

The Rev. Furman L. Buchanan

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Objective

My objective is to serve and lead alongside faithful Christians who are committed to prayer and worship; hospitality to strangers; a passion for justice; dedication to service in Christ's name; and peaceful living. My desire is to help cultivate these Christian virtues and disciplines while also writing, speaking, and sharing this witness with the wider Episcopal Church as well as ecumenical and interfaith partners.

Skills & Abilities

Leadership—Throughout my life I have gratefully received and carefully tended the trust that various communities have conveyed to me as a leader. In addition to serving as an ordained leader in the Episcopal Church for fifteen years, I served nearly a decade as president of a vibrant marketing and public relations firm and (concurrently) for seven years as executive director of a growing, non-profit, professional association of 3500 members. I have learned how to be both strong and flexible in my approach, carefully holding the trust of the communities I have led as a precious gift.

Preaching—When performed faithfully, preaching is like a conversation between the witness of Holy Scripture and the experience of the congregation, with the preacher serving as an informed and careful translator, eager to speak pastoral as well as challenging words, borne of a deep love for Christ and the people who are the very members of his Body in the world today. I believe my congregations would rate preaching as one of my strongest gifts in ministry.

Liturgy—The Anglican Tradition and The Book of Common Prayer offer an incredible inheritance of liturgy and prayer. I have utilized both the structure and flexibility of these resources to develop creative expressions of worship that lift our hearts to God with thanks and praise. My leadership in corporate worship is calm, prepared, audible, and steady. My tone is joyful and expectant. My congregations have expected and received excellence and sincerity in the celebration of the sacraments.

Church Growth—In places where deep faithful roots are nourished and generous open arms stretch forth, the Church grows in Spirit and in number. I have had the privilege to serve in well-nourished parishes, and to take part in cultivating this kind of growth. In my fourteen years of ordained ministry the congregations I have served have recorded consistent gains in average Sunday attendance. During my 10-year tenure at St. Peter's, membership has grown 50%, attendance has increased 21%, and both pledging and giving have increased 94%. In each year, we have outperformed our budgets and therefore boosted financial reserves by 542% while paying for more than \$300,000 in property repairs and updates out of cash flow. I have also presided over the re-formation of dormant youth communities in both parishes.

Teaching—One of my passions is teaching. My approach helps parishioners more clearly identify, comprehend, and appropriate what they already know at some level to be true so that the knowledge gained from their Christian formation can yield spiritual transformation. In this vein I published my first book in 2019—*Gifts of God for the People of God*—a narrative-based exploration of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist, which received a Silver Medal from the Illumination Book Awards for spiritual writing in the category of theology.

Pastoral Care—I believe pastoral care is the vocation of every faithful person, both lay and ordained, walking alongside others with authentic care in the spirit of Jesus Christ. My congregations have responded faithfully to the care I have extended, both personally as well as through staff and volunteers who have served as companions along the way.

Experience

Rector | St. Peter's Episcopal Church | 2010-current

Worship

During my tenure at St. Peter's I have expanded and updated the worship life of the congregation as we have transformed from a pastoral-size to a program-size model. We have introduced more occasions and opportunities for people to experience God sacramentally and liturgically in the course of everyday life. Holy Hikes, labyrinth walks, and special celebrations for all ages on feasts and holidays are three examples of how we help people discover grace at the intersection of faith and life.

Education

I have helped develop a comprehensive range of adult formation programming on Sundays and throughout the week, including three tracks on Sunday morning, a vibrant EFM group, energetic *Just Faith* groups, and a rector's weekly bible study. Children's Christian education at St. Peter's includes Godly Play, along with other curricula and many special opportunities for our children to learn, and even lead the parish in service and generosity. We also have developed a vibrant youth community. In addition to parochial learning and service, our youth also have been significantly involved in leading our diocesan youth ministry programming. In upper South Carolina, St. Peter's name is synonymous with quality youth leadership.

Service and Outreach

Our outreach committee's primary purpose is to identify, coordinate, communicate, and encourage every parishioner to identify at least one opportunity from a comprehensive 'menu' of service and outreach options with various ministry partners in Greenville and beyond. Although St. Peter's donates monetarily to local and international missions and Episcopal solicitations like the United Thank Offering, we have grown far beyond a 'check writing mentality' in response to our Baptismal Covenant. One example of St. Peter's exercising moral leadership occurs when we combine our gifts with the Islamic Society of Greenville, and work side-by-side with our Muslim sisters and brothers to prepare and package tens of thousands of meals through *Rise against Hunger* each year.

Parish Life, Pastoral Care, and Hospitality

We draw upon the gifts, talents, and skills of our people for pastoral care. Woodworkers create 'comfort crosses' for those preparing for surgery, quilters make quilts for our homebound, knitters make baby blankets for the newly born, embroiderers make custom banners for every baptismal candidate, cooks prepare meals for those in crisis, Eucharistic Visitors share the Sacrament with homebound parishioners, and several teams of people visit, call, chauffeur, or pray for others in need. Our goal is to give every willing person a chance to give and receive care in community.

Associate Rector & Priest-in-Charge | St. Martins-in-the-Fields Episcopal Church | 2006-2010

Account Executive & President | Fowler Communications, Inc. | 1990-2003

Education

M.Div. with honors | 2006 | School of Theology, University of the South

Freeman Award, given to a student who shows outstanding academic performance and promise.

B.A. in Philosophy | 1989 | Wofford College

Summa cum laude, Presidential International Scholar, selected to devote one year to independent study and travel in less developed countries around the world.