

Dear Parishioners of the Chapel of the Cross,

As we embark on a new chapter in the life of our parish, I am filled with immense joy and gratitude to formally welcome our Rector, the Reverend William Hewlett Compton, to our spiritual home effective December 1, 2023. This transition marks a significant moment in our journey of faith, and I am confident that Will is going to continue to provide a wealth of wisdom, compassion, and leadership that will guide us closer to God's embrace.

Throughout the search process, we sought a spiritual leader who not only possessed a deep understanding of our Episcopal traditions but also embodied the qualities of empathy, humility, and a genuine love for our community. While we interviewed many deserving candidates, Will's remarkable background with the Chapel, coupled with his unwavering dedication to serving God's people, resonated deeply with us. Will has a solid plan for the growth of our Parish and the necessary skills to lead us through that growth. We are also so fortunate to have his wonderful family be part of our spiritual community.

I am grateful to so many as we have navigated this process: Bishop Brian Seage for his guidance and wisdom; our outstanding Search Committee (Davis Frye, Oscar Hartman, Cliff Agnew, Suzanne Files, Annell Holland, LouEllen Latham, Brian Martin, Becky Herren, Jon Woodward, and Robert Pooley) led by the Search Committee Chair, Bob Williams, for their countless effort and time during the discernment process; the Transition Committee comprised of Eric Eaton, Pam Manor, and Stephen Applewhite who welcomed Tom and his family and will soon formally welcome Will and his family; The Reverend Beth Palmer who served as our knowledgeable Diocesan appointed Search Consultant; Marvin Koury, our Junior Warden and Michael Barker, our Treasurer, for their depth of knowledge and counsel as we moved through this process; our Vestry for providing support and issuing the formal call to Will; our staff at the Chapel of the Cross for their understanding and skills as we worked through this lengthy process; and of course, you, our dear parishioner. Thank you for allowing us to conduct this search thoroughly and correctly.

On behalf of the Vestry and the entire parish, I extend a heartfelt, formal welcome to Will and his family. We are truly blessed to have them join us as we continue in our spiritual journey.

With gratitude and blessings,

Brock H. Haas

Senior Warden, Chapel of the Cross

Dear friends,

When my grandfather retired from First Christian Church in Meridian, Mississippi after serving there for thirty-three years, the local news station, WTOK, interviewed him. In the interview, he said that it was “the holding power and the devotion of the congregation” that had kept him at First Christian Church for so long. When a pastor remains in a church for a long time, it is a testament to the congregation and the people in the church.

My grandfather was right. I have remained at the Chapel of the Cross since my ordination because of her people. I have served as your Curate, your Associate Rector, and your Priest in Charge. With joy in my heart and soul, I now accept the Vestry’s call to be your Rector. There is no finer church in the Anglican Communion and there is no people I’d rather serve, than as the 22nd rector of the Chapel of the Cross in Madison, Mississippi.

I first want to thank Sarah, John Owen, Addie, and Betsy. Before God ordained me a priest in his church, he first made me a husband and a father. I could not do any of this without them and especially Sarah Compton. If I’m visiting someone in the hospital, she is at home making sure homework is completed. She single parents on Sundays and has our kids dressed and in church every week. She loves the Chapel of the Cross and her people just as much as I do.

Second, I want to thank the Search Committee: Davis Frye, Brian Martin, Marvin Koury, Annell Holland, Becky Herren, Suzanne Files, Oscar Hartman, Cliff Agnew, LouEllen Latham, Robert Pooley, Jon Woodward, Brock Haas, and the Chair of the Committee, Bob Williams. Sometimes the Holy Spirit sends us out to do the work God has given us to do, and sometimes the Holy Spirit calls us to stay put. Discerning with them and discussing our love for the Chapel of the Cross further solidified that the Holy Spirit was calling me to stay put, and continue the good work we have been doing for over eight years.

We have much to celebrate in the weeks and months ahead. I’m looking forward to a holy Advent and a joyful Christmas at the Chapel of the Cross as we begin this new era of ministry together. Let’s get started! I have loved you all for eight years. I’m going to love you all for eighty more!

Christ’s peace,

Will Compton