

## **The Rev. Susan B. Haynes**

### **- Biography -**

In a one-room church in the low country of South Carolina, my faith was formed under the watchful eye of my grandmother. She taught me to sing the hymns, pray the prayers and say the creeds. There I learned that even a small faith community can powerfully impact the life of one person. That little church challenged me to be the person God was calling me to be and gave me the courage to answer the call. Because of their witness, I know how important every congregation is. As I consider the ministry of the episcopate, I bring the gift of a strong belief in the power of even the smallest of congregations!

That low country faith sustained me through elementary and high school and on to an Episcopal college where, as a member of the chapel choir, I was introduced to the liturgy for the first time. That introduction turned out to be a homecoming that led to my confirmation during my junior year. The liturgical grounding I received from that experience equips me to be at home in any number of different liturgical expressions.

Each of us receives gifts from the Holy Spirit at our baptism. My own gifts include compassion and an abiding sense for pastoral care. That pastoral care is manifested in the care of my congregation as I led them through their own challenge of reaching beyond their comfort zone to raise the money for the renovation of their building and installation of an elevator. As a result, the congregation developed a strong sense of self-confidence that enabled them to stretch even further out into the community to bring healing and hope to those struck by tragedy, poverty and hopelessness.

With a gift for building relationships, I have established a network of healthy, competent lay persons in my congregation. These lay persons have stepped into vocations to preach, to provide pastoral care, to help in the administration of the church, to go out into the neighborhood and to greet the newcomer. We are beginning to see a way forward for the church in a time when priests are not always available or when they are seriously overworked. This vision has prompted me to begin work on a lay discernment and formation program that challenges all of the baptized to realize their vocations.

A strong laity is sustained by healthy, well nurtured clergy. As a priest of compassion, I have reached out to colleagues on many occasions to support them as they respond to stress, loss, overwork and burn-out. I delight in assisting colleagues who face complicated situations in a profession that can be isolating and spiritually demanding.

Tom and I would delight in the opportunity to join you in your journey. We are both Episcopal priests (in both English and Spanish). We have two adult daughters, Sarah and Avery. We both come from families with military backgrounds. Wherever God has called us, He has not failed to use us mightily! My faith began in a little church, but God is spreading it in manifold ways. I am delighted to be in discernment as to whether he is calling us to join our faiths to work as bishop and people.