, this is what Southside Abbey would come to be: a church of, by, for, and with the Poor.

⁷⁶ Robert K. Leopold (as Bob Leopold) and crowd-sourced with members of Southside Abbey, “Heading Out Into Mission,” *Episcopal Church Foundation Vestry Papers, November 2013: Answering Jesus' Call*, (November 2013), <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/answering-jesus-call/heading-out-into-mission/>.

Chapter 2 – Southside Abbey's Corporate Life

This chapter details how Southside Abbey came to be beyond the theoretical. This was a birth, of sorts, of a temporal and ecclesiastical corporate entity that involved the move from talking about something to doing something. As much reading, thinking, and praying might prepare those who founded Southside Abbey for what would come, living in relationship with the community of Southside Abbey provided much fuel for transformation. This phenomenon is akin to John Dominic Crossan's words in the prologue to *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, a reprint from a 1991 *Christian Century* article, wherein he imagines a conversation between himself and the Historical Jesus:

“Jesus: 'I've read your book, Dominic, and it's quite good. So now you're ready to live by my vision and join my in my program?'
 Dominic: 'I don't think I have the courage, Jesus, but I did describe it quite well, didn't I, and the method was especially good, wasn't it?'
 Jesus: 'Thank you, Dominic, for not falsifying the message to suit your own incapacity. That at least is something.'
 Dominic: 'Is it enough, Jesus?'
 Jesus: 'No, Dominic, it is not.'⁷⁷

Southside Abbey's community had little idea it was about to embark on Jesus' vision, instead of just talking about it.

⁷⁷ John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography: A Startling Account of What We Can Know About the Life of Jesus* (New York: HarperOne, 1994), xviii-xix.

A Rough Timeline of Founding Southside Abbey

2011 & prior	A group meets at Niedlov's to talk about the church that is emerging.
Oct 2011	Phil dies. At the funeral, people say: "If Church were like this, I'd go."
Dec 2011	The Niedlov's group decides to "do" this thing that has been talked about.
Jan 2012	The idea is presented to the diocesan bishop.
Feb 2012	Behind the scenes work happens as "experts" are read and consulted.
Apr 2012	Feasibility conversation with Tom Brackett, Missioner, New Church Starts & Missional Initiatives of the Episcopal Church ⁷⁸ takes place.
Apr 2012	The diocesan executive council of the diocese forms a worshipping community and calls me its "Missioner."
Jun 2012	Prayerful discernment about what this new church might look like takes place in conversation with neighborhood personalities.
Aug 2012	I become a part of diocesan staff (with a three year contract). The Southside Abbey community begins summer book studies, "what-do-we-want-to-do?" gatherings, small groups meetings, one-on-ones, and neighborhood canvases.
Sep 2012	We begin worshipping/community partnership at H♥ART Gallery. ⁷⁹ We begin EfM, liturgy taskforce, community engagement, organizing, and partnerships. Community conversations continue to form the community.

When Southside Abbey became more than an idea, clarity was required about what the worshipping community planned to do so that those who were going to support us through the doing would have some idea where their time, energy, prayers, and resources would be going. Namely, after our diocesan executive council voted to form a new community, a meeting was called where I and several key diocesan players were present. In this meeting, assumptions by these individuals were indirectly presented through conversation, timetables, budgets, and paperwork. Lifetime formation in the liturgical church has allowed this author to do the work of Southside Abbey. This *ad hoc* committee knew my loyalties and intentions, but they felt they had to comply with the structures given to them. Saint Cyprian of Carthage (himself a convert) famously wrote in

⁷⁸ <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/staff/rev-thomas-brackett>.

⁷⁹ H♥ART Gallery, "H♥ART Gallery" (2016), <http://hartgallerytn.com/>.

De Unitate Ecclesiae: “He can no longer have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother.”⁸⁰ The Episcopal Church is a wonderful mother church, with aspects to love rooted in the institution and aspects to love reaching out in mission.

Terms like, “institutional church” or “inherited church,” and “emergent church” or “missional church,” promote slippery definitions. For the purposes of this paper, the institutional or inherited church is mainline Protestantism with a broader understanding of the term to include evangelical offshoots of the mainline. To try to assign any sort of definition to the emergent church movement is even more difficult. There is a lack of historical research about the emergent church movement as it has no centralized figure or headquarters, because of its postmodern elevation of deconstructionism, and because it is still rather new. There is little emergent church empirical data, aside from the field research by interested parties. Primarily, we have what the emergents say about themselves and we have what their enemies say about them. Nevertheless, an approximation can be made by describing some of the patterns that those involved with the movement have themselves set out.

There is a deep love of the Church: the emergents see something wrong with where the Church has found itself and want to create or recreate something better. In their literature, emergents often describe themselves as missional,⁸¹ having an outward focus

80 Cyprian of Carthage, “Treatise I. On the Unity of the Church, Section 6,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers. Volume 5: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian, Appendix*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Revised and Chronologically arranged with brief prefaces and occasional notes by A. Cleveland Coxe (New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886), 423.

81 Tony Jones, Address, “Ten Myths of the Emergent/Emerging Church,” *The Emergent Church in Multiple Perspectives: The Homiletical, Ecclesial, Liturgical, and Unknown Implications of What’s Next*, Advanced Degrees Program, School of Theology, Sewanee, TN, July 7, 2010.

on continuing the social side of Christ's ministry.⁸² Holy Scripture is kept, for the most part, in high esteem.⁸³ Many emergents call themselves, “Red-Letter Christians,” overtly placing more emphasis on certain elements of the Canon, namely the words of Jesus found in the canonical gospels. An emergent hub in the form of a blog, lead by reluctant emergent, Tony Campolo and friends, is even called redletterchristians.org.⁸⁴ Interestingly, another pattern is leading this largely evangelical movement back toward the liturgical.⁸⁵ This includes a movement toward ritual and new monasticism.⁸⁶

An emergent church theology is that there is redeemable good in the Church, but it may take some digging to find it. Much like Luke Skywalker was able to look into the dying Darth Vader and still see the good that was present in his father, Anakin.⁸⁷ For some in the emergent church, the institutional church is a lot like Vader: imperial, ornately-vested, and old. For some in the institutional church, the emergent church is a lot like Luke Skywalker: calling himself a Jedi before the well-educated experts Obi-Wan or Yoda would do so,⁸⁸ brash in his behavior and too young. But in the story, Luke is still the hero and like Luke, that is how the emergent church views itself, as the hero or

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 Tony Campolo, *Red Letter Christians* (2013), redletterchristians.org.

85 Tony Jones, Address.

86 Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, (Ana)baptist/Anglican, Methodist, catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-Yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished Christian* (Grand Rapids: Youth Specialties Books, 2004), 54.

87 Richard Marquand, *Star Wars: Episode VI – The Return of the Jedi*, (Los Angeles: 20th Century Fox, 1983).

88 Kershner, Irvin, *Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back*, (Los Angeles: 20th Century Fox, 1980).

heroine of the narrative that is church history. Perhaps the Episcopal Church is uniquely poised to propose some sort of *via media* between the institutional and the emergent church – both as teacher and student – honoring the strength in both movements, keeping conversations respectful and focused on the Jesus Movement.

This supposition harkens back to Lisa Leopold's question of structure and content. The best example of this took place during a telephone conversation with the Rev. Thomas Brackett, Missioner for New Church Starts and Missional Initiatives, on April 13, 2012.⁸⁹ In this conversation, Tom received the news that the Bishop of East Tennessee was ready to proceed with a new church start. Tom shared that a typical new church startup needs: a million or more dollars in the bank; two or more years of study of an area before worshipping should begin; a planter of retirement age, so the financial burden of potential failure is not too great.⁹⁰ How discouraging! The greater cause for discouragement is that Brackett is right: to build a new church startup using the current structure we have in the Episcopal Church, a million dollars might be on the low-end of monetary need.

Whatever Southside Abbey was becoming it needed to be something different, especially in terms of structure. Southside Abbey would not be following Brackett's list because, in light of the dire circumstances outlined in chapter one, we did not feel that we had the money, the time, or the option of failure. The idea of structural change over altering content would force the question: what content is central? This question will be answered more deeply in Chapter 3: Theology, but our answers in brief are: The hopeful

⁸⁹ Thomas Brackett in discussion with the author, April 13, 2012.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Biblical message of the old and new testaments: God desires relationship; a sacred meal entrusted to us by Jesus, where Christ has promised to be present; a commitment to being recognizably “Anglican” and “Episcopalian;” and radical inclusivity of people wherever they were in their lives of faith.⁹¹ These are the “non-negotiables” of the Southside Abbey community as it began to form. At the same time a list of things Southside Abbey ought to do and be was never handed to the community. When I met with the Rt. Rev. George D. Young, III, in January of 2012, he suggested we proceed by “[seeing] what happens.”⁹² When the diocesan executive council was consulted, they agreed to form a missional worshipping community on Chattanooga's Southside. Even more, they gracefully agreed to pay my salary and benefits for three years to serve as the community's missionary. This compensation package would come from the Diocese of East Tennessee's Mission Growth Fund, a fund dedicated to supporting mission churches. This replaced the original plan to do this ministry bi-vocationally, being a tentmaker as Paul was a tentmaker.⁹³ Being paid by the Diocese of East Tennessee to be Southside Abbey's missionary meant accountability – at least more accountability than a gentlemen's agreement to, “see what happens.” After financial support was secured, the oversight of the episcopal office – namely diocesan staff and executive council – began. Unfortunately, for some at Southside Abbey, many expectations went unspoken. There were benchmarks to meet that did not become clear until they were not met. These benchmarks were primarily tied to “sustainability” as discussed later in this in chapter. As

91 Emerging Southside Abbey Community in conversation, April 28, 2012.

92 George Young in conversation, January 20, 2012.

93 Acts 18:3.

Southside Abbey progressed, these metrics became clearer through a bump-and-stumble approach. We bumped against and stumbled over the requirements for other parishes and worshipping communities in the diocese and the Episcopal Church. For some, the answer of how to measure success was simple: just like every other worshipping community in the Diocese of East Tennessee. Measurement along these guidelines meant that success could be showed by parochial reports, congregational assessments, mutual ministry reviews, and the like.⁹⁴

The biggest unspoken measure of success in the Institutional Church is the Average Sunday Attendance (ASA). Southside Abbey has an ASA of zero. Our Average Weekly Attendance (AWA) could be tracked through Southside Abbey's Friday evening worship, but we do not typically gather for corporate worship on Sundays. On Sunday evenings, those in our community praying Compline wherever they are and remember our community in this prayer, as commended in our weekly Newsletter.⁹⁵ Such an exercise of corporate prayer in the diaspora is exceedingly difficult to put into numbers on a parochial report. Relationships are at the forefront of Southside Abbey's work – from those first one-on-ones in our neighborhoods to massive missional projects in partnership with schools and other area parishes. There is no metric for measuring relationship. The best device found to gauge relationship-driven ministry is sharing stories about how lives in our community have been changed through being in relationship with one another.

94 The General Convention of the Episcopal Church, "Canon I.6. Sec.1-2.," *Constitution & Canons Together with the Rules of Order For the government of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Otherwise Known as The Episcopal Church* (2012), http://www.episcopalarchives.org/CandC_2012.pdf.

95 Southside Abbey, "Southside Abbey News 11/12/15," (November 12, 2015), <https://us5.admin.mailchimp.com/campaigns/show?id=1061597>.

Storytelling is so transformative for this community that it led to my working on a Master of Arts in Reading with an Emphasis in Storytelling from East Tennessee State University, in conjunction with the International Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, Tennessee, to further hone this skill. More traditional Episcopal parishes are beginning to see the value of story, as narrative budgets demonstrate. The narrative budget is an attempt to show what is important to the worshipping community through storytelling as it pertains to the community's budget. While this practice is becoming more commonplace, there is still no space on the standard Parochial Report form for any such stories.⁹⁶

Apart from the ASA, the other number that has been avoided is the annual budget. When the earliest Southside Abbey group gathered, there was excitement and energy about being a church for the un-, anti-, and over-, that is the un-churched, or those who have had no real experience with church; the anti-churched, or those who are actively against the church and what the church has done historically; and the over-churched, or those who are burned-out on church in general. These groups have overlap, which when drawn in a tripartite Venn Diagram reveals an image that could look suspiciously like Southside Abbey's Trinitarian logo. One need not look too far in Chattanooga's Southside to find these groups, keeping in mind the eighty-two percent of people in Southside Abbey's zip code who do not think it important to attend worship services.⁹⁷

Another uncommon factor for Southside Abbey in the context of other Episcopal

96 The Episcopal Church, "The 2015 Report of Episcopal Congregations and Missions According to Canons I.6, I.7, and I.17 (Otherwise Known as the Parochial Report)," (2015), http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/2015_parochial_report_form.pdf.

97 Appendix 1: "ExecutiveInsite Report: Prepared for Episcopal Church Center of Study area: ZipCode: 37408," 15.

Churches is its mission statement. As followers of Jesus, we have a mission statement in the Holy Bible. As Anglicans and Episcopalians, we have honed that mission statement to include the *Book of Common Prayer 1979*. Southside Abbey's aversion to mission statements has been shaped by the biblical message of Jesus, our encounter with the Risen Christ in our community, and also by Guy Kawasaki. Reading books specifically for and about church planting – like the aforementioned conversation with Tom Brackett. It quickly became clear that Southside Abbey was going to be a different kind of thing. Choices in this genre are largely untested theories from the emergent church or how-to manuals from the mainline Protestant and evangelical church. Finding neither particularly suited to our context, our community turned to Silicon Valley, where startups are made everyday. Sometimes these startups become Google. Kawasaki has been a Silicon Valley fixture for years and his book, *The Art of the Start: the Time-Tested, Battle-Hardened, Guide for Anyone Starting Anything*, argues against the mission statement, thusly: “Forget mission statements: they're long, boring, and irrelevant. No one can ever remember them – much less implement them.”⁹⁸ He continues: “Crafting a mission statement is usually one of the first steps entrepreneurs take. Unfortunately, this process is usually a painful and frustrating experience that results in exceptional mediocrity... [T]he fundamental shortcoming of most mission statements is that everyone expects them to be highfalutin and all-encompassing.”⁹⁹ In the case of using the Bible as a mission statement, a word like mediocrity should be ruled out, but it is rather all-encompassing. Ultimately, Southside Abbey took Kawasaki's advice: “Postpone writing your mission

⁹⁸ Guy Kawasaki, *The Art of the Start: The Time-Tested, Battle-Hardened Guide for Anyone Starting Anything* (New York: Portfolio, 2004), 3.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

statement. You can come up with it later when you're successful and have lots of time and money to waste. (If you're not successful, it won't matter that you didn't develop one).”¹⁰⁰

Kawasaki instead argues that startups have a mantra. “The beauty of a mantra,” he writes, “is that everyone expects it to be short and sweet... If you... have to 'enforce' your mantra... it's not the right mantra.”¹⁰¹ For an example of the difference having a mantra can make in the life of a corporation, Kawasaki cites Starbucks: “Compare the Starbucks mantra, 'Rewarding everyday moments' to the company's mission statement, 'Establish Starbucks as the premier purveyor of the finest coffee in the world while maintaining our uncompromising principles while we grow.' Which is more memorable?”¹⁰² The Southside Abbey community took Kawasaki’s advice and forwent crafting a mission statement, and we have not yet had the time or money to revisit this decision.

After the phrase, “mission statement,” the word that kept coming up in literature and from church advisors was: “sustainability.” The word “sustainability” as it pertains to the church from common usage (especially among church-planters) means something like: “a ministry that is able to pay for itself.” In Southside Abbey's case, the understanding was that the worshipping community would have three years to become sustainable, coinciding with the three years of my compensation paid by the Diocese of East Tennessee. It is rare to hear church professionals question the foundation that separates them from amateurs: pay. The two greatest costs of most congregations in the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 7.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 7.

¹⁰² Ibid., 8.

Episcopal Church are place and personnel. So ubiquitous is this reality, finding a citation for this blatantly obvious statistic proved impossible, save for the budgets of parishes willing to share these figures. Place and personnel are still Southside Abbey's two greatest expenses. Sustainability was a huge goal for Southside Abbey, especially given our three-years of financial support from the Diocese of East Tennessee, but even this marker has moved as the ministry has continued to change all involved. A sustainable model of the ministry of Jesus in the world today is for this and future generations to embody. In many ways, Southside Abbey is an experiment in response to the question of sustainability.

Chapter 3 – Theology

In the writing thus far, theology has undoubtedly crept in. This chapter is not a systematic approach to the faith on the big issues. Southside Abbey tends to take the standard views of the Historic Creeds. The “Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral,” as reprinted in the *Book of Common Prayer, 1979*, understands “the Nicene Creed as a sufficient statement of the Christian faith.”¹⁰³ The issues raised by the Nicene Creed, even if we cannot agree on them, we, as fellow followers of Jesus, can chalk up to holy mystery or something that may one day be revealed to us in its fullness.

One such issue that has come up within Southside Abbey's worship is substitutionary penal atonement. In his book, *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions that are Transforming the Faith*, Brian McLaren writes about the atonement through the lens of story. In the chapter and question, “What is the Overarching Story Line of the Bible?,” McLaren talks about the way that Jesus has been recently understood to bridge the gap between “the Fall” and “salvation,” or what is often called the atonement. In diagrams that cannot be recreated here, he describes the metanarrative of modernist Christianity:

We start on the left with absolute perfection in the Garden of Eden. Then comes something called the Fall into original sin, “the Fall” and “original sin” (like

¹⁰³ Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, “The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886” in *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Publishing, 1979), 877.

“absolute perfection”) being terms that are never found in the Bible, but are fundamental to Catholic and Protestant faith as we know it. The bottom of the trough, in which we are now living, is a state of condemnation we could call the fallen world, human history, or life on earth. Next comes an ascending line, which we might call salvation, redemption, justification, or atonement (depending on our tradition), leading us to the top line on the right, known as heaven or eternity. Of course, for many people, perhaps the vast majority according to some versions of this conventional story line, the ending is not so happy. Instead, after everything they've suffered in this life, they face final damnation to hell, defined by most Western Christians as *eternal conscious torment*.¹⁰⁴

The reason this has come up – time and again during Southside Abbey's worship – is we have many in our community who are currently experiencing something that, to them, seems like eternal conscious torment.

McLaren begins to ask something of a structure versus content question as he continues, “In recent years, hundreds of writers, pastors, and thinkers – probably thousands – have dared to tweak various elements or lines in this story, I among them... [W]e suggest that this line should be a little longer or that one a little shorter. But seldom do we question whether this shape as a whole can be found in the Bible itself. Did Abraham hold it, or Moses, or Jeremiah, or Jesus, Paul, or James? Is it ever explicitly taught in scripture?”¹⁰⁵ McLaren argues for a “What Would Jesus Do?” approach, embracing mystery through relationship along the way. This is what we strive for at Southside Abbey.

Embracing holy mystery is wonderfully Anglican. The *Virginia Report: The Report of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission*, written in response to the not-yet-communion-wide ordination of women, claims mystery as central to our

¹⁰⁴ Brian McLaren, *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions that are Transforming the Faith* (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 34.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

identity as Anglicans: “The Churches of the Anglican Communion belong to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. That is to say, they understand themselves as an integral part of the mystery of God's reconciling work and an embodiment of the presence of God in the world.”¹⁰⁶ Such an embrace of mystery, no matter how loving, cannot excuse us from thinking about those mysteries. Rather than dwell on these mysteries, especially those that are most speculative, Southside Abbey is ultimately concerned with how the historic creeds are processed, discussed, and eventually and especially, lived, in our community. This is the realm of practical theology, or pastoral theology, and the concern of this chapter. The needs of many at Southside Abbey are too immediate to spend too much time mulling over the great questions. Southside Abbey is acting, reflecting, and acting again. This thinking about God in our lives, in our work, and in our world is theology. How we have come to think these things has been the fruit not only of our action but also of many conversations. Our second year was a theologically formative time for our community. During this time (July 27, 2013 until August 17, 2014), Southside Abbey hosted a theologian-in-residence, the Rev. K. Nicholas Forti (Nik), whose expressed intention of being with our community was, “To teach, preside, write, and help us think theologically about or unique ministry.”¹⁰⁷ Forti's ministry at Southside Abbey was to press theological issues and get us talking about the community's theology. Once those floodgates were opened, we were ready. Many in our community

106 The Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, “Chapter 4, Levels of Communion, Section 1, Introduction” *The Virginia Report: The Report of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission*. 1998. The Lambeth Conference 1998 Archives. Lambeth Conference. (2015), <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/150889/report-1.pdf?tag=IATDC>, 24.

107 Robert K. Leopold, “Southside Abbey News: Clericus Edition” (2013), http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3219334/Clericus_Announcement.pdf.

are used to being told what to think about God. When we started asking people what *they* thought, they were ready to talk.

Southside Abbey has used Jerome Berryman's book, *Children and the Theologians: Clearing the Way for Grace*, in thinking about Godly Play with our community. The content of the book is outside the scope of this paper, but the cover provides a good image. It shows a painting of cathedral choristers chucking snowballs at one another in the shadow of Exeter Cathedral's statue of Richard Hooker. The work is entitled, "Richard Hooker and the Snow Ball Fight."¹⁰⁸ Hooker "was a champion of establishment who championed it in distinctly unestablishment terms¹⁰⁹ – similar to Southside Abbey. At the heart of Hooker and his *Laws* is the question of authority. While Hooker did not hold *sola scriptura* like many of his contemporaries on the continent, he does afford a certain primacy to scripture. Hooker is often credited with the creation of the "Three-legged-stool" of Anglicanism. The three-legged-stool of scripture, tradition, and reason, does not exactly appear in Hooker, neither do the words Anglicanism or *via media*.¹¹⁰ Hooker actually describes something closer to the three-runged-ladder. In Book V, Chapter viii, Section 2 of the *Laws*, Hooker writes: "Be it in matter of the one kind or of the other, what Scripture doth plainly deliver, to that the first place both of credit and obedience is due; the next whereunto is whatsoever any man can necessarily conclude by

108 Jerome W. Berryman, *Children and the Theologians: Clearing the Way for Grace* (New York: Morehouse, 2009), iv.

109 Diarmaid MacCulloch, "Richard Hooker's Reputation," *The English Historical Review* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Sept. 2002), 776.

110 *Ibid.*, 773.

force of reason; after these the voice of the Church succeedeth.”¹¹¹ Or, as Don Armentrout, former professor of Theology at Sewanee was famous for crafting, the trinity of scripture, tradition, and reason, might be likened to a tricycle, but that the big wheel is scripture.¹¹²

The question of authority is one about which Hooker provides volumes of discussion in the English historical context. Diarmaid MacCulloch argues, “it would be foolish for modern Christians to ignore such a resource.”¹¹³ For Hooker, Holy Scripture is authoritative, then reason, then tradition. Southside Abbey has attempted a similar hierarchy. To this hierarchy, I submit a new interpretation of the classic *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*, or the Law of Prayer is the Law of Belief, or Praying Shapes Believing, or How we pray shapes what we believe. This last interpretation of the Latin phrase is probably the least literal, but it has come to shape much of what we do. As Paul V. Marshall argues in his article, “Reconsidering 'Liturgical Theology': Is there a *Lex Orandi* for All Christians?,” perhaps a broadening of this phrase is in line with its historical use and has been in order for some time.¹¹⁴ How Southside Abbey prays shapes what we believe but so do the elements that we use in prayer, with whom we pray, and where we pray. To expand upon the greater cosmology captured by this expansive use of *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*, I cite the trilogy of books by the great liturgical theologian with

111 Richard Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Book V, Chapter viii*, comp. by Isaac Walton (from *The Works of that Learned and Judicious Divine, Mr. Richard Hooker: with an Account of His Life and Death in Two Volumes*, Vol. I (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1875), 446.

112 This anecdote comes to me from his former student, the Rev. Suzanne Smitherman.

113 Diarmaid MacCulloch, “Richard Hooker's Reputation,” 812.

114 Paul V. Marshall, “Reconsidering 'Liturgical Theology': Is there a *Lex Orandi* for All Christians?,” 140.

whom I studied, Gordon Lathrop: *Holy Things*,¹¹⁵ *Holy People*,¹¹⁶ *Holy Ground*.¹¹⁷

The single greatest event that happens week in and week out at Southside Abbey is Friday evening worship. In his work of a familiar name, *Praying Shapes Believing: A Theological Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer* [1979], Leonel Mitchell writes, “Probably more than any other contemporary religious group, Episcopalians are people of a prayer book. Not only do we use the *Book of Common Prayer* for the conduct of our public services; it is the guide for our private prayer and the source of most of our theology.”¹¹⁸ It is here that Southside Abbey runs nearest a liturgical briar patch. We do not use the *Book of Common Prayer 1979* for worship: Southside Abbey uses the intention of the book, the format of the book, the *ordo* of worship found in the book,¹¹⁹ but not necessarily the physical book itself. This is an intentional departure and one contextual to our community, where both literacy and the aforementioned coded-language present difficulties. Accordingly, at Southside Abbey the “conduct of our public services,” “guide for our private prayer,” and “source of most of our theology” comes from shape and content of the *Book of Common Prayer 1979*, coupled with our experience of common worship, including the how, with what, with whom, and where. This is a broad, expansive step in line with the intention of the *Book of Common Prayer 1979*; namely the contextualization that has kept Anglicanism relevant through changes

115 Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

116 Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999).

117 Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Ground: A Liturgical Cosmology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

118 Leonel L. Mitchell, *Praying Shapes Believing: A Theological Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 1985), 1.

119 *Book of Common Prayer 1979*, 400-401.

in century, language, geography, and people.

Change is a word at the heart of who we are as Anglicans. In his preface to the *Book of Common Prayer 1542*, Thomas Cranmer wrote, “There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted.”¹²⁰ Cranmer goes on at length about how even the well-intentioned reading of the Bible in corporate worship went sour and thus needs changing.¹²¹ *The Virginia Report's* assessment of the change that occurred during the English Reformation was the fluidity of local embodiment: “In the sixteenth century, members of the Church of England continued to understand themselves as the local embodiment of the Catholic Church, continuing to live in England with the same faith, sacraments and ministry of the Church through the ages, and yet they developed a family likeness which today characterises Anglicans who live not only in England but in the 36 provinces of the Anglican Communion.”¹²² This “family likeness” remains, now in each of these provinces and the “extra-provincials” of the Anglican Communion both present now and yet to come and remains at Southside Abbey. People who come to worship with Southside Abbey from other Liturgical Church backgrounds recognize this.¹²³

The Episcopal Church officially began to change into our likeness by making changes to the *Book of Common Prayer 1662*, resulting in our own *Book of Common Prayer 1789*. The preface of which states:

120 Thomas Cranmer, “Preface: The First Book of Common Prayer (1549)” in *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Publishing, 1979), 866.

121 Ibid., 866.

122 *The Virginia Report*, “Section 3.2,” 15.

123 Carol Howard Merritt, “Putting Away the Silver.”

But when in the course of Divine Providence, these American States became independent with respect to civil government, their ecclesiastical independence was necessarily included; and the different religious denominations of Christians in these States were left at full and equal liberty to model and organize their respective Churches, and forms of worship, and discipline, in such manner as they might judge most convenient for their future prosperity; consistently with the constitution and laws of their country.¹²⁴

And further, “It seems unnecessary to enumerate all the different alterations and amendments [in the *Book of Common Prayer 1789*]. They will appear, and it is to be hoped, the reasons of them also, upon a comparison of this with the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England.”¹²⁵ The ecclesiastical polis of Hooker's description was torn in twain with the separation of church and state. In many ways the Episcopal Church was successful even through this, arguably our toughest transition. Our fledgling sapling of the Anglican Tree would grow and grow into that family resemblance, while maintaining our own customs and traditions locally adapted to our context. The aforementioned Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886 goes as far as elevating, “The Historic Episcopate, *locally adapted* [my emphasis] in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church” to the level of Holy Scripture, the Creeds, and the sacraments in terms of their restoration of unity to the Church.¹²⁶

Local adaptation requires change. The local adaptation that was the Oxford Movement represented change. In an aside during Ben King's lecture, “Moderate Calvinism and Richard Hooker,” he confessed that the Oxford Movement's

124 The General Convention of the Episcopal Church 1789, “Preface” in *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Publishing, 1979), 10.

125 Ibid, 11.

126 “Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral” in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979), 877.

“Anglicanism” was an anachronistic invention, but one he “rather quite likes.”¹²⁷ In some ways Southside Abbey is picking up where the Oxford Movement left off, being itself an anachronistic invention, but one suited to the context of its time. The Oxford Movement was a movement in conjunction with the poor,¹²⁸ and thus it has much in common with Southside Abbey. The movement celebrated beauty in an otherwise ugly world, engaging all the senses in worship.¹²⁹ As an outsider to the movement, it seems some parishes claiming the Oxford Movement remember the liturgical innovations but forget the missional movement. At Southside Abbey our community stands in succession with a long line of changers, reformers, and experimenters who have populated the Anglican Communion from our beginnings. This is our ecclesiastical underpinning, and it informs our missiology.

If Southside Abbey's theology can be shaped by how, what, or with whom we pray, our missiology can similarly be shaped by who shows up. The first three years of Southside Abbey's mission would at least be shaped by the diocesan employee who was being paid to show up. Beyond that, who Southside Abbey would be and what we would do to follow Jesus was left to the community to discern together, as long as we could be recognized as a worshipping community under the current constitutions and canons of the Diocese of East Tennessee and the Episcopal Church. Though Southside Abbey forwent the creation of a mission statement, there were several mantras crafted. The mantra that continues to guide us came up organically. When the phrase first surfaced, the

127 Benjamin John King, “Moderate Calvinism and Richard Hooker,” *Classics of Anglicanism*, Summer Advanced Degrees Program, School of Theology, Sewanee, TN, June 22, 2011.

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid.

community knew right away that it would be ours. “No leftovers!” is often printed #noleftovers and used to tag our pictures and writings. In Southside Abbey's context, “no leftovers” applies to the food served at worship and those people who might otherwise fall through the cracks in terms of church or society. Simply put, “no leftovers” is Southside Abbey's missiology. The way this manifests itself is through a calendar of missional projects that are tied to the church year from Advent's “Singing and Cider” to Epiphany's “Episcopal Pickles” to Ordinary Time's “Clean Hearts Laundry Jubilee” to Pentecost's “Tongues of Fire” chili cook-off.

Southside Abbey's missiology is also Incarnational. When the community functions at its best the wall between the “helper” and the “one who is helped” breaks down, as all are created in God's image and loved unconditionally. Anne Lamott, in her book, *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith*, tells the story of a friend leaving “a message on [her] answering machine that said, 'Don't forget, God loves us exactly the way we are, and God loves us too much to let us stay like this.’”¹³⁰ Incarnational love is a big theme for us at Southside Abbey. As our Warden, Kim Smith, puts it: “You're God's very favorite and so am I.” Kim came to us a cultural Mormon (her words). The gift that the Incarnation gives us is this: this life matters; it is even divine. This is a message that so many of Southside Abbey's communicants need to hear. This life, with all of its pain and suffering, but also joy and friendship, matters. It matters because God came here. Incarnate in the person of Jesus, Christ touched all corners of this life, even really dark ones, with God's presence. Or, as Saint Athanasius of Alexandria put it in his, *On the*

130 Anne Lamott, *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1999), 135.

Incarnation, “For He was made man that we might be made God.”¹³¹ Another way to think of this is passage this way: where God dwells is holy, and, through the Incarnation, God dwells here. While this is might number among the most quotable passages, this longer excerpt speaks more poetically to the understanding of the Incarnation for which Southside Abbey strives:

The achievements of the Saviour, resulting from His becoming man, are of such kind and number, that if one should wish to enumerate them, he may be compared to men who gaze at the expanse of the sea and wish to count its waves. For as one cannot take in the whole of the waves with his eyes, for those which are coming on baffle the sense of him that attempts it; so for him that would take in all the achievements of Christ in the body, it is impossible to take in the whole, even by reckoning them up, as those which go beyond his thought are more than those he thinks he has taken in.¹³²

Both passages speak to the many ways this life is holy – unfathomably, bafflingly holy.

Another aspect of the Incarnation illumined by these quotations is that we, humanity, are brought into the presence of the divine until we find that, just as the “us and them” of Southside Abbey's missiology is broken down, so the “us and them” of humanity and divinity breaks down into a Divine One. As Richard Rohr puts it in his book, *Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self*, “Most souls are initially 'unsaved' in the sense that they cannot dare to imagine they could be one with God/Reality/the universe. This is the lie of the False Self that dies slowly, and only after much testing from our side.”¹³³ We strive to break down walls between us and them and

131 Athanasius of Alexandria, “On the Incarnation of the Word.” *Christology of the Later Fathers*. Library of Christian Classics: Ichthus ed. ed. Edward R. Hardy. trans. Archibald Robertson. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1954), Section 54, 3.

132 Ibid., Section 54, 4.

133 Richard Rohr, *Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2013), 60.

participate in this divine oneness at Southside Abbey. This striving spills over into all that is produced at Southside Abbey, including founding documents, budgets, and the liturgies developed.¹³⁴

Another idea borrowed from Silicon Valley is the idea of “open source.”

Sometimes when the Church does something innovative, a book is produced, so that others can buy the copyrighted material so that another community can be innovative too. Jesus was open source. He left clear instructions to “do this” in remembrance of him. This is his central command, as lifted up by the liturgical church. Anglican Benedictine monk, Dom Gregory Dix, wrote in his tome, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, quite poetically an answer to the question, “Was ever another command so obeyed? [to do this in remembrance of me?]:

For century after century, spreading slowly to every continent and country and among every race on earth, this action has been done, in every conceivable human circumstance, for every conceivable human need from infancy and before it to extreme old age and after it, from the pinnacle of earthly greatness to the refuge of fugitives in the caves and dens of the earth. Men have found no better thing than this to do for kings at their crowning and for criminals going to the scaffold; for armies in triumph or for a bride and bridegroom in a little country church; for the proclamation of a dogma or for a good crop of wheat; for the wisdom of the Parliament of a mighty nation or for a sick old woman afraid to die; for a schoolboy sitting an examination or for Columbus setting out to discover America; for the famine of whole provinces or for the soul of a dead lover; in thankfulness because my father did not die of pneumonia; for a village headman much tempted to return to fetich because the yams had failed; because the Turk was at the gates of Vienna; for the repentance of Margaret; for the settlement of a strike; for a son for a barren woman; for Captain so-and-so wounded and prisoner of war; while the lions roared in the nearby amphitheatre; on the beach at Dunkirk; while the hiss of scythes in the thick June grass came faintly through the windows of the church; tremulously, by an old monk on the fiftieth anniversary of his vows; furtively, by an exiled bishop who had hewn timber all day in a prison camp near Murmansk; gorgeously, for the canonisation of S. Joan of Arc—one could fill many pages with the reasons why men have done this, and not tell a

134 Southside Abbey, “Open Source” (2015), <http://southsideabbey.dioet.org/opensource.html>.

hundredth part of them. And best of all, week by week and month by month, on a hundred thousand successive Sundays, faithfully, unfailingly, across all the parishes of Christendom, the pastors have done this just to make the plebs sancta Dei—the holy common people of God.¹³⁵

One *could*, “fill many pages,” which is precisely the point: the ways in which worshipping communities are answering Dix' question continues. One could easily add to this list, “at H♥ART Gallery on Friday evening while a fistfight almost broke out over the last piece of fried chicken.” Such an incident is rare at Southside Abbey, but two men almost came to blows over the offending chicken leg. With the Holy Spirit's sense of comedic timing, this indecent took place when the Episcopal Church Women from St. Paul's in Athens, Tennessee, were visiting. Where might the Church be now if communion had been copyrighted, or the *King James Bible*, or that Anglican hymn, “Amazing Grace?” Southside Abbey is thankful for the Jesus' command to “do this,” but also for those whom the Holy Spirit brings for us to “do this” with. In this way, Southside Abbey is deeply Eucharistic, as “Eucharist” means to give thanks. We participate in the Great Thanksgiving to lead lives of thanksgiving – not lives to light lamps to illumine the underside of buckets.¹³⁶

Finally, Southside Abbey's missiology is led by the Holy Spirit. We strive to keep Jesus' commands found in the four canonical gospel accounts. Beyond that, we look to the “Book of Acts.” Even the most cursory reading of the book reveals that the apostles did not do anything of note without being filled with the Holy Spirit. For church-planters, the Book of Acts is paramount, as it details the Holy Spirit moving through the early

135 Gregory Dix, Dom Gregory. *The Shape of the Liturgy*. New ed. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2005), 744.

136 Matthew 5:14.

church, while also lifting up the Holy Spirit's role in empowering those who are sent as Apostles or as church-planters. We encounter the Holy Spirit in our neighborhood primarily through relationships that have been formed in Jesus' name. Beyond the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts, other New Testament writings reveal that the Church, even the earliest expressions of church, can and will disagree. The Pastoral Epistles (I and II Timothy and Titus) describe the attributes which presbyter-bishops should have in order to lead the church, as well as the duties of these individuals.¹³⁷ The Pastoral Epistles treat the Church as an extension of the Roman household with God as the ruler and the presbyter-bishops acting on God's behalf.¹³⁸ Within the church structure outlined in the Pastoral Epistles, the role and place of women is also defined. The author of I Timothy exhorts, "I desire, then... that the women should dress themselves modestly... Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent."¹³⁹ This community held that part of the way to maintain the structure was to give such instructions to the women in the congregation. It was seen by the community that received the Pastorals as necessary to maintaining the Church after the death of the apostle Paul,

Compare the understandings of the submissive role of women to the understanding of women in the Johannine community. The difference between men and women in the Johannine community is negligible. In the Gospel according to John, "the Samaritan woman, Martha, and Mary are characters equal in importance to the blind man

137 I Timothy 3:1-16.

138 Raymond E. Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind* (Mahwah: Paulist, 1984), 32.

139 I Timothy 2:8-12.

and Lazarus. In the portrayal of major male and female believers there is no difference of intelligence.”¹⁴⁰ Women and men are equal players in the Johannine community's church structure. In the Gospel According to John, Mary Magdelene finds the empty tomb and runs out to tell Peter and the beloved disciple.¹⁴¹ If Mary, a woman, had not instructed Peter, a man, in this particular matter of faith, as forbidden by the author of the Pastorals,¹⁴² there might not be a faith to teach.

Without the household of God structure of the Pastorals, the Johannine community keeps order through the presence of the Holy Spirit. “Another aspect of Johannine ecclesiology is the dwelling of the Paraclete-Spirit [παράκλητος] in the believer, and this aspect carries over into the Epistles of John.”¹⁴³ The Paraclete acts in this community as teacher.¹⁴⁴ The teachings of the Holy Spirit in the Johannine community fulfill the role of the presbyter-bishops in the community to which the Pastoral Epistles were addressed. “The Spirit emerges clearly as a personal presence – the ongoing presence of Jesus while he is absent from earth and with the Father in heaven.”¹⁴⁵ The Spirit as Paraclete, rendered comforter or advocate, is unique to the Johannine Literature. The Paraclete is able to retain the sanctity of the past, while providing the Church with new guidance for the future, in keeping with how we at Southside Abbey understand the Holy Spirit's function in the Episcopal Church today, especially in our

¹⁴⁰ Brown, *Churches the Apostles Left Behind*, 94.

¹⁴¹ John 20:2.

¹⁴² I Timothy 2:11-12.

¹⁴³ Brown, *Churches*, 85.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 103.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 102.

context.

The disagreement about the role of women in the early church is an excellent reminder that there has always been disagreement in the Church. The most important thing to notice is that neither of these communities kicked the other out – they were both still a part of the church. As Saint John Chrysostom wrote: “Nothing so provokes God's anger as the division of the Church... not even the blood of martyrdom can wash out this sin.”¹⁴⁶ I pray for such charity in the Church today. While Southside Abbey might have different understandings of the way in which we are embodied as followers of Jesus in the Episcopal tradition, we do pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit. At Southside Abbey we do our best to hold much that would seem in opposition together in tension.

While this chapter thus far has been primarily concerned with Southside Abbey's theology of mission, we have veered into the lane of theology of the ecclesia.

Ecclesiology is the theology of doing and being church. It is tied to how the church is governed, but it includes deeper questions of inclusion too. In Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen's *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives*, he details the ecclesiology of different churches, as well as outlining the value of such an endeavor grounded in history. He writes, “There is no denying the value of ecclesiological traditions in classical theology. It simply is the fact that most ecclesiological thinking and even experimenting has taken place within the confines of classical Christendom up until the expansion of the modern missionary movement.”¹⁴⁷

146 John Chrysostom, “Homily XI” *On the Epistle to the Ephesians*, in *Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and West Translated by Members of the English Church* vol. 5 (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1840), 228-229.

147 Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 9.

One glaring oversight in his survey of church ecclesiologies is Anglican ecclesiology. In Kärkkäinen's work, there is minimal consideration given to Anglican ecclesiology, through he mentions the Thirty-Nine articles¹⁴⁸ as part of his explanation of ecumenical ecclesiology. Those of us who have dedicated our lives to Anglican ecclesiology might prefer more distinction, but this omission might be seen as fitting, as Anglican ecclesiology has aspects of New Testament ecclesiology (disagreeing with one another, but remaining in communion¹⁴⁹), Eastern Orthodoxy (understanding ourselves as communions of local churches¹⁵⁰), Roman Catholic (as the "Body of Christ"¹⁵¹), Reformed (the Thirty-Nine articles¹⁵²), or even Pentecostal (trusting the Holy Spirit to lead¹⁵³).

The centrality of the Holy Spirit in the Church is not an excuse to avoid seeking the Holy Spirit at work in the world. As former titular head of the Anglican Communion, Rowan Williams has much to add about Anglican ecclesiology: "The connection of the Spirit with ecclesiology belongs here. We are so used to the rhetoric of the Church as the 'Spirit-filled community' that we have frequently lost a sense of the church as a sign of the Spirit rather than its domicile. The Church signifies (means, points to) the humanity

148 Ibid., 77.

149 An idea pushed to its limit of late.

150 The International Commission for Anglican - Orthodox Theological Dialogue, *Church of the Triune God: The Cyprus Agreed Statement of the International Commission for Anglican - Orthodox Theological Dialogue* (London: Anglican Communion Office, 2006) 39.

151 Kärkkäinen, 27.

152 The Bishops, the Clergy, and the Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in Convention, on the twelfth day of September, in the Year of our Lord, 1801, "Articles of Religion," in *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Publishing, 1979), 867-876.

153 Kärkkäinen, 47.

that could be, that could exist in this tension between security and powerlessness, so that it is indeed in one sense *the* place where the Spirit is seen.”¹⁵⁴ Southside Abbey seeks efficacious working of the Holy Spirit in our community, primarily through relationship, and acts with the work of the Spirit in our context through partnerships with schools, a non-profit art gallery, an artisan bakery, and other area parishes.

Southside Abbey views itself as a member of the beloved community (as mentioned previously) in the dual sense that ours is a community loved by God *and* we love one another within the community. We are the Body of Christ, Christ's hands, feet, eyes, ears, guts, and heart in the world. Southside Abbey's ecclesiastical expression of the Body of Christ is consistent with E.P. Sanders' picture of the historical Jesus: “He was essentially homeless; he traveled in the company of his disciples, including more than just ‘the Twelve’ at least some of the time; the group had minimal financial reserves; he was sometimes able to eat and sleep in comfort, thanks to the fact that he found at least some supporters of means, especially women.”¹⁵⁵ Many of Southside Abbey's worshippers as Body of Christ, relate and identify with *this* picture of Jesus far more than would the average middle-class Episcopalian. Southside Abbey's prayer is that we may be Christ's Body, akin to the poem of Frances Ridley Havergal's that is one of our central hymn texts:

“Take my life, and let it be consecrated Lord, to thee;
 take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.
 Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of thy love;
 take my heart, it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne.
 Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King;

¹⁵⁴ Rowan Williams, “Word and Spirit” *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2000), 124.

¹⁵⁵ E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 110-111.

take my intellect, and use every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine.
Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.¹⁵⁶

This prayer hearkens to Paul's words in Galatians, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in [or of] the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."¹⁵⁷

When the earliest churches use the word "Church," the Greek word is ἐκκλησία, meaning assembly.¹⁵⁸ The assembly is a group of people, not a building. In *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* by Gordon Lathrop, the word "assembly" appears over eighty times.¹⁵⁹ Over the life of the Church, worship moved from borrowed spaces to basilicas, with practical, architectural, theological, and aesthetic reasons to do so. At Southside Abbey, our assembly worships in borrowed spaces. Sometimes the community even engages in guerrilla liturgy, showing up and saying prayers in spaces such as laundromats, city property, or neighborhood streets, that often do not invite, or even actively discourage the presence of the Church. Jesus and his disciples did not have their own building.¹⁶⁰ The particular expression of the Jesus Movement of the Southside Abbey community is pleased to borrow space at present. It seems God interrupts the idea

156 Frances Ridley Havergal, "Take My Life and Let it Be" *The Hymnal 1982* (New York: Church Publishing, 1982), 707.

157 Galatians 2:19b-20.

158 Warren C. Trenchard, *A Concise Dictionary of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 47.

159 Lathrop, *Holy Things*.

160 Matthew 8:20 § Luke 9:58.

of mountaintop buildings in the Transfiguration of Jesus.¹⁶¹ When it was put in David's mind to build a building for the ark of the covenant, the word of the LORD came to Nathan to tell God's servant David: "Thus says the LORD: You shall not build me a house to live in. For I have not lived in a house since the day I brought out Israel to this very day, but I have lived in a tent and a tabernacle."¹⁶² God was happy in a tent. Many of God's worshippers at Southside Abbey who live in camps or in tents and can relate.

One week, in the context of liturgical worship, the preacher asked the Southside Abbey community: "What is the Church?" And received this answer: An African American man was seated across from a young lady who happened to be a zookeeper. Through the course of our conversation time, they got to know one another. When we called the community back together to answer the question, "What is the Church?" he answered, "I'm a black, out-of-work, homeless man, and I just talked to a white zookeeper about Jesus. That's the Church!" This kind of interaction takes place every week at Southside Abbey.

If the church is a group of people, no wonder some are concerned with membership numbers. The *Book of Common Prayer 1979* changes the understanding to the baptized as full members in the Body of Christ: "Holy Baptism is *full initiation* [my emphasis] by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body the Church."¹⁶³ James Turrell writes in his book, *Celebrating the Rites of Initiation: A Practical Ceremonial Guide for Clergy and Other Liturgical Ministers*, "In order to celebrate the initiation rites of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer with integrity, one must grasp the essential features of the

¹⁶¹ Matthew 17:4-5 § Mark 9:5-7 § Luke 9:33-34.

¹⁶² I Chronicles 17:4-5.

¹⁶³ *Book of Common Prayer* (1979), 298.

prayer book's baptismal theology. It is marked by a baptismal ecclesiology, an emphasis on baptism as the entry into discipleship, and an assertion that baptism is full initiation.¹⁶⁴ This is a shift in Anglican practice¹⁶⁵ and one we have not fully grappled with. One of the most moving moments in the baptismal liturgy in the BCP 1979 occurs after baptism and chrismation, in the call and response of priest and congregation. The celebrant says, "Let us welcome the newly baptized," and the celebrant and people respond, "We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood."¹⁶⁶

Finally, we arrive at Southside Abbey's theology of stewardship. I have hinted at stewardship in previous sections, but one way our theology of stewardship impacts our community is through church buildings. At this point in the life of the earth, buildings – church buildings or any buildings – are problematic. In his lecture at Gordon-Conwell on his book, *Everything Must Change: When the World's Biggest Problems and Jesus' Good News Collide*, Brian McLaren reveals that "if all the world were to live as the United States [energy consumption, waste production, nuclear family in their own buildings, heating and cooling habits, wasteful eating tendencies], we would need about five planet earths to keep us sustained."¹⁶⁷ Good stewardship for Southside Abbey is to use buildings to which the community is given access. Sometimes this theological decision is difficult

164 James F. Turrell, *Celebrating the Rites of Initiation: A Practical Ceremonial Guide for Clergy and Other Liturgical Ministers* (New York: Church Publishing, 2013), 6.

165 Ibid.

166 *Book of Common Prayer* (1979), 308.

167 Brian McLaren, Lecture, "Everything Must Change" Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts, (January 24, 2008), 19:52.

for some serving or formed in the liturgical church. Some would love to design a building for Southside Abbey with apartments for people to sleep, washers and dryers, a place for cars to be worked on, a communal kitchen, and homework and language tutoring stations, but that is not where the Holy Spirit is currently calling the community.

Place and personnel are the two largest costs of most worshipping communities, even Southside Abbey. We view these costs in terms of missional ministry, asking the question: how can spending money in these areas be used to support other ministries? One of the ways we get on board with what the Holy Spirit is doing is through strategic partnerships. One such partnership is with H♥ART Gallery, the space where Southside Abbey most often worships. H♥ART Gallery is a place of healing before we set foot in the door. From their website:

H♥ART Gallery TN is a 501c3 not-for-profit entity that offers homeless and other non-traditional artists an opportunity to create and sell their artwork. Our extended mission is to supply art materials and mentoring classes to other not-for-profit community organizations who can provide a space for their clients to participate in art classes. Works that are deemed commercially viable are sold through the gallery at affordable prices. Money from art sales are returned to the artist and the agency for their benefit.¹⁶⁸

H♥ART Gallery is a wonderfully appropriate place for our community to worship. The partnership that has blossomed with H♥ART Gallery has informed both of our ministries and drawn us deeper than either would have gone on our own. As Southside Abbey, our personnel are minimal. In the first three years of our ministry, the clergy's compensation package was paid by the Diocese of East Tennessee, off the books of Southside Abbey. Now stewardship of the resources we have been given necessitates the clergy's compensation going toward pension and insurance only. This requires a pastoral leader

¹⁶⁸ H♥ART Gallery, <http://hartgallerytn.com/>.

willing to participate in bi-vocational ministry.

No accounting of stewardship would be complete without talking about fundraising. Southside Abbey has been spectacularly different in this regard. At Southside Abbey, no weekly “ask” for money is made, and no collection plate is passed. Nevertheless, people are certainly given plenty of opportunities to give of the gifts they have been given. For example, we do host a “support” page on our website,¹⁶⁹ but this is done so in a way that people seek it out, keeping the decision to give between God and the giver. Southside Abbey engages in stewardship of money in this way because so many of our congregants have been hurt over the issue of money. The stewardship of them, as wounded, yet no less beloved children of God, is of utmost importance. The Holy Spirit provides; the money comes in, and Southside Abbey is able to do ministry year after year. By not explicitly asking for money, Southside Abbey has empowered people to give as they are called. Our community tells the story of what is happening, and people want to be a part of it. People just give.

¹⁶⁹ Southside Abbey, “Support” (2015), <http://southsideabbey.dioet.org/support.html>.

Chapter 4 - Practice

As theology crept into the chapter “Setting the Stage,” so has the practice of it, seeped into the theological discussion pertaining to Southside Abbey, namely the way the community lives and worships. Southside Abbey's practices are the community's theology put into action, or how that theology is lived out in the community. Primarily, Southside Abbey is a community of doers. This community takes seriously Jesus' commands to “do.” Only four or five times a year are Episcopalians treated in corporate worship to the list of “to dos” found in the Baptismal Covenant.¹⁷⁰ The Gospel reading includes the life of Jesus; the sermon applies what we are to “do” in Jesus' name in the world; and the dismissal (when the appropriate form is used) addresses us to “go in peace to love and serve the Lord.”¹⁷¹ However, the Baptismal Covenant unpacks the work in a corporate exchange of celebrant and congregation. In his work, *The Christian Moral Life: Practices of Piety*, Timothy Sedgwick unpacks the term “piety:” “piety originally referred to persons who habitually acted with 'reverence and obedience to God' and 'faithfulness in the duties owed to parents and relatives [and] superiors.’”¹⁷² The term “piety” might conjure images of “reverence,” “obedience,” and “faithfulness.” Consider

¹⁷⁰ *Book of Common Prayer* (1979), 312.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 340 and 366.

¹⁷² Timothy F. Sedgwick, *The Christian Moral Life: Practices of Piety* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 3.

the phrase “habitual action.” The pious are those who *act*, out of a reverence for and obedience to God, but act nonetheless. Sedgwick further describes the “Christian faith as a matter of practical piety... [It is] to see that the revelation given in the Christian story is nothing less than a new meaning and identity for our lives.”¹⁷³

Action has, does, and will change the community of Southside Abbey. Jesus is full of action words, commanding his followers – then and now – to act. Sometimes this action does not take the shape we might think. For example, the parable of the Good Samaritan¹⁷⁴ occurs just after Jesus has sent out the seventy to “do” by receiving hospitality.¹⁷⁵ After telling the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus asks his audience – the lawyer who stood up to test Jesus – “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?”¹⁷⁶ The lawyer responds quite well, “The one who showed him mercy,” but he is challenged by Jesus to act, “Go and do likewise.”¹⁷⁷ Go and *do* likewise; show mercy by *doing*. The Epistle of James is clear in this regard, “For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.”¹⁷⁸

One of the things we *do* at Southside Abbey is the ancient practice of hospitality. The seventy are appointed by Jesus to go and experience hospitality.¹⁷⁹ Hospitality begins

173 Ibid., 143.

174 Luke 10:25-37.

175 Luke 10:1-12.

176 Luke 10:36.

177 Luke 10:37.

178 James 2:26.

179 Luke 10:1-12.

with welcome. In her book, *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, the Other, and the Spirit of Transformation*, Stephanie Spellers writes about “radical welcome,” which she defines as:

A fundamental spiritual practice, one that combines the universal Christian ministry of welcome and hospitality with a clear awareness of power and patterns of inclusion and exclusion... [more than just] having a warm, dependable welcome at the door of the church and a really good cup of coffee and snacks in the church hall... [It is the duty of all, not only] the province of the Hospitality and Greeters Committee.¹⁸⁰

As Southside Abbey, enacting hospitality is done so in relationship with context. People arrive to worship drunk. The rule is one can be drunk but not belligerent. Additionally, many in worship on Friday evening are hungry. This hunger is not limited to spiritual hunger, though that is very real too. Many of Southside Abbey's worshippers are physically hungry. Some have been banned from the Community Kitchen, a local provider of three meals a day, 365 days a year. Some will not go there for fear of being attacked or relapsing.

One of the ways Southside Abbey shows hospitality is by feeding all who come to worship. In her book, *Send My Roots Rain: A Spirituality of Justice and Mercy*, Megan McKenna links the doing of justice and mercy ministries with the spirituality of the church. She writes:

Nicolai Berdyaev has said: 'Bread for others is always a spiritual question.' It is always a question of love. Most of us are sure we love. In James' letter to his community, he warns that there is no meaning in love for the hungry person which leaves that person hungry, no meaning in love for one who is cold and without shelter that does not supply the necessary clothing, fuel, and housing. Jesus' message is good news, hope for the poor that their suffering is to be alleviated. It

¹⁸⁰ Stephanie Spellers, *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, The Other and the Spirit of Transformation* (New York: Church Publishing, 2006), 11.

is to be alleviated in the kingdom, by those who follow his ways and share.¹⁸¹

In this community, the doing of justice and mercy makes sense in light of James' understanding of love for the hungry. In Southside Abbey's context, some of the communicants are hungry – a reality we learned through conversation and relationship. One of the first ways these stories were shared was through a project that came to be known as Episcopal Epiphany Pickles. Early in Southside Abbey's ministry, near the end of the summer of 2012, our community received word from the Chattanooga Food Bank that they had more cucumbers than they could store. The back of a truck was filled to take these cucumbers to the Southside. It did not take long for people to stop accepting raw cucumbers. What were we going to do with all of these cucumbers? The question was answered by a wise woman who travels with us, named Jane Lewis: “pickles.”

Not knowing too much about pickles, we learned as a community and made “slow pickles” in two varieties – spiced and spicy – that were ready by January during the Season of Epiphany. Dedicated members of Southside Abbey braved the cold and trekked through the neighborhoods of Chattanooga's Southside, pickles in hand and a trade in mind. The intention was to go into the neighborhoods of the Southside and swap pickles for the stories of the individuals who received them. Nothing diffuses any potential danger in a situation like the words, “Hi. We are from a new worshipping community in the neighborhood called Southside Abbey. We have some pickles for you, and we would like to hear your story.” One could almost see mental calculation happening across people's faces: *pickles?* More often than not, these encounter teams

181 Megan McKenna, *Send My Roots Rain: A Spirituality of Justice and Mercy* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 250.

were eventually let into people's homes and their lives. Once we opened those gates, they swung wide and the people shared story after story. Like those seventy Jesus sent out, the members of Southside Abbey who braved the cold and neighborhoods were relying on the hospitality of those encountered to be welcomed into their homes and into their lives. When Frank Griswold was in the area for a speaking engagement, he came to visit some people from Southside Abbey.¹⁸² When he heard about the pickles, he suggested that we celebrate "Picklemas" instead of Michaelmas. Our plan is thus to do "quick pickles" at the end of next summer, allowing for delivery not during Epiphany, but around September 29th (Michaelmas).

This exchange of pickles and story was used to ascertain the felt needs of the community. "Felt needs" are the needs experienced by a community. These needs often exist outside perceived needs, or the needs projected upon a community by outsiders. Projects based upon felt needs tend to be more successful. The pickle exchange helps Southside Abbey discern the felt needs of the Southside community – those needs that the people live with day-in and day-out. The needs we heard expressed were about food, justice, and God. That is where Southside Abbey started.

Welcome and hospitality ministries undergird everything at Southside Abbey. As we welcome the stranger, we are being the Body of Christ for the Body of Christ. As the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it in that letter's section on what to do, "Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that, some have entertained angels without knowing it."¹⁸³ Similarly, when one does these

¹⁸² March 15, 2013.

¹⁸³ Hebrews 13:1-2.

ministries, she or he is doing these things for and with Jesus. In Matthew 25 Jesus outlines that the righteous are those who give the Son of Man (in the guise of a King) food when he was hungry, drink when he was thirsty, welcome when he was a stranger, clothing when he was naked, care when he was sick, and company when he was imprisoned. (Matthew 25:35-36). When we engage in these ministries, we are engaging not only the ministry of Jesus, but Jesus himself, at times ministering to him, as the Gospel Account Continues, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”¹⁸⁴ If this is true, then at times, the flip-side must be true as well. Sometimes we are serving Jesus, and sometimes, some of us must be acting as Jesus, receiving ministry.

In his book, *Strangers at My Door: A True Story of Finding Jesus in Unexpected Guests*, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove describes how his encounters with those in his neighborhood have led him to encounter Jesus in his community.¹⁸⁵ Rather than sharing Wilson-Hartgrove's stories about encountering Jesus, a few brief stories from Southside Abbey follow.

One story is about a man named Jim who had been living in a camp in the woods for at least twelve years. One day he handed me a money order for \$250, the exact amount we budgeted for food each week. I needed him to be Jesus for me, not because Southside Abbey needed the money, but because I, in my worldliness, tried to talk him out of this gift. I tried to tell him all the ways he needed this money more than our community, to which he responded: “Don't take this away from me! I want to buy dinner

¹⁸⁴ Matthew 25:40-41.

¹⁸⁵ Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *Strangers at My Door: A True Story of Finding Jesus in Unexpected Guests* (New York: Convergent Books, 2013).

for all my friends on Friday.”¹⁸⁶

Another story is about one of Southside Abbey's regulars. Mark worships with us whenever it is not too cold or wet or he when is not too drunk to leave his camp under a nearby bridge. He seemed to be present and sober at worship most weeks, until his attendance abruptly stopped. When he finally returned, he was pretty badly bruised. During Southside Abbey's passing of the peace, I asked him what had happened. He told me that he had been thrown off his bridge by a couple of guys, who had added insult to injury by stealing his stuff. Then he told me that the two men who attacked and robbed him were present at worship that evening. When I asked who they were, he told me that he would not tell me, because I might ask them to leave. Mark stunned me with his faith when he said, “You can't ask them to leave, because they need Jesus just as much as I do.”¹⁸⁷ In this moment, I found my faith formation a little lacking. Here was a great teacher in this moment. Here was the love and forgiveness of Jesus.

The more revealed of Southside Abbey's community, the more one can see the necessity of hospitality at Southside Abbey. This hospitality extends deeply into the way our community plans and enacts liturgy. Liturgy is important; how we do things is important. As Patrick Malloy writes in his work, *Celebrating the Eucharist: A Practical Guide for Clergy and Other Liturgical Ministers*, “The liturgy is serious business. It is not about dressing up and parading around, saying peculiar words and doing odd things.

186 Robert K. Leopold (as Bob Leopold), “Tis the Season” *Episcopal Church Foundation Vital Posts* (blog), November 13, 2014, <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/tis-the-season-3/>.

187 Robert K. Leopold (as Bob Leopold), “The Best Teachers Money Can't Buy” *Episcopal Church Foundation Vital Posts* (blog), November 11, 2015, <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/the-best-teachers-money-cant-buy/>.

It is a confrontation with God that changes lives. And changed lives change the world.¹⁸⁸

The way Malloy describes liturgy is how we strive to present and experience liturgy at Southside Abbey. Distinctions of “high” and “low” church tend to subside, and Southside Abbey is a community that can experience journeying with Jesus through incense, the daily office, or contemplative prayer. The particulars of the thing pointing to God, the liturgy, become less and less important as union with God increases, as lives are changed and as “changed lives change the world.” Liturgy is important because it is, in the words of Bruce Lee¹⁸⁹ channelling the Buddha, “like a finger pointing a way to the moon. Don't concentrate on the finger or you will miss all that heavenly glory.”¹⁹⁰

In a like manner, Southside Abbey strives to keep the metaphorical finger from being a distraction from not only the heavenly glory that is God, but also the work that Jesus calls us to do through the power of the Holy Spirit. Aidan Kavanagh wrote *Elements of Rite: A Handbook of Liturgical Style* about the liturgical stylings of the Roman Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council. In the chapter entitled, “Elementary Rules of Liturgical Usage,” rule one is: “Avoid disorderly and last-minute makeshift.” He continues, “the history of Christian worship is a story of flight from disorder and makeshift.”¹⁹¹ Kavanagh saw the order of the liturgy and the safety and stability it provided as precisely the way the Holy Spirit might break in. Southside Abbey

188 Patrick Malloy, *Celebrating the Eucharist: A Practical Ceremonial Guide for Clergy and Other Liturgical Ministers* (New York: Church Publishing, 2007), viii.

189 Robert Clouse, *Enter the Dragon* (Burbank: Warner Brothers, 1973), 7:29.

190 Thich Nhat Hanh, *Old Path White Clouds: Walking in the Footsteps of the Buddha* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1991), 211.

191 Aidan Kavanagh, *Elements of Rite: A Handbook of Liturgical Style* (Collegeville, MN: The Order of St. Benedict, Inc., 1990), 12.

works no differently. The community allows for the breaking in of the Holy Spirit, in the Spirit's time. Sometimes the Holy Spirit comes in beautiful ways, like the silence that just happens at Holy Communion, because everyone in attendance knows something Divine is happening. Sometimes the Holy Spirit comes in harsh ways that remind us of the felt needs of our community, embodied in what might have become a fistfight over the last piece of fried chicken. In this instance, a priest and a police officer named David Lewis (whose wife is the pickle lady, Jane) stopped the fight before it could really start with the help of the broader community.

Liturgy is formative, as discussed in Chapter 3. If that liturgy is inaccessible, however, something of that formation will be missed. “Article XXIV. [of the Thirty-Nine Articles] Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the people understandeth,” puts it this way: “It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have public Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood of the people.”¹⁹² This usage of “tongue” means a particular language, like Latin or English, not an idiom of English. For those at Oxford University in the nineteenth century, perhaps Latin *was* a tongue understood of the people, but in Southside Abbey's context liturgical English, such as that found in parts of the *Book of Common Prayer 1979*, might as well be another language. Our call is to create authentically Episcopal worship in the vernacular of the people.

At Southside Abbey, those who show up for worship are our members. We are attempting to live into the *Book of Common Prayer 1979*'s norm that Baptism is full inclusion into the Body. As such, our liturgical understanding is that liturgy is also the

¹⁹² “Articles of Religion” *Book of Common Prayer* (1979), 872.

work of the people. Marion Hatchett, in his seminal work of liturgical theology, *Sanctifying Life, Time and Space*, writes “Liturgy is the work of the community, not something done for community... Liturgy is the work of the people. It is the opposite of lethargy.”¹⁹³ This “work of the people” or “public work”¹⁹⁴ includes the design of liturgies appropriate to the community's context.

Southside Abbey has a great relationship with our bishop, who has been most willing to allow this liturgical experimentation. The only liturgical correction he has offered is: “add an epiclesis,” in one of the earliest “worship labs,” which is what the community called our worship for the first year. The name “worship lab” points to the reality that this really is experimental and that change could, would, and did happen from week-to-week. Now Southside Abbey has settled into a rotation of changing our liturgy with the seasons of the church year, which we share on the “open source” page of our website.¹⁹⁵ These liturgies have been written by our community – especially those seminarians serving us from the School of Theology in Sewanee, Tennessee – in conjunction with one another. Many of the written prayers come from Southside Abbey's EfM groups' weekly gatherings.

The liturgies follow the trajectory of the Seasons of the Church Year. In Advent, we are expectant; in Lent we are penitential; during Easter we party; in ordinary time we are reminded of the ways God is present in the “ordinary.” Special care has to be taken that our liturgies do not involve too many words in need of unpacking, keeping the

193 Hatchett, *Sanctifying*, 4.

194 Maggi Dawn, “Liturgy – it's *not* the work of the people.”

195 Southside Abbey, “Open Source,” <http://southsideabbey.dioet.org/opensource.html>.

required reading level low and using “call and response.” Another way we have approached the issue of literacy is with the use of memorization. Even though the liturgies change seasonally, by the end of each season, many in the community have committed certain prayers to heart, like the *Nunc Dimittis*, which closes our liturgy in several seasons. Following the three-year lectionary cycle allows more possibilities for change, as Advent in Year A uses a different form than Advent in Years B or C.

The *ordo* of a typical Southside liturgy remains similar from season to season.¹⁹⁶ The shape of the liturgy begins with song and an opening acclamation, gathering the community in the name of Jesus. Next prayers are said – in the form of a Collect (written by one of three Southside Abbey EfM groups) and then the prayers of the people – and, when seasonally appropriate, a confession. Then the community shares in Christ's Peace.

What happens next is something of a departure, though in location, not necessarily in inclusion. The community strives to create liturgies that are according to the form found in the *Book of Common Prayer 1979*, entitled, “An Order for Celebrating the Holy Eucharist.”¹⁹⁷ This *ordo* prescribes that “the people and priest:”

Gather in the Lord's Name
 Proclaim and Respond to the Word of God
 Pray for the World and the Church
 Exchange the Peace
 Prepare the Table
 Make Eucharist
 Break the Bread
 Share the Gifts of God¹⁹⁸

196 See Appendix 2: Representative Southside Abbey Liturgy

197 *Book of Common Prayer 1979*, 400-401.

198 *Ibid.*, 400-401.

Each of these steps is present in a typical liturgy of Southside Abbey,¹⁹⁹ though the order of the steps changes slightly. Similarly, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America's analog to the Prayer Book, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, identifies a fourfold pattern for worship: Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending.²⁰⁰ To those familiar with either of these patterns, all the parts are present at Southside Abbey's worship, though the aspects of the sections "Proclaim and Respond to the Word of God" and those sections corresponding to the ministry of the table (or word and meal in Lutheran parlance) are combined. After the Gathering portion culminates in the exchange of Christ's Peace, Southside Abbey's liturgies move immediately to the ministry of the meal or table. A Eucharistic prayer is said, though not one of the two forms provided in "An Order for Celebrating Holy Eucharist,"²⁰¹ and the gifts of God are shared in bread only. After the bread has been received, Southside Abbey expands the ministry of the table to include an actual, physically-filling, meal. Jesus has entrusted the Church with a sacred meal full of his presence, but it is often so stylized it cannot be recognized as a meal any longer.

The ministry of the table is next interrupted with the ministry of the word, putting the two together in an exciting way that seems both new and ancient at the same time. While sharing a meal, the community hears from Holy Scripture. Then we engage in holy conversation. Instead of a more familiar, "I talk, you listen" sermon, the reflection on the text at Southside Abbey is more conversational. After we hear from Holy Scripture,

199 See Appendix 2: Representative Southside Abbey Liturgy.

200 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. Pew ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2006), 92-93.

201 *Book of Common Prayer 1979*, 333-338, 340-343, 361-365, 367-369, 369-372, 372-376, 402-403 and 404-405.

whoever has prepared something for the week will ask a few questions that spark discussion. In intentionally diverse small groups, these questions are discussed. When the conversation dies down, the preacher presents a capstone homily, trying to tie together some of the conversations that were happening. When I am the preacher at Southside Abbey, I often find myself jettisoning much of what I have prepared for the evening in favor of lifting up something someone from our community has brought to the conversation. After dinner and conversation are finished, the ministry of the table begins again with the words, “after supper Jesus took the cup,” to finish Holy Communion. The sending portion of the liturgy includes a postcommunion prayer that prepares the community for action in the world; announcements that share what sort of action is available to be done corporately; and a dismissal that sends the community to action in the world in Christ's name. Apart from the meal, there is nothing earth-shatteringly innovative about our worship, which is itself not so earth shattering. Such a meal is mentioned in “An Order for Celebrating Holy Communion.”²⁰² Innovation comes in the way in which liturgical worship is a response to the current felt needs of the Southside community. In this regard Southside Abbey is innovative in the same way the Anglican Communion has been for centuries.

In an echo of Matthew 25, we know Jesus to be present here in the liturgy, among those worshipping. Martin Luther also claims that Jesus is present in the proclamation of the Gospels themselves, literally manifested in the assembly. Luther writes:

So you see that the Gospel is really not a book of laws and commandments which require deeds of us, but a book of divine promises in which God promises, offers, and gives us all his possessions and benefits in Christ... When you open the book

202 Ibid., 401.

containing the Gospels and read or hear how Christ comes here or there, or how someone is brought to him, you should therein perceive the sermon or the Gospel through which he is coming to you, or you are being brought to him. For the preaching of the Gospel is nothing else than Christ coming to us, or us being brought to him.²⁰³

Through reading the Word of God we begin to see the *logos* incarnate in the midst of the assembly more and more. “The four Gospels of the New Testament still belong in an assembly where they are read and heard aloud. They come to life there. They come to their purpose... It is in an assembly that [the Gospels] seem to breathe the air of their origin.”²⁰⁴ That purpose, Lathrop asserts, is to *incarnate* Christ in the presence of the assembly, continually remaking the assembly more and more into the Body of Christ. When he says that it is in the assembly that the Gospel accounts come to life, he is not being metaphorical. He means that through the proclamation and hearing of the Gospel texts, Jesus is once again embodied in the assembly.

Thus, Southside Abbey's liturgy and the liturgies of churches across time and space is triply formative: formation through the liturgy proper; formation by Christ's presence in the Gospel Account; and formation in Christ's presence in the Body of Christ comprised of those worshipping. In this way Southside Abbey, views the formation that liturgical worship provides as supreme. At Southside Abbey this tripartite formation forms and transforms all of us – churchy people and non-churchy people and those with and without homes. The understanding of how important this tripartite formation is did not register with the community until we had been engaged in the act of formation,

203 Martin Luther, “A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels” *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings* 2nd ed., 2005), 95-96.

204 Gordon W. Lathrop, *The Four Gospels on Sunday: The New Testament and the Reform of Christian Worship* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 153.

allowing Southside Abbey to be formed by those present at worship and in holy conversation.

In a work much deeper than first assumptions might belie, Jennie Turrell's *Let Us Pray: A Little Kid's Guide to the Eucharist*, outlines, in an approachable way, the idea that the liturgy can form us, regardless of our age or ability (especially the way that the Turrells' young son is aware of his liturgical surroundings enough to teach his mother “more than she ever learned in Sunday School”).²⁰⁵ This has been most helpful at Southside Abbey in understanding the way that liturgy, and by extension, Jesus present in the ministry of the word and Christ embodied in the assembly, is working on us all even if we cannot fully express how – even when coded-language or literacy issues remain. The formation that Southside Abbey's holy conversation provides is an attempt to answer what Professor of New Testament and Preaching at the School of Theology at Sewanee, Bill Brosend, describes as the “Homiletical Question,” “What does the Holy Spirit want these people to hear on this occasion?”²⁰⁶ Rather than try to discern the answer to that question in solitude, the holy conversation at Southside Abbey's worship fulfills this homiletical function, allowing people to answer the question by speaking what is on their hearts, in their minds, and what is troubling their spirit. This is especially refreshing with our community, many of whom have been told time-and-again what they are to think about and how they are to believe in God. Many of them have never been asked to share their thoughts, experiences, and testimonies about all that God has done for them. In this

205 Jennie Turrell, *Let Us Pray: A Little Kid's Guide to the Eucharist* (New York: Church Publishing, 2014), back cover.

206 William Brosend, Lecture: “Introduction” in *The Old Testament in Christian Preaching*, Summer, 2011. Drs. Howard and Brosend. The School of Theology, Sewanee, Tennessee, June 22.

way, we begin to see one another as created *Imago Dei*, aware that we all have something to contribute.

The shared leadership that the holy conversation allows is part of the formation of future leaders who will likewise lead the churches they serve in the future. Leadership development is a big part of the work of Southside Abbey, in part to replace the leaders who go on to found new or reform present communities based upon what they have learned in their time at Southside Abbey. Leadership development at Southside Abbey also builds up entrepreneurial leaders to serve the church in new ways, ways of which have not yet been dreamt.

Southside Abbey's traditional, formal "Christian Education" is admittedly limited. Children are formed in the liturgy. There is little time for "Friday School" before or after Southside Abbey's worship service due to school demands and bed times. There are several small groups of adults that meet with regularity, including three EfM groups. Beyond these EfM small groups, which are essentially "closed" for the season they run, there are "open" seasonal short burst opportunities for formation, again following the small group format.

This section on formation finishes with an image to which I have previously alluded. In my very first blog post for Episcopal Church Foundation's *Vital Posts*, I describe the phenomena of what I called "fishing together."²⁰⁷ From that article:

The way the Church has historically done outreach ministry is embodied in the familiar adage: Give a person a fish and he or she eats for a day; teach a person to fish and he or she eats for a lifetime. Through the Middle Ages the Church was in

²⁰⁷ Robert K. Leopold (as Bob Leopold), "Fishing Together," *Episcopal Church Foundation Vital Posts* (blog). August 7, 2013, <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/fishing-together/>.

the business of handing out proverbial – and sometimes literal – fish. In many pre-Modern places the Church still functions this way, giving out bread or other staples. The rise of Modernity saw the Church shift to the model of teaching people to fish: creating or staffing agencies to help people help themselves.

I don't want to downplay this important work, as these models have served [and continue to serve] countless people, but they are prone to the danger of thinking that the Church has a monopoly on fish or on the knowledge of fishing. The Church after Modernity might just have to be in the business of fishing with people.²⁰⁸

This is, in a metaphorical sense, what Southside Abbey is attempting in practice. We want to be fishing with people. Some people may know where the fish are biting, and some may know how to chum the water or bait the hook. Some may have a boat or waders; some may even feel called to clean the fish; but we all contribute something and that is the Gospel Good News that Southside Abbey tries to lift up.

208 Ibid.

Conclusion

This project began with a set of metrics that originated from the Southside Abbey community that were garnered from one-on-one and group conversations. Similarly, there was a set of metric expectations that came from outside the Southside Abbey community, unstated, but nevertheless deeply real. How could Southside Abbey possibly reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable? We, as a community, could not. Because of this, some might view Southside Abbey's work as having fallen short in some ways. I argue instead, that Southside Abbey is a success – not necessarily in the ways that many had hoped but precisely in the ways we, as a community, needed.

Through the three years and counting of Southside Abbey, the community has striven to be shaped by the biblical narrative, especially lifting up aspects of the biblical message so rarely heard in Southside Abbey's context – neighborhoods simultaneously consisting of affluent people not interested in religion and those experiencing homelessness living lives of faith by-in-large unrecognized by traditional church structures. During this time, food became a central aspect of the ministry – not just the holy food and drink of Holy Communion, but also the food served during worship and the food of the missional projects that take Southside Abbey community members out into Southside neighborhoods. In that sharing, we, as a community, are fed with the

presence of Christ. Southside Abbey has been authentically Anglican, locally adapting Anglican worship and theology to the community's context. We, at Southside Abbey, have practiced radical hospitality, including people wherever they are in their lives of faith. The people of Southside Abbey have done this work and continue to do it, primarily through relationship. Southside Abbey is at the beginning of a movement. It is something different and would be poorly judged by systems already in place. My mentor in undergraduate school, Dr. Mark Hulseth, might compare this phenomenon to an expert on cats. This cat-expert knows everything there is to know about cats: breeds, care, feeding, husbandry. When confronted with a dog, the cat-expert asks: “what kind of cat is that?”²⁰⁹ Southside Abbey is a “dog.”

Having one foot in the Episcopal Church and the other foot in the missional experimental church, I have done my best to translate between “cat” and “dog.” To continue this metaphor, the Southside Abbey community has done our best to “feed the hand that bites us,” cranking out liturgical resources and new structural models for the Episcopal Church what may not deem the Southside Abbey project “successful.” Though I could not fully understand it at the time (more than three years ago at the time of this writing), one truth that now rings clear from the discouraging phone conversation with Episcopal Church Missioner for New Church Starts and Missional Initiatives, Tom Brackett, is this: church planters are the individuals taking the risk.²¹⁰ If Southside Abbey “succeeds,” the credit will be shared with the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of East Tennessee and among all those who had a hand in the work. If Southside Abbey “fails,”

²⁰⁹ Hulseth often used this illustration, which I found helpful in discussing paradigmatic shifts.

²¹⁰ Thomas Brackett in discussion with the author, April 13, 2012.

the planter alone takes the blame.

Aquinas' method of disputation guides the congregational analysis, starting with the *contra* position: Southside Abbey did it wrong. We missed the implied Mission Statement (the one not written), but we have also fallen short of the community's mantra to leave “no leftovers.” People have fallen through the cracks, but this is the nature of church work – but pastors everywhere can take comfort in the fact that in baseball batting .400 (hitting forty percent of the time) results in a place in the hall of fame. As proud as Southside Abbey is to share its founding documents, the leadership could have fought harder to change some structures of the Episcopal Church. For example, the charter (and accompanying Article III in the Bylaws) could have allowed for the flexibility to incorporate with the State of Tennessee as something other than a religious institution or organize with the Diocese of East Tennessee as something other than a worshipping community.²¹¹ Episcopal institutions need to be ready to more nimbly change. There is an organization called the Freedom from Religion Foundation, dedicated in part to eradicating the tax-exempt status for churches.²¹² Now would be a great time to reorganize Southside Abbey and other Episcopal parishes as public-benefit, not-for-profit 501-c-3 tax exempt corporations. The tradeoff is, these public benefit nonprofits must actually benefit the public in ways that are not limited to religious outcomes. This requirement to be a “religious institution” or “worshipping community” seemingly pigeonholed Southside Abbey into doing and being something like other church

211 Southside Abbey, “Charter of Southside Abbey,” (2013), http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments_public/documents/3184445/Southside_Abbey_Charter.pdf.

212 Gaylor, Annie Laurie. comp. “State/Church FAQ” *Freedom From Religion Foundation* (2010), <http://ffrf.org/faq/feeds/item/12601-tax-exemption-of-churches>.

communities in Chattanooga. In whatever way Southside Abbey had been organized, worship would have been a large part of its community, but this legal flexibility may have allowed Southside Abbey to follow the Holy Spirit in ways the community could not imagine, especially in the earliest conversations. For example, what if the Southside Abbey community had discerned that food ministry would be paramount and corporate worship would be done in conjunction with other area Episcopal and Lutheran parishes? This is the type of flexibility that Southside Abbey lacks in having to keep a role for the diocese and file as a religious institution with the state. Despite these limitations in organization, leadership was able to define the members of Southside Abbey in quite a broad way. “Members of the worshipping community are communicants [who are] regular in attendance and [participate] in worship, service, and educational opportunities.”²¹³ This is a huge victory.

Another way the work of Southside Abbey might be viewed as having fallen short is in terms of budget. Despite being able to redefine sustainability mid-stream, the diocesan funds invested in Southside Abbey might be seen by some as a poor investment. When talks with Bishop George Young began, sustainability meant something different than the way Southside Abbey's community is using it now.²¹⁴ Despite this discrepancy, the work Southside Abbey is doing with the relatively little amount of money being spent to do it is laudable. The clergy's family is being provided for in the form of health insurance and pension payments. Nevertheless, Southside Abbey is not compensating a priest at the “diocesan minimum” and the budget is as lean as possible. Despite this

²¹³ Southside Abbey, “Bylaws of Southside Abbey,” (2013), http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments_public/documents/3184446/Southside_Abbey_Bylaws.pdf, Article IV, Section 1.

²¹⁴ April 16, 2012.

shortcoming, Southside Abbey declared 2014 a Jubilee year²¹⁵ and raised a remarkable \$38,801²¹⁶ to give away to those working, through the Holy Spirit, outside the worshipping community in line with the Biblical principle of Jubilee.²¹⁷

Perhaps the largest unspoken metric of which Southside Abbey fell short is the number of members, especially new members that Southside Abbey might bring to the Episcopal Church. The average weekly attendance is in the mid-forties, fluctuating wildly depending on the weather, as many of our communicants live outside. Southside Abbey has confirmed or received five new Episcopalians in three years, all occurring in the first year.²¹⁸ Since then, the community has not really pushed confirmation, as baptism is full inclusion, into the Body of Christ and Southside Abbey's community, and leadership wanted to avoid a two-tiered system of membership. As such, Southside Abbey has baptized seven new followers of Jesus into the household of God (only two of which were infants). Where confirmation numbers are on the low side, the number of members who participated in the "Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows"²¹⁹ has been in the double digits each time it has been offered at the yearly bishop's visitation. These people are full members of the Episcopal community as allowed for in Southside Abbey's bylaws²²⁰ and supported by the *Book of Common Prayer 1979's* theology of baptism as full inclusion in

215 Southside Abbey, "Southside Jubilee Fund" (2014), <http://southsideabbey.dioet.org/welcome/jubilee.html>.

216 Community Foundation for Greater Chattanooga, "Gifts and Grants History Reports," email Message to author, November 2, 2015.

217 Leviticus 25.

218 Palm "Friday," March 22, 2012.

219 *Book of Common Prayer* (1979), 413-419.

220 Southside Abbey, "Bylaws of Southside Abbey."

the community.²²¹

Southside Abbey has not, as its founders set out intending, swelled in ranks with an abundance of millennial generation “nones.” Though Southside Abbey has many relationships with those in the un- and anti-churched camps, many of whom view the work Southside Abbey does as a statistical outlier to the churches they “know,” have not yet joined the worshipping community. These relationships are exceedingly difficult to measure, especially on a parochial report. Among these non-churched millennials is a small group of immigrants from Sudan, who are Muslim and yet consider me in some ways their pastor – despite my unapologetically following and sharing the teachings of Jesus and *not* Muhammed – and Southside Abbey their worshipping community. Who besides the Holy Spirit might have seen these relationships forming? In these and other ways, Southside Abbey is a pastoral presence in the broader Southside of Chattanooga's community, even to those who do not view themselves as part of the Jesus Movement.

Where Southside Abbey has swelled in numbers is among the poor. Many of those experiencing homelessness and hunger who worship with the Southside Abbey community are not a part of any other worshipping community and thus might be classified as “nones.” Southside Abbey is their church home. They have so much to contribute, except financially. This change in our demographics might also be seen by some as “missing the mark.” For example, in its first year, Southside Abbey was overrun by young families with small children. Twenty-five children out of sixty-five worshippers was not an uncommon sight. The schedule worked for families who could come to worship after school and put children to bed after worship and dinner. During the second

221 *Book of Common Prayer* (1979), 298.

year, trust and relationship spread among those experiencing homelessness and hunger. It was clear that these followers of Jesus were coming for more than just the food. As outdoor neighbors began to participate more and more, the community noticed a disturbing trend: the young families were staying home in droves. In one-on-one interviews, Southside Abbey asked those who left the community their reason for leaving. The issue was almost always one of safety. As much as our community tried to explain these fears away or own up to the biblical reality that Jesus does not promise us safety (instead Jesus promises to be with us), this explanation did not assuage fears and many of the young families left. The Southside Abbey community met and said our prayers, engaging in conversation about Southside Abbey's identity and who it was being called to serve. Painfully, the Southside Abbey community reasoned together that the Holy Spirit was calling us to be in community with those whose presence might be upsetting to some. This was done with the full awareness that those experiencing homelessness cannot pay for the ministry of Southside Abbey in the same way young families might be able to, but Southside Abbey stepped out in faith to be the community God was calling us to be. These are the people with whom the Holy Spirit has blessed the Southside Abbey community.

During its third year, Southside Abbey achieved a kind of balance. There is a new cadre of involved young families who are a part of our community because we stepped out in faith to be a worshipping community of, by, for, and with the poor. Southside Abbey has the kind of diversity in our community often lifted up as an ideal. Doctors worship with those for whom literacy is a problem; rich and poor share Christ's table;

those who live in cars or tents or motels pass the peace with residents of Lookout Mountain; many ethnicities are represented in the prayers of the people, including black, brown, and white skin tones, and immigrants from Sudan, Kenya, Guatemala, and Russia; gender and sexuality spectrums are discussed in a safe space; young and old commune one another around the table; those on the autism spectrum or with epilepsy are part of the conversation about what they can do, not what need be done for them; priests and the priesthood of all believers share in the responsibilities of making eucharist together. This diversity includes a mishmash of people who would not normally be interacting with one another, coming together to worship God and be the Church. That is how Southside Abbey does it right. Southside Abbey has followed the Holy Spirit in truly contextual ways that have shaped the worshipping community and the broader community of Chattanooga's Southside. Most importantly, by following the Holy Spirit, Southside Abbey did things none of us could have imagined.

First, we are an Episcopal worshipping community primarily made up of the poor and working poor. School-teachers, full-time clergy, a college professor, and a general practice doctor are the highest paid people in the community, and many of those listed are in single-earner households. It is exciting to be a part of a community like this, where creativity is required to do the things the Holy Spirit is calling us to do, as this community can nearly never just write a check.

Next, through a strategic partnership with Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Hixson, Tennessee, Southside Abbey has been able to be an expression of the emergent church that helps to revitalize Trinity Lutheran as an expression of the institutional

church. When a relationship first began at Trinity Lutheran several years ago, they had seen a steady decline in numbers, having once been – as that community vividly remembers – the largest ELCA parish in four states (Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi). Clinging to a narrative of scarcity, they turned inward. Southside Abbey partnered with Trinity in several missional activities. First, Southside Abbey and Trinity Lutheran made lunches for elementary school students who live at the Country Hearth (the motel from the story with the sex workers). While students who receive lunch at no cost are on spring and fall break they may not have food to eat, so together with the Lutherans, Southside Abbey packed lunches so that each student would have food for the week out of school. This occurred at the same time as an Oktoberfest was held (where the Lutherans were wonderful partners).

Their whistle wetted for mission, the Lutherans wanted to do something for these and other children for Christmas and the annual Saint Nicholas Celebration was born. Each child gets a sack full of presents. Each family gets Christmas dinner to take home and a pack full of things government assistance programs will not pay for, which includes toilet paper and feminine hygiene products. (When Lisa Leopold heard that these things were not provided by government assistance, she asked, “What *man* wrote that law?”) Each child gets to go “shopping” for the significant adults in their life. To see these children pick out and wrap a football for their dad, perfume for their mother, or a scarf for their grandmother is really special, but the best part is when they run to these people, eyes beaming, and say, “I got this for you.” They understand the blessing that giving is. The Lutherans understood that blessing too. The story of the 2012 Saint Nicholas

Celebration spread among those who were not able to be there. Trinity Lutheran was on the road to recovery – doing God's work in the world, outside their walls. The real blessing of the story is that, after that first year's partnership settled down, Southside Abbey received a call from the congregational president,²²² Beth Painter, that Trinity ended the year with a five-figure budget surplus. They could not explain it except through their partnership with Southside Abbey through the Holy Spirit. Being the wonderfully faithful followers of Jesus they are, they are giving Southside Abbey a portion of the money back over a three-year period. This is a story that needs to be told: institutional churches like Trinity Lutheran are being revitalized through partnerships with missional churches like Southside Abbey, and missional churches like Southside Abbey are being blessed with the funds to keep doing mission by institutional churches like Trinity Lutheran.

The stories that the Southside Abbey experience has produced have caused biblical stories to come alive. The Southside Abbey community has seen the return of the prodigal son. One week the then-seminarian, Sarah Weedon, invited the worshipping community to reflect on things we hold in tension as part of our holy conversation. When she called us back together from our conversations, she asked people to share, as they felt called, with the wider community. That's when Chris nervously stood up. Chris is a big guy, whose hugs cause me to wonder if one of my ribs might snap. A blue teardrop tattoo on his cheek brands him as someone who has paid a debt to society. He had been a part of our community for only a few weeks when this story took place. He shared – with shaking in his voice – the things he holds in tension: “On the one hand, I'm trying to walk

²²² A Lutheran role similar to the Episcopalian “senior warden.”

the good walk. I'm trying to be a good man – the kind of man that my grandmother would be proud of. I'm trying to follow Jesus and not do some of those bad things I have done in the past. On the other hand, I'm homeless and an ex-con. I spent twenty-five years in the pen. Not that I want to live that kind of life ever again or the kind of life that put me there, but... people have these expectations of me – of what kind of man I am – because I'm homeless and I've done time. But I want to be good. I want to do good.”²²³ What could those in attendance add to that? Chris's story is the story of the prodigal's return. How could the community respond except to welcome him with open arms and a fatted calf?

We have even seen resurrection. Sharing the following story could be exploitative, as it is not Southside Abbey's story, but members of the community were involved, so it became the community's story too. This was originally posted on ECF's

Vital Posts:

Several nights ago, I was startled by a knock at the door. While our house is used to a steady stream of visitors, this knock was startling as it came at nearly one o'clock in the morning. As I drew back the curtain to espy my visitor, I knew who it would be. Yup, sure enough, it was him.

I had met him two days previous when a well-spoken, well-meaning, over-churched neighbor brought him to my door. This neighbor had encountered the man on our diverse street and had engaged him in conversation. In the fifty or so words of English he knows, the man – I can't use his name – told my neighbor that he had been brought to this country from Darfur, Sudan. He had told my neighbor that Muslims had killed his whole family and that Christians were the people who brought him here and because of this... he wanted to become a Christian. My neighbor, well-spoken and well-meaning as he is, is done with just about all things Church (though he did make an appearance at last year's Easter Brunch and Lamb-B-Q), so he brought the man to me. We talked briefly and I told him I would follow up with an Episcopal priest in our area who speaks

²²³ Robert K. Leopold (as Bob Leopold), “What Am I Thankful For?” *Episcopal Church Foundation Vital Posts* (blog), November 26, 2014, <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/what-am-i-thankful-for/>.

Arabic, but that was all during normal working hours.

This was one o'clock in the morning and here he stood! I invited him in. What else could I do? In the fifty or so words of English that he spoke the man explained to me that I had to come over to his house right then. I was reassured that there was no emergency, but he did tell me that I had to come or he would never come to my house again. I don't respond well to ultimatums – my contrarian nature prevents that – but I know just what a huge deal hospitality is in his culture, so I made an exception. What really got me moving was when the man said, “You pastor? You pastor!” He reminded me – as his language would allow – if I am a pastor, then I had better act like it...

Thankfully, I live in a small intentional community and I was able to take my brother-in-Christ and Southside Abbey's Theologian-in-Residence, Nik Forti, with me. We approached the man's house and there were decorations on the door: a gold plastic Christmas wreath. When we entered, the holiday theme continued with festive teddy bears, flowers, and, displayed in a place of prominence, an American flag. It was surreal to think about this man who had lived through unimaginable violence decorating his apartment with wreaths, flowers, and bears, oh my.

The man welcomed us in and commanded us, “Sit down!” I don't know if this is a cultural thing, but he seems to shout everything he says. He disappeared into the kitchen only to return with glasses and a tray full of Fanta of various flavors, guava nectar, and some sort of cola with Spanish writing on the side. I could feel my blood sugar rising, but again, there was that cultural thing of accepting hospitality. Again the man disappeared into the kitchen. Nik and I began to drink what we were given. The whole place reeked of cigarette smoke. The man returned from the kitchen, bearing bowls and plates of food that smelled incredible. It was starting not to matter that it was approaching two o'clock in the morning.

He disappeared into a different room and emerged with another man, who he introduced as his brother. Wait!?! Didn't he say that his whole family was killed back in Sudan? That is what he said, because that is what he thought until that evening, when his brother just showed up at his house. That's when it hit me: this was a welcome home party for a brother who was thought dead. The man didn't have anyone else to invite. Nik and I were the guests dragged in off the street for the celebratory banquet. Suddenly, the hour didn't matter, the cigarette smoke didn't matter, my blood sugar didn't matter. What else could we do but keep the feast?²²⁴

²²⁴ Robert K. Leopold (as Bob Leopold), “You Pastor? You Pastor!” *Episcopal Church Foundation Vital Posts* (blog). December 11, 2013, <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/you-pastor-you-pastor/>.

At Southside Abbey, the biblical stories about return and resurrection have skin on them.

These and all of Southside Abbey's stories and experiences point to the fact that the community formed there is real – a real worshipping community; a real church.

“Real” is a word that gets bandied about, but in this instance it is helpful. The book, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, contains a passage on what makes the eponymous rabbit “real” and seems to fit Southside Abbey:

“Real isn't how you are made,” said the Skin Horse. “It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.”

“Does it hurt?” asked the Rabbit.

“Sometimes,” said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. “When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.”

“Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,” he asked, “or bit by bit?”

“It doesn't happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.”²²⁵

So, here we are: a community of people not easily broken, with few sharp edges, who do not have to be carefully kept. Here we are: hair loved off, eyes dropped out, with joints, rather shabby. Here we are: we are real, and we cannot be ugly except by those who do not understand what we are about.

At the conclusion of this paper, there is a biblical question for this age. It is the question that God asks Ezekiel when Ezekiel is standing in the Valley of the Dry Bones of Israel: “Mortal, can these bones live?”²²⁶ Can the Episcopal Church continue? At a loss rate of seven percent every five years, bound to be exacerbated by the deaths of the Baby

²²⁵ Margery Williams, *The Velveteen Rabbit or How Toys Become Real: Reprint of the 1922 Original with Illustrations by William Nicholson* (New York: Avon Books, 1975), 12-13.

²²⁶ Ezekiel 37:3.

Boomers and those generations prior, can the bones left in the Episcopal Church live?

Ezekiel's answer is my answer, "O Lord God, you know."²²⁷

An ever-present and ever-renewing learning is that the Holy Spirit can do whatever the Holy Spirit wants to do. One young writer calling the Episcopal Church back to our roots in this regard is Dwight Zscheile. In his book, *People of the Way: Renewing Episcopal Identity*, he writes, "Trends point to a significantly changed religious situation in America. We have entered a new apostolic age, where the church's relationship to its surrounding environment more closely resembles the first few centuries of the church's existence."²²⁸ On some days this can be seen as an exciting and invigorating reality: think of all the good done by the counter-cultural Early Church. What is exciting about this new apostolic age is, like the first apostolic age, it seems as if anything is possible – as if the Holy Spirit is moving through creation and people are being used wherever they are and wherever they come from. Consider scholars like Dwight Zscheile himself who, according to our correspondence, was confirmed an Episcopalian in 2000,²²⁹ having grown up a "none."²³⁰ According to his *Curriculum Vitae*, he has written two books, five scholarly articles, and taught a seminary course on Episcopal identity.²³¹ That this newcomer to the Episcopal Church would be so prolific in

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Dwight J. Zscheile, *People of the Way: Renewing Episcopal Identity*. (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2012), 39.

²²⁹ Dwight J. Zscheile, email message to author, January 15, 2015.

²³⁰ Dwight J. Zscheile, "Address to Diocese of East Tennessee 2015 Convention," Holiday Inn, World's Fair Park, Knoxville, Tennessee. (February 7, 2015).

²³¹ Dwight J. Zscheile, "Curriculum Vitae," (May 2013), http://www.luthersem.edu/photos/facultypublish/Cvs/Dwight_Zscheile_CV.pdf.

his writing could be seen as a weakness in our denomination, or it could be seen as a strength. In this regard, the Episcopal Church wonderfully allows the Holy Spirit to lead. This is what this whole thesis project and Southside Abbey has been about: finding the Holy Spirit, while being found by the Holy Spirit.

If we (Southside Abbey, the Episcopal Church, followers of Jesus) can be who we are called to be by the Holy Spirit, these bones can live. It may be painful. We may be called to give up some of the things we love, but this postmodern or post-something age, may provide an opportunity to be the expression of Christianity the Holy Spirit has called us to be for eons. In surveying the future landscape of the Lutheran and Episcopal Churches, one can faintly make out more successes along the lines of the aforementioned partnership between Southside Abbey and Trinity Lutheran. Even more faintly, there are a few places functioning like cathedrals working in conjunction with smaller cells of missional effort like Southside Abbey.

Something that might hold the Episcopal Church back is our leadership in this “Secular Age.” According to the “Episcopal Congregations Overview: Findings from the 2008 Faith Communities Today Survey,” the “Areas of ministry where clergy spend the most time,” are:

- Planning and leading worship
- Teaching people about the faith and the Bible
- Pastoral care
- Administration & committee meetings
- Developing and promoting a vision & purpose²³²

While the “Areas of ministry where clergy spend the least time include”:

232 Evangelism and Congregational Life Center, “Episcopal Congregations Overview: Findings from the 2008 Faith Communities Today Survey (New York: Episcopal Church Center, March 2009), https://faithcommunitiestoday.org/sites/all/themes/factzen4/files/Episcopal_Overview_FACT_2008.pdf.

Contacting inactive persons in the congregation (least overall)
 Dealing with conflict;
 Organizing and leading small groups; and
 Evangelism and recruitment.²³³

Southside Abbey has intuitively flipped these areas in a way that might be of great benefit to the wider Episcopal Church. As priest and pastor to Southside Abbey, much of my time is spent doing one-on-ones with people who are not yet or no longer active in the community, organizing and leading small groups, and in efforts at relationship-based evangelism and recruitment. Similarly, relatively little of the clergy-person's time is spent planning and leading worship or on administration and committee meetings. To promote honesty, a little sign sits on my desk, indicting me with the question: "Are you doing something a lay person could be doing better?"

Another problem with our leadership is brilliantly outlined in Edwin Freidman's *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*. Rabbi Friedman writes: "There exists throughout America today a rampant sabotaging of leaders who try to stand tall amid the raging anxiety-storms of our time."²³⁴ This sabotage is rampant in our churches. We are scared to offend. Friedman writes "about the need for clarity and decisiveness in a civilization that inhibits the development of leaders with clarity and decisiveness."²³⁵ It is not too late to change how we lead and engage in servant leadership modeled so well by Jesus.

Opportunities for further study abound. Much of the smaller theses within this

233 Ibid.

234 Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Seabury Books, 2007), 2.

235 Ibid., 2.

thesis will be put to the test time after time as Southside Abbey continues. There is a fantastic opportunity to put together a network of missional lay and clergy leaders to learn from one another. Through the Fellowship Partners Program of the Episcopal Church Foundation, such a missional network is being built. Southside Abbey already has burgeoning relationships with missional communities in Minnesota with more work planned in Alabama, Virginia, North Carolina, Illinois, Western Michigan, West Tennessee, Central Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Maryland, Colorado, and California.

The Episcopal Church needs to invest in leaders who are willing to try something bold. Now is not the time to play it safe. The refrain of my speaking engagements is this: “You can do it too!” Southside Abbey is a quirky little worshipping community, but admittedly it is not that special. Even more, I am not that special. We are all God's favorite. You *can* do it! Whatever it is, it need not look like Southside Abbey, in fact it probably should not, because – unless you are doing it on the Southside of Chattanooga – that is not your context. Southside Abbey is *a* way, not *the* way. The work of Southside Abbey and its growing pains can be a learning tool to help others on their way. How is the Holy Spirit calling you to be contextual in your community? Might you benefit from some community organizing tactics? What is the Holy Spirit doing in your context? Now is the time to get on board.

Many people had many presuppositions about Southside Abbey. The worshipping community was overwhelmed by its initial success and shocked by the change in demographics midstream. Some might say that Southside Abbey did it wrong. But through these challenges, Southside Abbey has been prayerfully following the Holy Spirit

to the most unexpected places, with the most unexpected companions. In that regard, the Southside Abbey community did it exactly right.

Appendix 1 –
ExecutiveInsight Report for Zip 37408

The NEW ExecutiveInsite Report

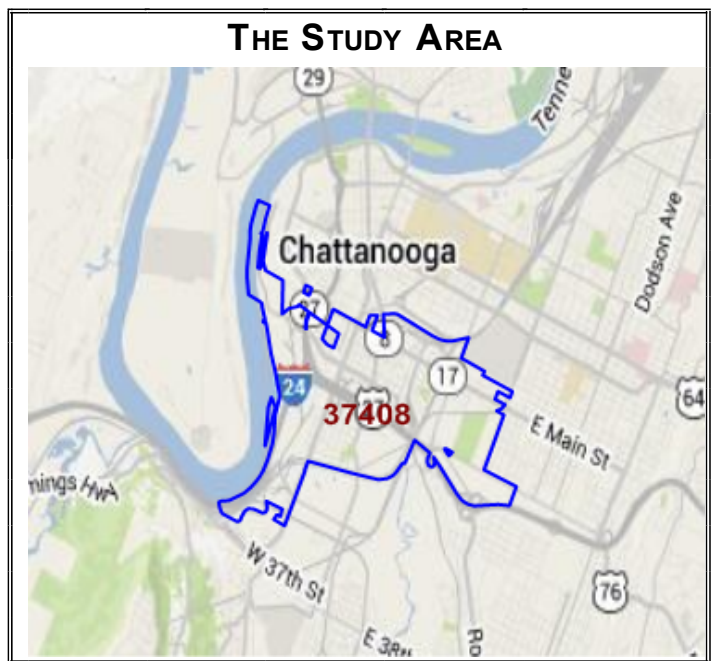
Prepared for: Episcopal Church Center
 Study area: ZipCode:37408

Base State: TENNESSEE
 Current Year Estimate: 2013
 5 Year Projection: 2018
 Date: 10/7/2013
 Semi-Annual Projection: Spring

This ExecutiveInsite Report has been prepared for Episcopal Church Center. Its purpose is to “tell the demographic story” of the defined geographic study area. ExecutiveInsite integrates narrative analysis with data tables and graphs. Playing on the report name, it includes 12 “Insites” into the study area’s story. It includes both demographic and beliefs and practices data.

ExecutiveInsite is intended to give an overview analysis of the defined geographic study area. A defined study area can be a region, a zip code, a county or some custom defined geographic area such as a radius or a user defined polygon. The area of study is displayed in the map below.

THE 12 INSITES	
INSITE	PAGE
Insite #1: Population, Household Trends	2
Insite #2: Racial/Ethnic Trends	3
Insite #3: Age Trends	4
Insite #4: School Aged Children Trends	6
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Insite #9: Employment and Occupations	12
Insite #10: Mosaic Household Types	13
Insite #11: Charitable Giving Practices	14
Insite #12: Religious Practices	15



More Information

Please refer to the last page of the report for additional notes and interpretation aides in reading the report.

Not all of the demographic variables available in the MI System are found in this report. The FullInsite Report will give a more comprehensive view of an area’s demographics and ViewPoint a fuller view of its beliefs and practices.

INSITE #1: POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

Population:

The estimated 2013 population within the study area is 1,606. The 2018 projection would see the area grow by 330 to a total population of 1,936. The population within the study area is growing somewhat faster than the statewide growth rate. While the study area is projected to grow by 20.5% in the next five years, the state is projected to grow by 4.8%. The study area's estimated average change rate is 4.1%.

Households:

The households within the community are growing faster than the population, thus the average population per household in 2010 was 2.18 but by 2018 it is projected to be 2.13. Compare this to the statewide average which for the current year is estimated at 2.54 persons per household.

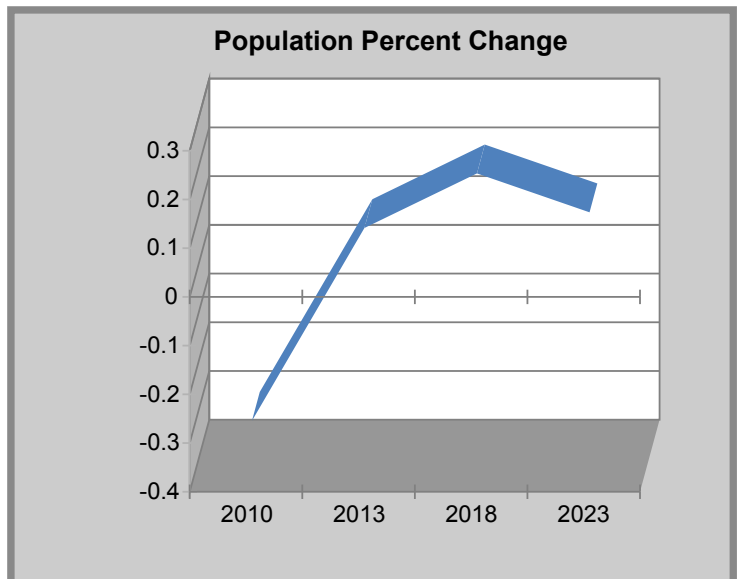
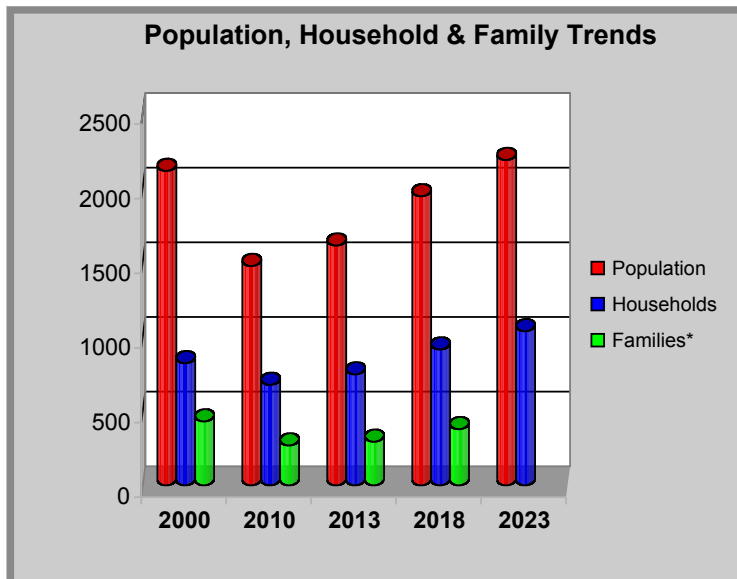
Population Per Household

Population per Household: The relationship between population and households provides a hint about how the community is changing. When population grows faster than households, it suggests an increase in the persons per household. This can only happen when more persons are added either by birth or other process such as young adults in multiple roommate households or young adults returning to live with parents. In some communities this can occur when multiple families live in the same dwelling unit.

Family Households:

Family households provide an additional hint about the changing dynamics of a community. If family household growth follows population growth, then it would be reasonable to assume that the increasing population per household comes from additional children. This is the case within the the study area. Family households are growing as fast as the population suggesting that the increasing population per household is from additional children.

<i>Population/Households & Family Trends</i>					
	2000	2010	2013	2018	2023
Population	2,106	1,469	1,606	1,936	2,179
Population Change		-637	137	330	243
Percent Change		-30.2%	9.3%	20.5%	12.6%
Households	818	673	743	910	1,032
Households Change		-145	70	167	1,032
Percent Change		-17.7%	10.4%	22.5%	13.4%
Population / Households	2.57	2.18	2.16	2.13	2.11
Population / Households Change		0	0	0	0
Percent Change		-15.2%	-1.0%	-1.6%	-0.8%
Families	428	267	292	376	
Families Change		-161	25	84	
Percent Change		-37.6%	9.4%	28.8%	

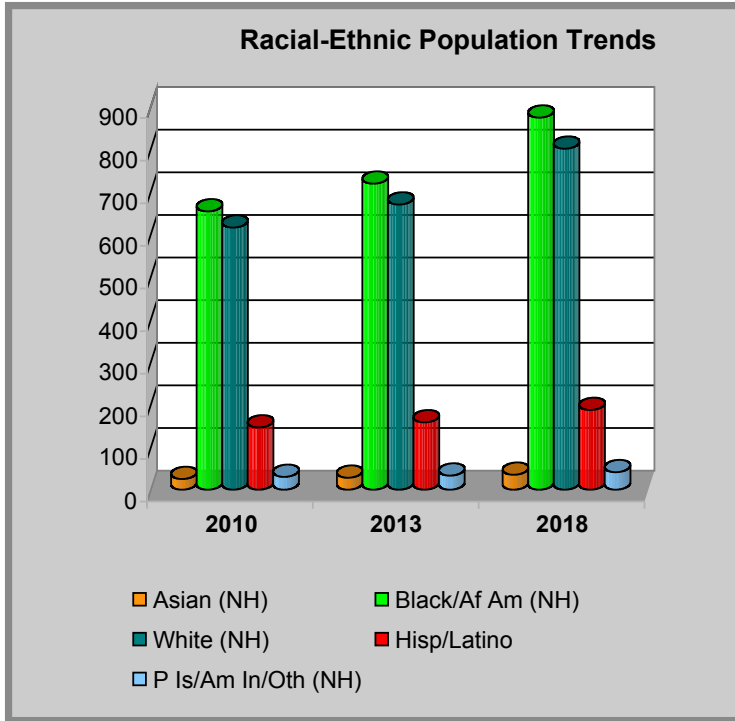


NOTE: Family Household data is not projected out 10 years.

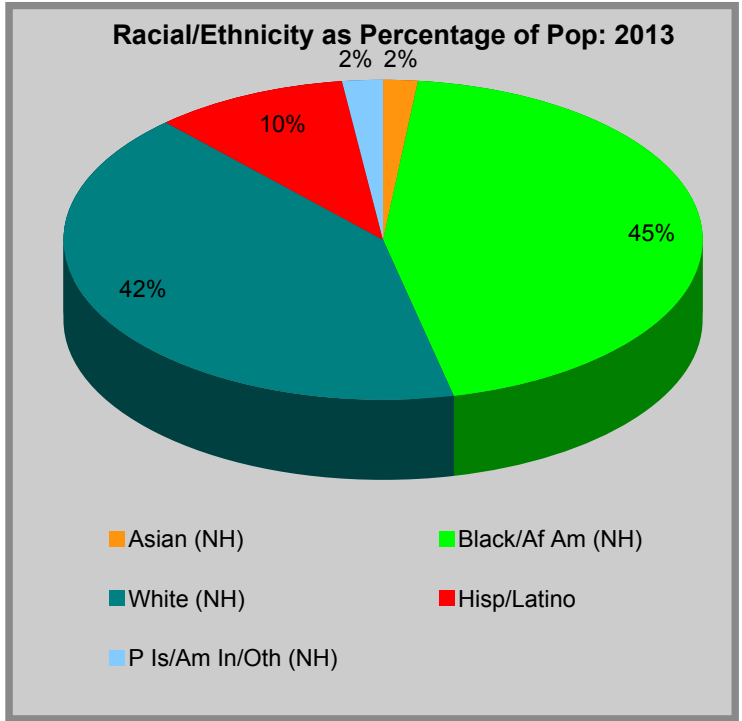
INSITE #2: RACIAL-ETHNIC TRENDS

The US population's racial-ethnic diversity is continually adding new and rich cultural mixes. This data considers the five groups for which trending information is available. Please note that several groups are aggregated into a single category due to their smaller size. Those persons who indicated Hispanic or Latino ethnicity along with a racial category have been separated into a Hispanic or Latino category.

The Population: Racial/Ethnic Trends table provides the actual numbers and percentage of the total population for each of the five racial/ethnic categories. Pay special attention to the final column on the right. This will quickly indicate the direction of change from the last census to the current five year projection.



The Racial Ethnic Trends graph displays history and projected change by each racial/ethnic group.



This chart shows the percentage of each group for the current year estimate.

The percentage of the population...

Asian (Non-Hisp) is projected to remain about the same over the next five years.

Black/African American (Non-Hisp) is projected to remain about the same over the next five years.

White (Non-Hisp) is projected to remain about the same over the next five years.

Hispanic or Latino is projected to remain about the same over the next five years.

Race and Ethnicity	2010	2013	2018	2010%	2013 %	2018 %	2010 to 2018 Change
Asian (NH)	25	28	35	1.70%	1.74%	1.81%	0.11%
Black/Afr Amer (NH)	653	718	873	44.45%	44.71%	45.09%	0.64%
White (NH)	615	669	800	41.87%	41.66%	41.32%	-0.54%
Hispanic/Latino	146	158	187	9.94%	9.84%	9.66%	-0.28%
P Is/Am In/Oth (NH)	30	33	41	2.04%	2.05%	2.12%	0.08%
Totals:	1,469	1,606	1,936				

INSITE #3: AGE TRENDS

A community's age structure and how it is changing is an important part of its story. Overall, the American Population has been aging as the Baby Boomers progress through each phase of life. This has been abetted by episodes of declining live births. However this picture may particularize differently from community to community. There are communities in the US where the average age is lower than some others. In other cases, there is a clear shift toward senior years as the Boomers enter their retirement years.

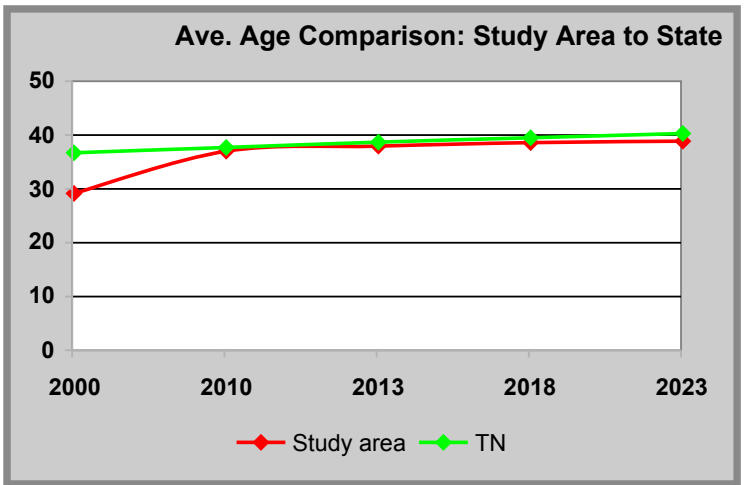
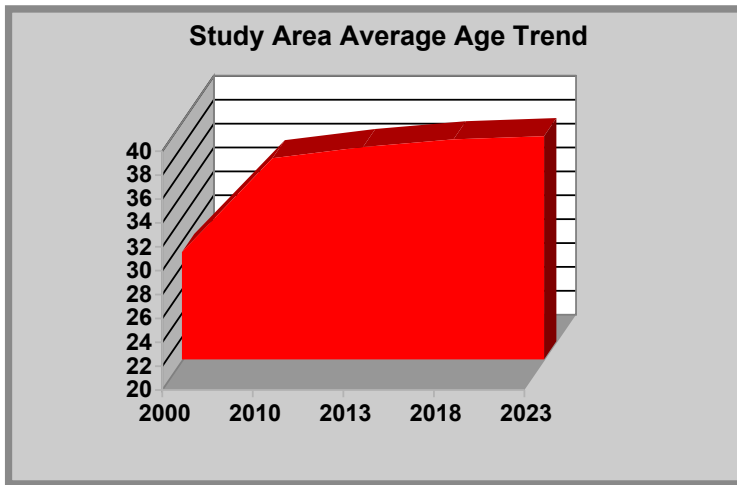
The Age Trend Insite explores two variables: Average age and Phase of Life.

Average Age Trends provides five important snapshots of a community from five data points; the 2000 census, the last census, the current year estimate, the five year projection and the ten year forecast. These five numbers will indicate the aging direction of a community.

The Phase of Life Trends breaks the population into seven life phases that the population passes through in its life time.

AGE

<i>Average Age Trends</i>	2000	2010	2013	2018	2023
Average Age: Study Area	29.16	37.02	37.95	38.60	38.86
Percent Change		26.9%	2.5%	1.7%	0.7%
Average Age: TN	36.72	37.71	38.69	39.51	40.29
Percent Change		2.7%	2.6%	2.1%	2.0%
Comparative Index	79	98	98	98	96
Median Age: Study Area	25	33	35	37	39



Summary of Average Age Findings:

The Average Age Trend chart shows both history and projection of the change in average age in the study area. The average age of the study area has been rising for several years. It is projected to rise over the next five years.

A comparison to the average age of the state helps to contextualize the significance of the average age of the study area and its history and projection. In the graph above, the study area and state are laid out side by side. The state's average age is estimated to be about the same as the study area.

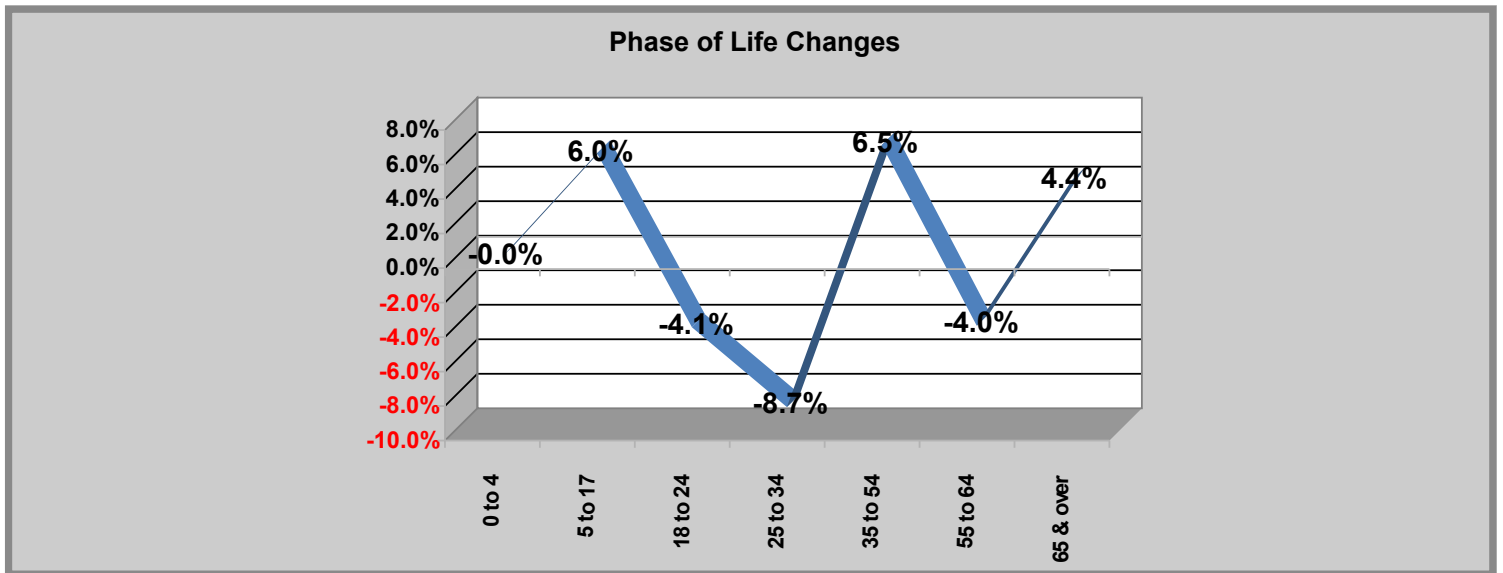
INSITE #3: AGE TRENDS (continued)

PHASE OF LIFE

The Phase of Life analysis provides insight into the age distribution of a population across the different stages of life experience. It can reveal a community in transition.

Pay special attention to the color codes of the Change column (far right below). It will immediately indicate which phases are increasing or decreasing as a percentage of the population.

Phase of Life	2010	2013	2018	2023	2010%	2013%	2018%	2023%	Estimated 10 Year Change 2013 - 2023
Before Formal Schooling									
Ages 0 to 4	89	113	148	153	6.1%	7.0%	7.6%	7.0%	0.0%
Required Formal Schooling									
Ages 5 to 17	166	186	272	383	11.3%	11.6%	14.0%	17.6%	6.0%
College/Career Starts									
Ages 18 to 24	199	174	148	147	13.5%	10.8%	7.6%	6.7%	-4.1%
Singles & Young Families									
Ages 25 to 34	303	310	296	231	20.6%	19.3%	15.3%	10.6%	-8.7%
Families & Empty Nesters									
Ages 35 to 54	354	411	555	699	24.1%	25.6%	28.7%	32.1%	6.5%
Enrichment Years Sing/Couples									
Ages 55 to 64	196	216	226	206	13.3%	13.5%	11.7%	9.4%	-4.0%
Retirement Opportunities									
Age 65 and over	162	195	292	361	11.0%	12.1%	15.1%	16.6%	4.4%



Summary of Phase of Life Findings:

Phase of Life changes reflect the age profile of a community. On average, it takes 2.1 children per woman to replace both mother and father. If the percentage of the population under 20 is declining as a percentage of the total it is likely that the community will see an increase in the more senior aged population possibly due to a decline in birth rates.

In this study area children 17 years of age and younger are increasing as a percentage of the total population. Considering the other end of the phases of life, adults 55 years of age and older are increasing as a percentage of the total population.

In summary it may be that the community is experiencing some growth of children of school age.

INSITE #4: SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN TRENDS

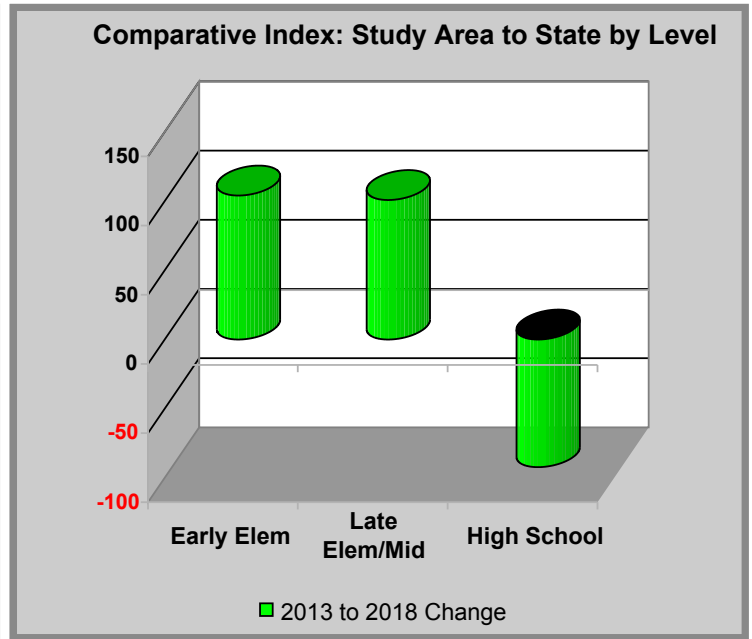
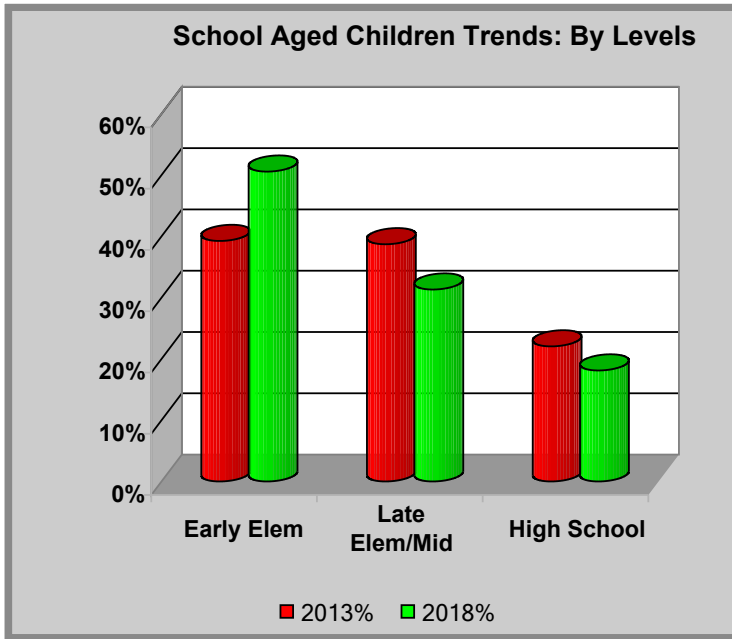
Children are the future! Understanding their specific population dynamics is critical for all planners of social and/or educational services. The "School Aged Children" variable is a subset of the "Required Formal Schooling" segment in the Phase of Life profile. It allows one to zoom in more closely on the children who are of formal schooling age.

The school aged population includes all school aged children including those enrolled in public and private schools, those home schooled and children in institutions.

The School Aged Children variable provides a snapshot of three levels of the population that comprise school age children. The three levels roughly correspond to the following.

- Elementary grades
- Intermediate/Middle School grades
- High School Grades

School Aged Children	2010	2013	2018	2010%	2013%	2018%	Estimated 5 Year Change 2013 - 2018
Early Elementary Ages 5 to 9	62	73	134	37.1%	39.2%	50.6%	11.3%
Late Elementary-Middle School Ages 10 to 14	67	72	83	40.1%	38.7%	31.3%	-7.4%
High School Ages 15 to 17	38	41	48	22.8%	22.0%	18.1%	-3.9%



Summary of School Aged Children Findings:

Early Elementary children ages 5 to 9 are projected to increase as a percentage of children between 5 and 17 by 11.3%.

Late Elementary to Middle School aged children ages 10 to 14 are declining as a percentage of children between 5 and 17 by -7.4%.

High School aged children 15 to 17 are declining as a percentage of children between 5 and 17 by -3.9%.

Overall, children are aging through but there is some evidence of a resurgence of children in the younger years.

INSITE #5: HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY INCOME TRENDS

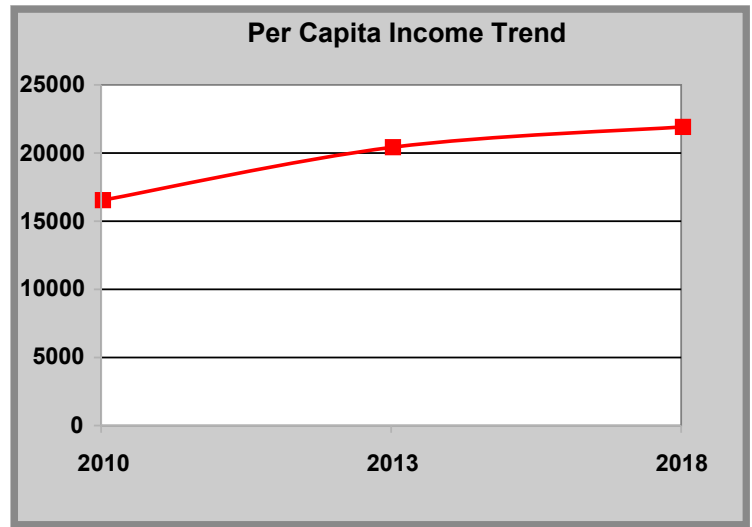
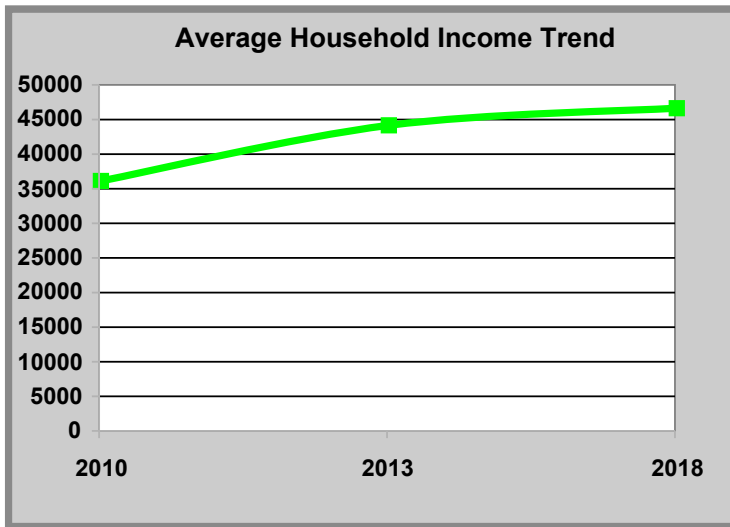
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND PER CAPITA INCOME

Average Household Income and Per Capita Income indicate the level of financial resources within a community. Average Household income reflects the average income for each household, whether family or non-family.

In this study area, the estimated current year average household income is \$44,166. The average household income is projected to grow by 5.6% to \$46,638.

Per Capita Income is a measure of the average income of all persons within a household. For family households, this would include all children. It does not mean that each person actually contributes to the average income from work. It is calculated by dividing the aggregate household income by the population.

The estimated per capita income for the current year is \$20,433. The Per Capita Income is projected to grow by 7.3% to \$21,922.



Income Trends	2010	2013	2018	2010%	2013%	2018%	Estimated 5 Year Change 2013 - 2018
Households							
Less than \$10,000	205	172	180	30.5%	23.1%	19.8%	-3.3%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	72	94	115	10.7%	12.7%	12.7%	0.0%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	113	106	129	16.8%	14.3%	14.2%	0.0%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	99	68	90	14.7%	9.2%	9.9%	0.8%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	47	94	121	7.0%	12.7%	13.3%	0.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	62	59	67	9.2%	7.9%	7.4%	-0.6%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	34	87	107	5.1%	11.7%	11.8%	0.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	16	38	65	2.4%	5.1%	7.2%	2.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	14	7	12	2.1%	0.9%	1.3%	0.4%
\$200,000 or more	11	18	21	1.6%	2.4%	2.3%	-0.1%
Totals	673	743	907				

INSITE #5: HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY INCOME TRENDS (continued)

FAMILY INCOME

Family income is a sub-set of household income. It excludes non-family households. Family households include two or more persons who are related and living in the same dwelling unit. Children are more likely to live in family households. Non-family households are households in which two or more persons live in the same dwelling unit but are unrelated.

The number of families with annual incomes above \$100,000 is projected to decline over the next five years. For the current year, it is estimated that 5.1% of all family incomes exceed \$100,000 per year. In five years that number is projected to be 5.1%.

<i>Income Trends</i>	2013	2018	2013%	2018%	Estimated 5 Year Change 2013 - 2018
Families					
Less than \$10,000	108	140	36.9%	37.2%	0.37%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	30	38	10.2%	10.1%	-0.13%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	62	80	21.2%	21.3%	0.12%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	33	44	11.3%	11.7%	0.44%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	33	42	11.3%	11.2%	-0.09%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	2	2	0.7%	0.5%	-0.15%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	10	11	3.4%	2.9%	-0.49%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2	2	0.7%	0.5%	-0.15%
\$150,000-\$199,999	13	17	4.4%	4.5%	0.08%
\$200,000 or more	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%
Totals	293	376			

INSITE #6: HOUSEHOLDS AND CHILDREN TRENDS

Diversity of child rearing environments is increasing along with the many other types of growing diversity in the US. To understand this, we begin with the types of households that exist in a community. There are...

- family households with children under 18
- family households without children under 18

The concern of this analysis is family households with children under 18. Of the types of family households with children there are...

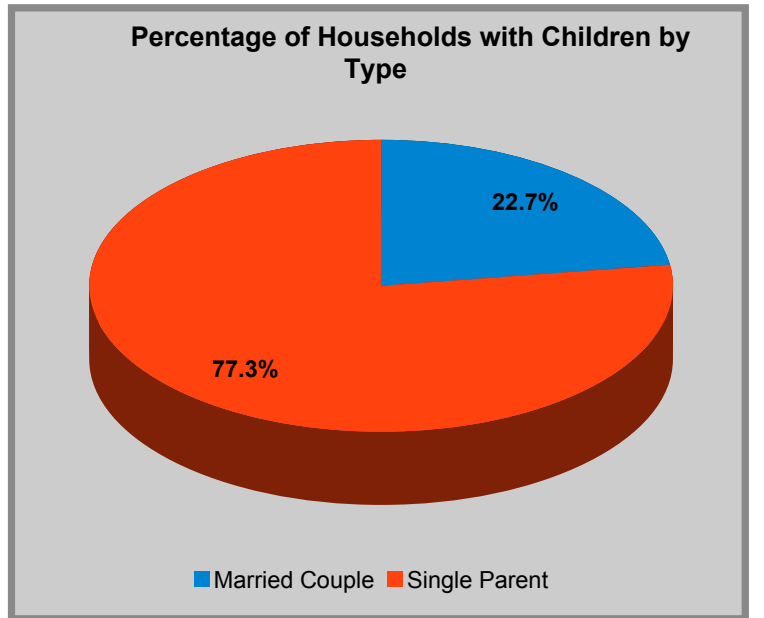
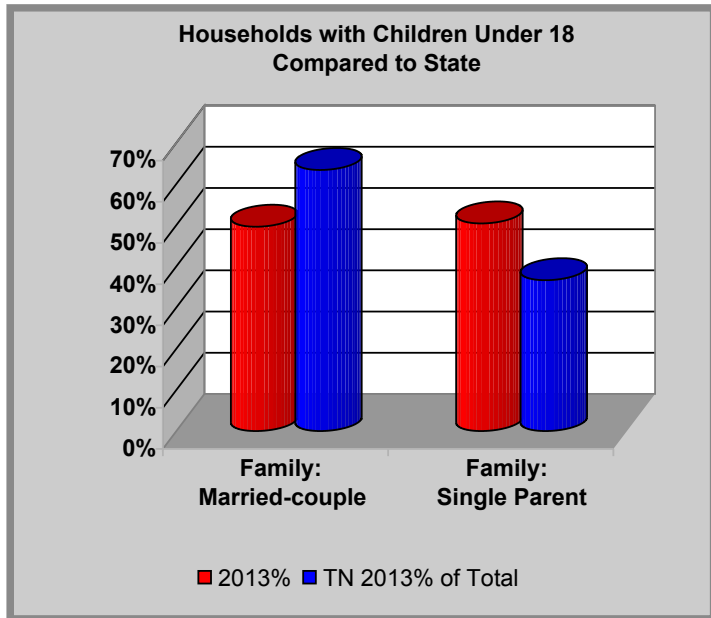
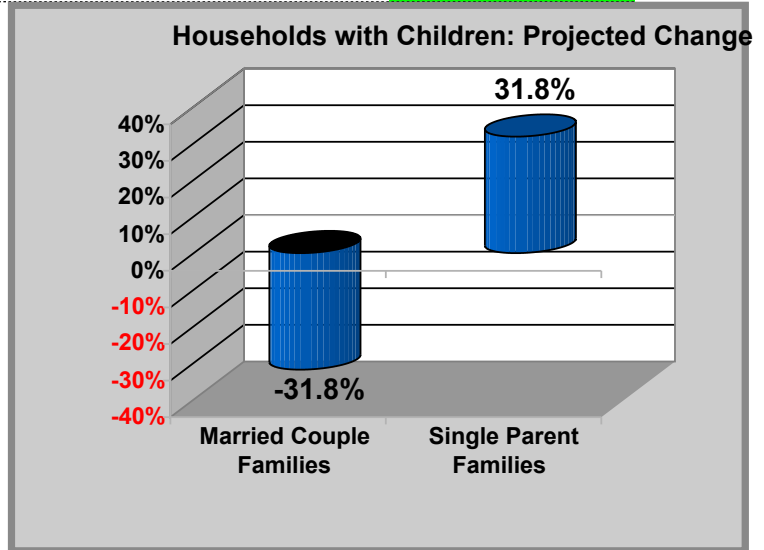
- Married couple families
- Single parent families (father or mother)

These two are reported for the study area in the table below.

Households	2010	2013	2018	2010%	2013%	2018%	Estimated 5 Year Change 2013 - 2018
Households with Children under 18							
Married Couple	62	32	32	49.6%	22.7%	17.8%	-31.8%
Single Parent	63	109	148	50.4%	77.3%	82.2%	31.8%

Of the households with children under 18, married couple households are decreasing as a percentage while single parent households are increasing. The graph to the right illustrates this. Bars above the 0% point indicate a family type that is increasing while bars below 0% is decreasing. This provides "insite" into how family households and structures with children are changing in the study area.

A comparison to the state reveals to what extent this community is similar or dissimilar to the state as a whole. The study area's married couple households with children are dissimilar to the state's profile. The percentage of single parent households with children is greater than the state.



INSITE #7: MARITAL STATUS TRENDS

MARITAL STATUS BY TYPE

Population by Marital Status considers the number and percentage of persons 15 years of age and greater by their current marital status. Both trend information as well as a comparison to the study area's state marital status types provides two different views of this social reality.

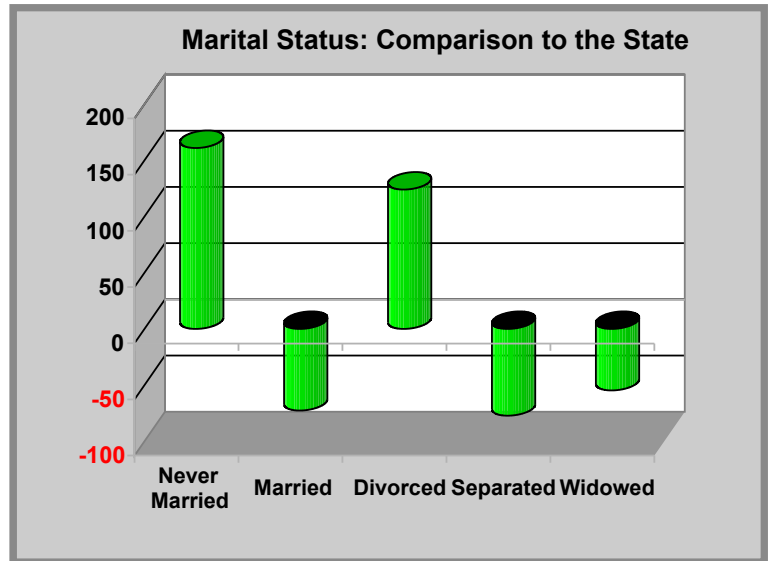
Marital types reported include..

- Never Married (Singles)
- Currently Married
- Divorced
- Separated
- Widowed

	2010	2013	2018	2010%	2013%	2018%	2010 to 2018 Change
Population by Marital Status: Age 15+							
Never Married	513	553	651	40.5%	40.8%	41.2%	0.7%
Married	500	533	620	39.5%	39.3%	39.2%	-0.2%
Divorced	187	198	227	14.8%	14.6%	14.4%	-0.4%
Separated	22	24	29	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	0.1%
Widowed	45	48	54	3.6%	3.5%	3.4%	-0.1%

In this community, the current year estimate of marital status reveals a community of adults less likely to be married than the state average for adults. The percentage single, never married in the study area is higher than the state average for adults 15 years and older. Divorce is more prevalent than the state wide average.

The graph to the right illustrates the marital status comparison of the study area to the state. Bars above the 0% point line indicate a marital status type that is more prevalent than the state average while bars below the 0% are below the state average. The length of the bars represent the strength of the difference. They are not percentages.



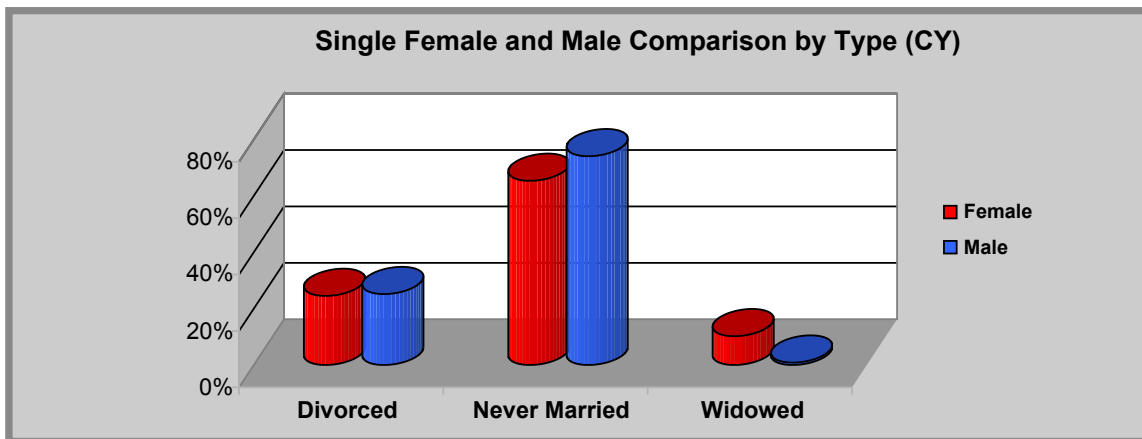
MARITAL STATUS BY FEMALE AND MALE

Who is more likely to be unmarried, women or men in this community? Consider these findings about this study area:

Women 15 years and older are less likely to be single, never married than men.

Women 15 years and older are about as likely to be divorced as men.

Women 15 years and older are more likely to be widowed than men.

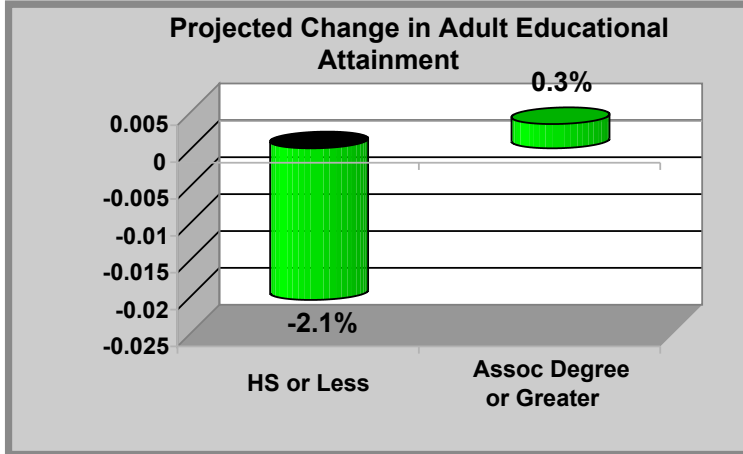


INSITE #8: ADULT EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The level of educational attainment of a community's adult population is an important indicator of its opportunities and challenges. This analysis will look at the Adult Educational Attainment from three perspectives

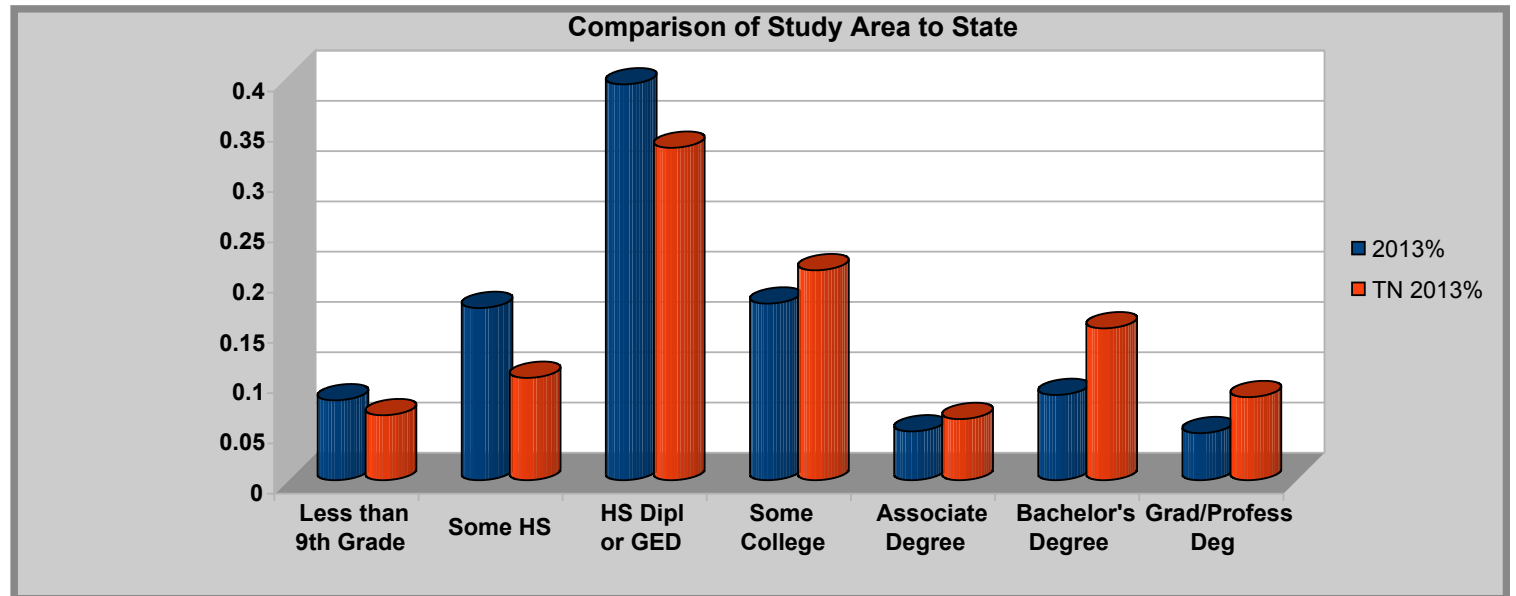
First, it looks to see if the level of educational attainment for adults is rising or not. Second, it compares the level of attainment to that of the state of TENNESSEE. (If this is a state report, the comparison will be to itself.) Finally, the table provides the percentages from 2010.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL ATTAINMENT CHANGE



The educational attainment level of adults has declined over the past few years. It is projected to rise over the next five years by 0.3%.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL COMPARED TO THE STATE



	2010	2013	2018	TN 2013%	Comp Index
Population by Educational Attainment: 25+					
Less than 9th Grade	7.7%	7.9%	8.1%	6.5%	123
Some HS	15.1%	17.1%	14.9%	10.2%	168
HS Dipl or GED	38.2%	39.4%	40.8%	33.1%	119
Some College	22.2%	17.6%	17.9%	20.9%	84
Associate Degree	3.2%	4.9%	5.0%	6.1%	80
Bachelor's Degree	9.7%	8.5%	8.5%	15.1%	56
Grad/Profess Deg	3.8%	4.7%	4.8%	8.3%	57

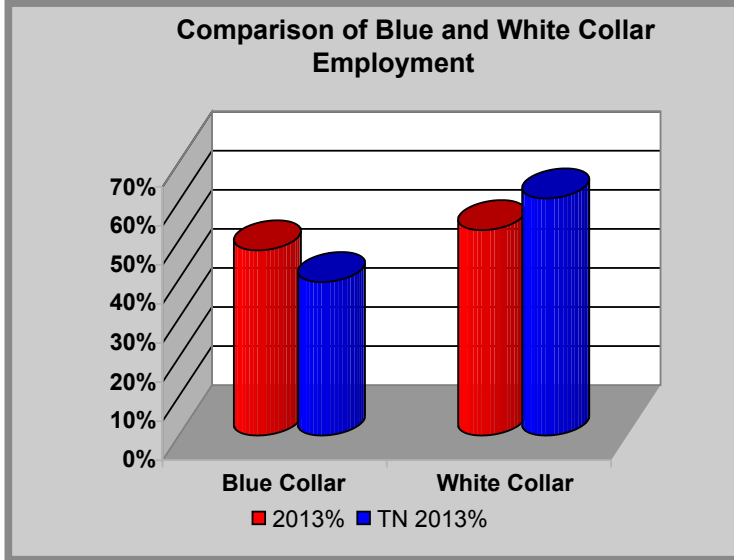
The overall educational attainment of the adults in this community is lower than the state.

INSITE #9: POPULATION BY EMPLOYMENT

Like educational attainment, an analysis of a community by its employment types and categories provides an important “insite” into its socio-economics. This analysis looks at two factors.

First is a report of the employed population 16 and over by the traditional “blue collar” and “white collar” occupations and compares these to the state. Second, it looks at the community by the seven standard census bureau occupations and compares them to the state.

EMPLOYED POPULATION : BLUE COLLAR OR WHITE COLLAR



On the chart to the left, the study area is compared to the state of TENNESSEE. This study area is well below the state average for White Collar workers. It is well above the state average for Blue Collar workers.

EMPLOYED CIVILIAN POPULATION BY OCCUPATION

	2013	TN 2013	Comp. Index	Interpretation
Employed Civilian Pop 16+ by Occupation				
Bldg Maintenance & Cleaning	3.9%	3.9%	102	At about the state average.
Construction	6.3%	9.1%	69	Well below the state average.
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	5.0%	0.5%	1071	Well above the state average.
Food Preparation Serving	5.8%	5.5%	106	At about the state average.
Healthcare Support	1.3%	2.1%	60	Well below the state average.
Managerial Executive	5.5%	12.9%	43	Well below the state average.
Office Admin	11.3%	14.3%	79	Well below the state average.
Personal Care	7.8%	3.0%	258	Well above the state average.
Production Transportation	18.3%	15.3%	120	Well above the state average.
Prof Specialty	10.3%	20.0%	52	Well below the state average.
Protective	0.2%	2.1%	7	Well below the state average.
Sales	24.3%	11.5%	212	Well above the state average.

INSITE #10: MOSAIC Segments

Mosaic is a geo-demographic segmentation system developed by and for marketers. Instead of looking at individual demographic variables, a segmentation system clusters households into groups with multiple common characteristics. Demographic variables that generally cluster together would include income, educational levels, presence of children and occupations among others.

This database is developed by Experian. Some find the information helpful because it presents a multi-dimensional view of a community.

In the report below, the top 15 Mosaic Segments of the study area are provided. (If less than 15, rows will be blank.)

NOTE: For a full description please see the DI Demographic Segment Guide (Mosaic) under the Help menu on the Documents gallery.

	2013	2013%	State %	Comp Index	Relative to the TN State Ave.
Mosaic Segments					
R67 Aspirational Fusion - Hope for Tomorrow	249	33.56%	2.01%	1672	Well above the state average
S71 Struggling Societies - Hard Times	105	14.15%	0.59%	2402	Well above the state average
S69 Struggling Societies - Soul Survivors	65	8.76%	2.93%	299	Well above the state average
N48 Pastoral Pride - Gospel and Grits	59	7.95%	2.53%	315	Well above the state average
O51 Singles and Starters - Digital Dependents	41	5.53%	2.05%	269	Well above the state average
S68 Struggling Societies - Small Town Shallow Pockets	39	5.26%	3.32%	158	Well above the state average
N46 Pastoral Pride - True Grit Americans	35	4.72%	1.28%	369	Well above the state average
O54 Singles and Starters - Striving Single Scene	32	4.31%	1.05%	409	Well above the state average
R66 Aspirational Fusion - Dare to Dream	27	3.64%	0.95%	381	Well above the state average
P61 Cultural Connections - Humble Beginnings	25	3.37%	0.17%	2005	Well above the state average
Q65 Golden Year Guardians - Senior Discounts	14	1.89%	0.85%	223	Well above the state average
O50 Singles and Starters - Full Steam Ahead	9	1.21%	1.02%	119	Somewhat above the state average
B09 Flourishing Families - Family Fun-tastic	8	1.08%	1.03%	105	About average for the state
L42 Blue Sky Boomers - Rooted Flower Power	8	1.08%	1.56%	69	Somewhat below the state average
G24 Young, City Solos - Status Seeking Singles	6	0.81%	1.04%	77	Somewhat below the state average

INSITE #11: CHARITABLE GIVING PRACTICES

Charitable giving practices data provide three perspectives about giving in the study area. First, they indicate how extensive giving is within a study area by showing the percentage of households that are likely to contribute \$200 or more dollars per year to charitable causes.

Second, they project the direction of giving. Giving data is provided across 10 sectors of charity giving. Each community has its own distinctive pattern.

Finally, they show how the study area gives across the 10 sectors in comparison to the state of TENNESSEE. An area may contribute modestly to a charitable sector in terms of actual projected households but it may be well above the state-wide average for such giving.

Interpreting the Table

As the table is studied look at two factors; the number of people or households and the index. The first will provide a sense of the number strength in the study area. The second shows how giving to one of the 10 charitable targets compares to the state. Any "index" over 100 means the study area gives more to a charitable target than is true for the state as a whole.

To make the interpretation of this easier, the following table is sorted by Index. However, be sure to look at the "% of Households" column. A particular charitable sector may have a low index but still a larger percentage than some other of the 10 sectors represented here.

	Hholds	% of HH	Index	Interpretation
Charitable Contributions Last Yr: \$200 Or More				
Environmental-\$200 Or More	67	8.9%	1222	Well above the state ave.
Public Television-\$200 Or More	2	0.3%	90	Somewhat below the state ave.
Public Radio-\$200 Or More	2	0.3%	84	Somewhat below the state ave.
Social Services/Welfare-\$200 Or More	27	3.6%	82	Somewhat below the state ave.
Other-\$200 Or More	15	2.0%	52	Well below the state ave.
Religious-\$200 Or More	83	11.0%	50	Well below the state ave.
Health-\$200 Or More	8	1.1%	33	Well below the state ave.
Private Foundation-\$200 Or More	7	0.9%	27	Well below the state ave.
Political Organization-\$200 Or More	1	0.1%	23	Well below the state ave.

Summary of Charitable Contribution Findings:

Overall, it is estimated that households in this study area are well above the state average in their contributions to charities.

More specific findings include:

The number of charitable sectors where giving is well above the state average: 1.

The number of charitable sectors where giving is somewhat below the state average: 3.

The number of charitable sectors where giving is well below the state average: 6.

INSITE #12: RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Religious practices differ greatly. For some people, the practice of religion is very important. For others less so. While the US continues to be a very religious country, the diversity of practice and beliefs continues to increase.

Summary of Religious Practices:

Though there are differences by each specific practice, taken together it is estimated that people in this study area are somewhat above the state average in religious practices.

	Pop	% of Pop	Index	Interpretation
Adult Religious Practices				
My Faith Is Really Important To Me	346	26.5%	153	Well above the state ave.
Enjoy Watching Religious TV Programs	302	23.1%	122	Somewhat above the state ave.
Conservative Evangelical Christian	538	41.2%	106	About average for the state.
Consider Myself A Spiritual Person	582	44.6%	97	About average for the state.
Important to Attend Religious Services	235	18.0%	94	Somewhat below the state ave.

Summary findings:

The number of religious practices well above the state average is 1.

The number of religious practices somewhat below the state average is 1.

The number of religious practices somewhat above the state average is 1.

The number of religious practices well below the state average is 0.

Supporting Information

Interpreting the Report

The ExecutiveInsite report is designed for easy reading. But there are several tools provided in the tables that make this easier.

Change over time: Several trend tables have a column indicating a change over time. Generally these tables begin with the last census, include the current year estimate, a five year projection and if available, a 10 year forecast. The data in each cell represents a percentage change up or down.

Color Coding: Both the "Change over Time" and "Comparative Indexes" columns are color coded to easily spot any change and the direction of that change.

Change:	Increasing	Stable	Declining
Index:	Above Ave	Ave	Below Ave.

Variable Definitions

Full variable definitions can be found in the MI Demographic Reference Guide. Download it free from the Help/Documents menu located on the map screen of your study area on the MissionInsite website.

Indexes: Some variables will have a column called "Comparative Index." An index is an easy way to compare a study area with a larger area. For this report, all comparisons are with the state or states within which the study area falls. The indexes can be interpreted as follows.

- Indexes of 100 mean the study area variable is the same as its base area.
- Indexes greater than 100 mean the study area variable is above the base area. The higher the number, the greater it is above the base.
- Indexes less than 100 mean the study area variable is below the base area. The lower the number, the greater it is below the base.

Support

If you need support with this report, please email MissionInsite at misupport@missioninsite.com.

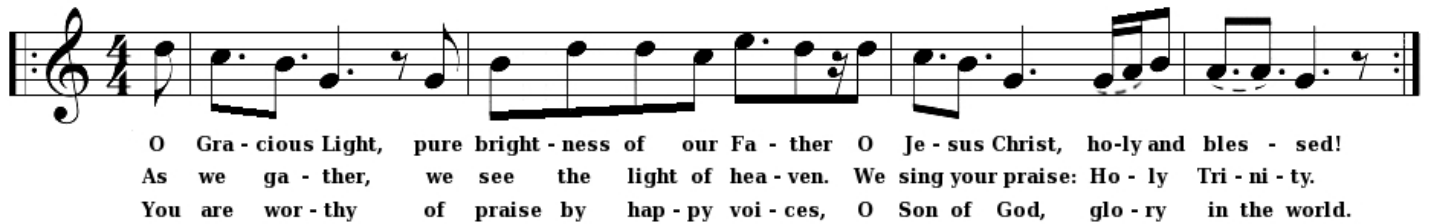
Appendix 2 –
Representative Southside Abbey Liturgy

All: I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!" [from Psalm 122]



[as the Spirit moves, keep singing the line from Psalm 122, while others sing the O Gracious Light]

All: O gracious light, pure brightness of our Father, O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!
As we gather, we see the light of heaven. We sing your praise: Holy Trinity.
You are worthy of praise by happy voices O Son of God, glory in the world.



One: Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! All: Christ is Risen indeed! Hallelujah!
One: The Lord be with you. All: And also with you.
One: Let us pray.
All: Source of Love, you dwell in eternal relationship with all that is: give us eyes to see the unity and the love in the world all around us, that we may be your agents in the world; in Jesus' name... Amen!

One: On God's creation in infinite diversity... All: Jesus, have mercy.
On those who represent us to God's world... Jesus, have mercy.
On those who dare to proclaim God's love... Jesus, have mercy.
On the hopes & decisions of this community... Jesus, have mercy.
On those who suffer and those in any trouble... Jesus, have mercy.
On those who have departed this life... Jesus, have mercy.

All: Jesus, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you:" Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Body and give us your Peace... Amen!

One: The Peace of Christ dwell in all our hearts forever!

All: Thanks be to God!

One: Sovereign of all life, with all creation we praise your holy name, for you sustain us constantly with your love. You never abandon your creation, restoring us to you again and again. Out of your desire to draw us deeper into your infinite love, you sent your son, Jesus Christ, to be born of a young woman, to open our eyes to your presence in the world, to live as one of us, to love those who society deems unlovable, and to lay down his life freely, triumphing over evil, dying rather than remembering our sin any longer.

All: Loving his own in the world, he loves us to the end.

Bob: On the night of the Passover, before he was handed over to the authorities, Jesus and his disciples were at table. There, he took bread, blessed and distributed it, saying, "Take, eat: This is my Body which is broken for you. Do this to re-member me." Celebrating your boundless love, we offer the gifts we share. Pour your Holy Spirit into this bread that it may be for us holy food. Pour the same Spirit on us, that Christ is made known to us at this table. All praise to God, the source of love, in Jesus Christ, who loves among us still, and the Holy Spirit who binds us together in that love.

All: AMEN!!! One: As our Lord Jesus has taught us, we now pray:

All: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

One: Behold what you are! Become what you receive! The Body of Christ for the Body of Christ.

[the bread is broken and shared with the words, "The Body of Christ, the Bread of Life" while we sing:]

Ho-ly, Ho-ly, Ho-ly, my heart adores you! My heart is glad to say the words: 'You are Ho-ly, Lord.'

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major and 6/8 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: "Ho-ly, Ho-ly, Ho-ly, my heart adores you! My heart is glad to say the words: 'You are Ho-ly, Lord.'"

[after all have received the bread, please get a plate from the kitchen. enjoy "getting-to-know-you" conversations over supper. soon we will hear the story of Jesus present in the world.]

One: The Good News of God in Christ Jesus, according to the evangelist... [the Gospel reading is read.]

One: For the word of God in our hearts and on our lips: **All: Glory to God!**

All: [in groups, talk about the readings and a question]

[the cup is shared after supper and the ministry of the word]

Bob: As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, poured out for all. As often as you drink this, re-member me." Remembering Christ's ministry of reconciliation to God and to one another, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving. Celebrating God's boundless love for us in Jesus Christ, we offer the gifts we share, made by the cooperation of human hands and a divine universe of creation. Bless them by your Holy Spirit that they may be for us the holy food and drink of new and unending life in Christ. Pour out your Spirit on us, that Christ may be made known to us at table. At the end of our earthly pilgrimage, unite us with all your saints, past, present and yet to come.

All: AMEN!!!

One: The gifts of God are for all God's children.

[the communal cup is shared with the words: "The Blood of Christ, shed for you" while we sing again]

Ho-ly, Ho-ly, Ho-ly, my heart adores you! My heart is glad to say the words: 'You are Ho-ly, Lord.'

This is an identical copy of the musical notation and lyrics from the first block.

[after all have received the cup, we continue...]

One: Let us pray.

All: Ever-loving God, we give thanks that Christ has been known to us at this table: strengthen us that we may be moved from doubt to belief, giving us the strength to live our lives as if the Good News is really true; give us now the life of the ages, that we may build your kingdom and praise your name forever. Amen!

One: Source of Love, you desire newness of all life: make new our hearts that we may live for reconciliation: the restoring of all people to unity with God and each other in Jesus' name; we ask in the name of the one who comes to save us, who meets us where we are, who calls us to greater things, and who welcomes us home...

All: Amen!

One: [Announcements]

All: Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised; For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, whom you have prepared for all the world to see: A Light to enlighten the nations, and the glory of your people Israel.

One: We go into the world with the risen Christ to love and serve in Jesus' name! **All: Thanks be to God!**

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