

Scott Anson Benhase

Parish Experience

St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Washington, DC, 2006 - Present; Rector

My service in the Church has been to lead parishes to a renewed sense of mission, particularly in the areas of church growth, evangelism, and stewardship. St. Alban's Parish is located on Mt. St. Alban overlooking downtown Washington, and is the parish church on the grounds of the National cathedral. It is a large, diverse parish with influence and outreach nationally and internationally. Yet, it has been in decline during this decade. It has not adapted well to the changing neighborhood demographics that are primarily households led by people who are under 40 years old. Although I came here as Rector, they did not have a trained Interim Rector before I arrived. So, I am having to do the work an Interim Rector would have to do to address long-standing conflicts and persistent budget deficits. (They averaged six-figure annual deficits before I arrived.) We just finished the third budget year of my rectorship and all have ended in the black.

St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Durham, NC; 1995-2006; Rector

My leadership there was to revitalize an aging, downtown parish. When I left the parish it had a membership of over 750 with a budget of \$600,000, 225 households pledging \$515,000 in 2006. The budget was less than \$200,000 when I came in 1995. We completed in 2000 a \$1.8 million renovation and expansion of the facilities. Shortly after I arrived, I led the parish in developing a 12 point action plan that we estimated would take about seven years to complete. With the completion of the facility expansion and renovation, all 12 points were completed two years earlier than expected. In 2002, we completed a \$2.5 million renovation and expansion of our homeless shelter and soup kitchen. The soup kitchen was \$40,000 in the red when I arrived. It now has an endowment of \$300,000. The adult and children's education was struggling. They now have a vibrant program of adult classes on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening and use the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for younger children and J2A for teenagers. Enrollment more than quadrupled among children and teens. They also began ministries to one another, such as: Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Stephen Ministry, Healing Ministry, and Men & women's Prayer Groups. All these are thriving. When I left, we had just completed another capital campaign to expand and renovate our parish house, particularly our space for children and youth.

Trinity Episcopal Church, Charlottesville, VA; 1990-1995; Vicar

Trinity was a small, African-American mission averaging 35-40 folk on Sunday. I was the first white vicar they had ever had. We worked together to build up and integrate the congregation during my tenure. We also expanded the worship and educational space and added a full-time assistant priest. By 1995, we had quadrupled attendance (150) and active membership (about 60% Black, 35% White, and 5% Asian & Hispanic,) bought a neighboring house to use as transitional housing for homeless families, and brought the mission to the edge of parish status.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, East Cleveland, OH; 1986-1990; Rector

The parish was going to be closed in 1985 until the Bishop changed his mind and the parish called me. A small, white membership had hung on while the surrounding neighborhood had become all black. My call was to integrate the parish and make it a viable neighborhood parish again. By 1990, it had become a neighborhood parish with a majority black membership. Attendance tripled in the last two years and we reduced by half our financial aid from the Diocese.

Trinity Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, IN; 1983-1986; Curate

I served with Roger White, retired Bishop of Milwaukee, and Jim Lemler, now Rector of Christ Church, Greenwich, CT, on an outstanding clergy team. Part of my call was to begin a collaborative urban ministry uniting 14 Episcopal parishes in the city. I led the establishment of a homeless shelter, soup kitchen, and an advocacy ministry for the poor.

Education

- De Pauw University, Greencastle, IN; B.A. Religion; 1979
- Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA; M. Div.; 1983
- Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland, OH; Masters in Urban Affairs; 1990
- Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA; D. Min. (expected); 2009

Personal

- I have been married to Kelly Jones Benhase for nearly 25 years. She currently teaches high school English at one of the lowest performing public high schools in the District of Columbia. She is a remarkable teacher and there is nobody better at what she does.
- We have three children: John, age 21; Charley, age 18; and Mary Grace, age 16.

Other

- After college, I spent a year as a church missionary in Honduras. I continue to be involved in supporting mission work in Central America. I chaired a diocesan committee that established the first Latino mission congregation in the Diocese of North Carolina.
- I am a trainer in parish development and have worked with many vestries on leadership and parish development. I limit my contracts to one per year so as not to interfere with my parochial ministry. I partner with others in a group called CDITrainers. (website: cditrainers.org) I am currently one of the lead trainers for the Church Development Institute in the Diocese of Washington.
- Until recently, I enjoyed the sport of Judo. I no longer compete, but continue to work out. I also have coached YMCA baseball and soccer.
- I am an avid biker. I take a number of bike trips each year.
- I am a Diocesan facilitator for Fresh Start.
- Former member of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of North Carolina.