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The Diocese of Atlanta

Among the settlers arriving with Georgia founder James Edward Oglethorpe in 1733 was a clergyman from the Church of England. The Diocese of Georgia was established in 1823 and by 1907 had grown so much that it was divided geographically and the Diocese of Atlanta was created.

Our diocese comprises middle and north Georgia with ninety-three parishes, with a current mission initiative to increase that number to 100 by 2010. The next new start is S. Benedict's in New Vinings, Cobb County. There are over 57,000 communicants in the Diocese of Atlanta. Five Hispanic congregations worship in the diocese and several parishes have services in both English and Spanish. Christ the King, an international congregation in Lilburn and a community of Sudanese immigrants at St. Michael's, Stone Mountain, are exciting missions among emerging populations. We enjoy companion relationships with the dioceses of Ecuador and Rio de Janeiro, and our relationship with the Diocese of Central Tanganyika, where we have several missionaries, holds great promise.

The budget for the Diocese of Atlanta, approximately \$4.7 million is funded by parish assessments of ten percent of annual parish net income, one of the lowest assessments in the Episcopal Church. To support ministry beyond the diocese, the diocese pays the full apportionment of the Episcopal Church. There is currently an appeal for mission funds, called the Alleluia Fund for Mission, to start new congregations. Several agencies in the diocese make annual appeals to parishes.

The diocesan quarterly journal, *Pathways*, reaches nearly 27,000 households. Our weekly e-news message, *Connecting*, contains timely announcements on diocesan and national church life. Camp Mikell, our camp and conference center near Toccoa in northeast Georgia, is the site of retreats, camps and conferences throughout the year. A number of parishes have affiliated schools, and there are several diocese-related retirement centers. Most churches in the diocese devote time and resources to the needy; Emmaus House and Holy Comforter in Atlanta are parishes with attendant outreach centers funded in part by the diocesan budget. Chaplaincies are active at most of the colleges or universities in the diocese including the University of Georgia, Emory University, Georgia State University, and the Atlanta University Center (the largest consortium of Black colleges and universities in the world).

The offices of the Bishop and staff are located in The Cathedral of St. Philip in Atlanta. The Deployment Officer in the Diocese of Atlanta is the Canon to the Ordinary. Each interested applicant for a parish is screened on at least two occasions, and no candidate is considered without a full background check and interview with the Bishop.

Clergy are expected to attend the annual fall clergy conference and are invited to a pre-Lenten retreat. Study days, usually led by a scholar from one of several seminaries located in the Atlanta area, are held each year. Clergy are called upon to serve on various diocesan boards, committees and commissions as part of their service to the larger church. All clergy in new positions will attend a year of Fresh Start. Congregations support clergy continuing education, and clergy participation is expected and recorded. The Diocese of Atlanta is part of the Medical Trust of the Episcopal Church to provide healthcare benefits to clergy.