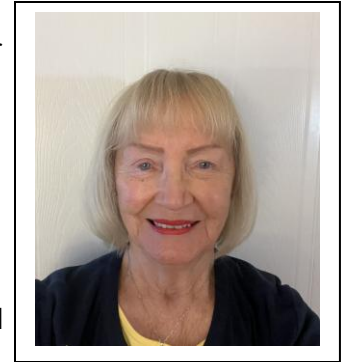




Chloe Snell &
Bishop Justin Holcomb



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, by *Sandi Hendriks*

Annual Meeting Recap -- What a wonderful Diocesan Altar Guild annual meeting we had on February 14, 2026! For those of you who were unable to attend, let me share a bit about the day. The Cathedral Church of St. Luke graciously hosted the meeting in beautiful downtown Orlando. We started the morning with registration and a continental breakfast, providing a great opportunity to meet and greet each other. Attendees enjoyed a fabulous tour of the Cathedral, explored the exchange table, resource table, and linens table, and browsed the Cathedral Bookstore, which was open for shopping. Special thanks to Kathy Tindal and her altar guild team for organizing these events. Many participants especially enjoyed the tour of the Cathedral and the sacristy. Amazingly, all these activities took place within one hour, between 9 and 10 AM.

Business Meeting Highlights -- Barbara Miller called the meeting to order at 10 AM to begin our business session. The Rev. Garcia Barnswell-Schmidt led us in the opening prayer. We reviewed and approved the minutes from the last meeting. Cyndy Berry, our Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report. After our business meeting, we gathered in the sanctuary for the Holy Eucharist service and the installation of the DAG board members, led by The Rt. Dr. Bishop Justin S. Holcomb. Following our luncheon, we enjoyed presentations from two outstanding guest speakers. Scott Gabrielson shared an engaging history of the Cathedral Church of St. Luke, which was established in 1882. Deacon Johnny Clark from Mission Hope Belize provided a comprehensive summary of his work and the needs in Belize. After our guest speakers, thank you gifts were presented to Barbara Miller for her three years of service as President, and to our chaplain, Rev. Garcia Barnswell-Schmidt and our two guest speakers.

Lenten Practices at St. Jude's -- Ash Wednesday has passed, marking the start of our Lenten season. Over these 40 days, some choose to give up something, while others prefer to add meaningful practices. At St. Jude's, we have introduced a special tradition for Lent: prayer postcards are available in the narthex. As you enter the church, you are invited to take a card, write your name and address on the back, and drop it in a basket. Then, you take a card from the basket—signed by someone else—and pray for that person throughout Lent. Just before Easter week, you mail the postcard to the person you have been praying for, adding a note that can be signed or anonymous. This simple exchange fosters a spirit of connection and prayer within our community.

Preparing for Holy Week -- The week leading into Holy Week, including Palm Sunday, is often very busy due to the many services. It can become hectic, especially for altar guild teams. If you have multiple teams, now is the time to plan and prepare. Ask each team to participate in Maundy Thursday services, Good Friday, Easter Vigils, and Easter Sunday. This approach ensures that no single team is overwhelmed with all the responsibilities. At St. Jude's, this method has proven effective.

(continued at the bottom of page 3)

SAVE THE DATE

PROVINCE IV Altar Guild will meet May 31 to June 3, 2026, at Sewanee, Tennessee. Registration and further details were included in an issue of The Province IV Email newsletter; if you do not already receive their newsletter, **Sacristy Sense**, please contact Phyllis Bruce at pobruce46@gmail.com

GUIDED TOURS OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. LUKE, ORLANDO

Central Florida Diocesan Altar Guild Annual Meeting, February 14, 2026

By Mona Leverett, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Melbourne

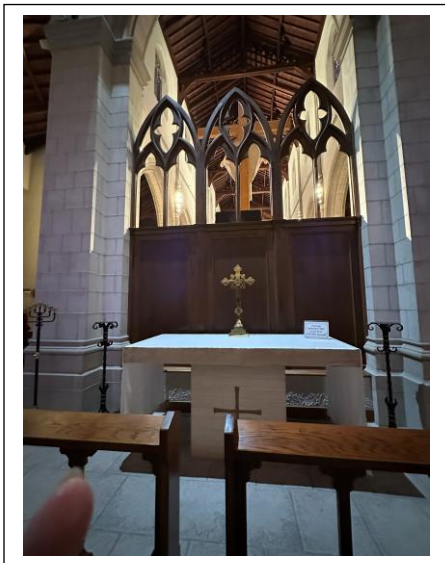
On Valentine's Day 2026, the Diocesan Altar Guild Annual Meeting schedule offered visiting members guided tours of the Cathedral Church of St. Luke, including the nave, ambulatory, priests' and Altar Guild sacristies, and St. Mary's Chapel.

We entered the Cathedral narthex by stepping down a few steps from the social hall entrance and walking across the walkway to the steps leading to the Cathedral entrance. Our guide immediately directed our attention to a very tall, beautiful stained glass window honoring Francis Eppes, a devout Episcopalian and the grandson of Thomas Jefferson. In the mid-1800's, neighbors began gathering in Eppes's home for morning and evening prayers which led to the establishment of the Episcopal Church in Orlando. Our guide entertained us with historical snippets: Maria Jefferson died when Francis Eppes was only three years old. Eppes then spent a great deal of time living at Monticello. Eppes later moved to Tallahassee where he was a prominent leader in civic, religious, and social arenas. Eventually Eppes moved to Orlando as one of the first area settlers.



Our Altar Guild guide explained that the Cathedral Church of St. Luke was built in Gothic style architecture with Spanish influences. She informed us that St. Luke's was designed by the same architect who planned the Washington Cathedral. Entering the nave, we were amazed to find a huge, extremely tall, beautiful place of worship. The wooden ceiling beams appeared as the hull of a ship; stone columns, arches, and carvings rose awesomely high; and tall multi-colored stained-glass windows lined the walls at standing level as well as high in the upper walls.

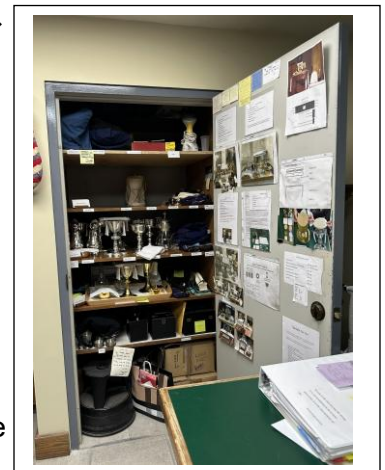
We walked through the nave towards the sanctuary to enter the ambulatory, a hallway which ran behind it. Entering to the left we were guided into the Priests' Sacristy. The vesting room walls were lined with beautiful dark wooden cabinets and/or closets. Our guide explained each member of the clergy was given their own closet which was labeled as such. The altar assistants, however, had to share cabinets. I was impressed with the cleanliness and neatness of this spacious area - well, actually, of the whole Cathedral grounds.



As we continued around the ambulatory, we found a chapel with an altar and two columbarium walls. Our guide informed us that the City of Orlando has forbidden the church to inter any further cremains in their Memorial Gardens. Thus, the Cathedral chose to expand the columbarium area.

Wall Safe →

On the alternate side of the back hallway, we entered the Altar Guild Sacristy. Again, this sacristy was a large room of beautiful dark cabinets, closets, and tables. A huge wall safe stood open so that we could view the Cathedral's storage of precious sacred Communion vessels. I noted several shelves, and was told each shelf contained the vessels for a particular service; i.e. gold chalices for the early Sunday morning service on an upper shelf, silver for the later morning service on the next shelf, and those reserved for the contemporary evening



Sunday service on the lowest shelf. I was intrigued by a cabinet next to the safe which the Altar Guild guide opened to show a tray laden with altar vessels and linens. The guide explained it was pass-through cabinet with a door which opened on the other side of the wall in the St. Mary's Chapel, in the south transept. Pretty handy! Visitors from other parish Altar Guilds had several questions about having brass items treated with a protective covering, suggestions for polishing silver, and recommendations for various supplies. The most helpful idea I heard was from a Cathedral Altar Guild guide. After one unsuccessful attempt, they were able to find a local dry cleaner who cleans and presses their fair linen for a reasonable charge of \$20 and which does a superb job of returning the fair linen properly rolled.

St Mary's Chapel →



The tour ended with a return to the church nave for a closer look at the sanctuary as well as St. Mary's Chapel. The pulpit was constructed in a beautifully carved wooden circle, while the gospel lectern was a wondrous

large oak eagle. Someone mentioned it was a gift of another descendent of Thomas Jefferson. As an Altar Guild member, I was intrigued by the beautiful altar frontal which hung like a tapestry on all sides of the altar, and not simply across the front. One of the most striking features of the sanctuary was a huge carving of Jesus Christ, with a cross supporting him, which hung over the altar; but instead of a crucifix, Jesus was holding his open hands out in a gesture of welcome. The huge original traditional crucifix was moved to the side chapel. St. Mary's Chapel also housed prayer candle stands and lovely unique banners.



Turning to face the entrance/exit, I took a few minutes to admire the embroidered kneelers the guide had informed us had been made by parish members. With words of admiration, she proudly remarked that one talented woman in the parish had designed most of the patterns on the kneelers as well as the many banners on display. We, who have been members of Holy Trinity for a few decades, can relate to this sense of gratitude for a sole talent who has left a great wealth of artistic adornments for future generations. In our case, that woman was Mary deMunecas. I took time to examine the cushions on the front row of chairs in St. Luke's nave which were embroidered with names of the parish churches of the Central Diocese. I was able to find the cushion with the words "Melbourne Florida" on one side, and "Holy Trinity Church" on the other.

As we exited the nave, our eyes were drawn up to view the dramatic rose window on the street side of the cathedral. We also noted a balcony above the narthex where the organ and great pipes were housed. And only a few hours later, I stood in this same spot as the organist played a postlude with roaring resonance as the communicants exited. I might note as well, that as I sang amidst the many Altar Guild members gathered for the Holy Eucharist with Bishop Justin Holcomb, I heard our voices echo off the great walls and thought to myself, "Maybe this is but a 'foretaste' of the Heavenly Choirs singing above."



All in all, I found the tours of the Cathedral Church of St. Luke, Orlando, to be well organized. Several different members of the Cathedral Altar Guild led various parts of the tour. All were informative, friendly, and helpful. They are to be commended for their service to the visitors, to their parish, and to the honor of the Lord.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(continued from page 1)

Closing and Easter Greetings -- As your new President of DAG, I wish each one of you a very joyous Easter. Please feel free to call me with any questions; I am only a phone call away.

In Faith, Sandi Hendriks, President (386-748-1186)

ANNUAL DIOCESAN ALTAR GUILD (CFDAG) MEETING

By Judy Henderson, Newsletter Editor, Holy Trinity Episcopal - Melbourne

The Annual Meeting of the Diocesan Altar Guild (DAG) was held 14 February 2026, at the Cathedral Church of St Luke in Orlando with representatives from all five Deaneries.

Many attendees arrived early so they could take the Cathedral guided tour – see additional information about the tour on pages 2-3. Breakfast foods and beverages were available to get the day started. Everyone stayed busy with the following activities:

- The Exchange Tables were full of items donated by churches that no longer need the items. Items available for the taking included vestments, aumbryns, candles and candlesticks, a chalice, cruets, BIBLES, and many other items.

- A demonstration of the proper folding of small-linens and advice on removing difficult stains.

- Altar Guild books that are available for purchase online were on display. *Exchange Tables* →



- Samples of Altar Guild resources that have been collected from various sources, including Province IV Altar Guild and National Altar Guild Association (NAGA) meetings. These resources can be ordered via Email; no paper copies will be sent. If you missed the meeting and would like to order any of these resources, contact Judy Henderson at 321-536-3965 or Email jem2415@earthlink.net.

- Silver or gold Altar Guild pins were available for purchase.

Holly Vanture

- The Cathedral Bookshop was open for business. *Book Shop* →



Following a brief business meeting, we attended Eucharist led by The Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin Holcomb. At the Peace, The DAG Board was

installed by Bishop Holcomb and the DAG Chaplain, The Rev. Garcia Barnwell-Schmidt. Bishop Holcomb graciously stayed around to greet attendees, pose for pictures, and answer questions.



← *Judy Henderson, Kathy Shearer, Sandi Hendriks, Barbara Miller, Betty Seckinger, Bishop Justin Holcomb, Karen Stewart, Dawn Foster, Paul Lagassey, Rev Garcia Barnwell-Schmidt, Carol McFarlane, Lynn Howell, and Cyndy Berry [missing from photo – Beth Hyatt-Burgess, Eve Hyatt, and Diane Casson]*

After lunch, Scott Gabrielson presented a program on the history of the growth of the Orlando area and the Cathedral Church of St Luke. Scott added to the history presented during the tour of the Cathedral. His interesting and informative program took us through renovations and amusing stories about the Cathedral.

Outgoing DAG President, Barbara Miller, and Scott Gabrielson →



Deacon Johnny Clark, Mission Hope Belize, presented the initiatives of Mission Hope which has been supported by the CFDAG for the past several years with school supplies and Exchange Table items that were left after everyone had a chance to take what they needed. Mission Hope Belize is grateful for the support offered by the Central Florida Diocese.

Deacon Johnny Clark →



← Newly elected DAG President, Sandi Hendriks, and Previous DAG President, Kathy Shearer

The new President of the DAG Board, Sandi Hendriks, was introduced. Attendees took time to complete the Evaluation Forms which will help the Board develop a program for next year's Annual DAG Meeting, and the beautiful African Violet centerpieces were given away as door prizes.

It was a busy day, and all attendees certainly came away with new knowledge and a sense of joy at attending the meeting. A show of hands indicated that of those attending, about 1/3 had never attended a Diocesan Altar Guild meeting before. Hopefully, the 2027 meeting will take place in the Northeast Deanery. Hope to see you at the meeting next year; watch the newsletter for location and date.

DUES AND LOVE OFFERING

To all who have submitted their dues and love offering for 2026, THANK YOU for supporting the Central Florida Diocesan Altar Guild. Dues are due in February each year, but it's never too late to submit your annual donations. Diocesan Altar Guild dues are \$10 for churches or \$5 for missions.

Please be sure to make the check payable to DIOCESE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA, INC., with a memo "For Diocesan Altar Guild Dues and Love Offering." (Please do NOT make checks payable to Cyndy Berry.)

It is preferred that you mail the check to Cyndy Berry so that she has your contact information (and then she can properly credit your church with the payment). However, if you (or your church office) send the check directly to the Diocesan Office in Orlando, please let Cyndy know, by Email or text, the amount of the check (dollar amount for dues and dollar amount for Love Offering) as well as your contact information – Church, City, Directress/Director, Phone, and Email.

For those who provide an Email address, Cyndy will send an acknowledgement by Email. Cyndy's address is **Cyndy Berry, Treasurer, Diocesan Altar Guild, 4201 Limerick Drive, Lake Wales, FL 33859.** Cyndy can be contacted at **Cell: 203-215-0125 - Home: 863-875-7043 - Email: cyndy.berry@usa.net .**

(Include this portion with your Dues and Love Offering)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please make your check payable to: **Diocese of Central Florida, Inc.**
With a Memo for: **Diocesan Altar Guild Dues and Love Offering**

Mail to: Cyndy Berry
Treasurer, Diocesan Altar Guild
4201 Limerick Drive
Lake Wales, FL 33859

Please return this notice with your check (This will help Cyndy give credit to the correct parish or mission) Thanks!

Diocesan Altar Guild Dues and Love Offering

Church _____
Directress _____
Email _____

City _____

Phone _____

Dues (please circle one) \$10 \$5

Love Offering \$ _____

Total enclosed \$ _____

ADDITIONAL PICTURES FROM THE DAG ANNUAL MEETING AT THE CATHEDRAL – 14 FEBRUARY 2026:



Bishop Justin Holcomb



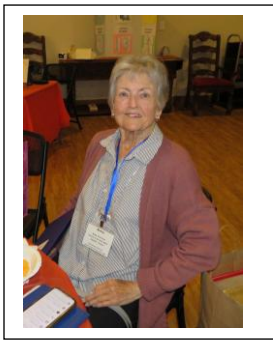
Trudy Knecht, Kathy Consigilo, Helen Bostock, Eleanor Ackermann, Beatriz Colon, & Suzanne Thomas



Maria Balseiro, Mona Leverett, & Judy Henderson



Sandra Davis, Carol White, Connie Olson, Cyndy Berry, June Joseph, & Betty Seckinger



Betsy Townsend



Stephanie Simmons, Mary Peoples, Ruth Mitchell, & Claudette Bardowell



Deb Boshell-Idowu, Susan Fezie, & Bev Hughes Crummey



Evanda Tsolo, The Rev Becky Chapman, & Joan Lambert



Dawn Foster, Chloe Snell, Candy Philbrick, & Debbie Bryan



Carmen Downer, Mary Hamilton, Claudia McGregor, & Felicia Stephens



Robin Switzer, Scott Gonzalez, & Jeanette Steeves



Carol McFarlane, Betty Seckinger, & Barbara Miller – Registration Table

* * * * *

NECROLOGY LIST

The Necrology List includes the names of Central Florida Diocesan Altar Guild members who have died. If you have a member who has died, and you would like to include him or her on the list, please submit the member's name, the name of the church, and the city where the church is located to Judy Henderson, jem2415@earthlink.net or mail the information to Judy at 1978 Red Bud Circle NW, Palm Bay, FL 32907.

Members who are included in the DAG Necrology List since the last Annual DAG meeting include:

HOLY TRINITY Episcopal Church – Melbourne
Marilyn McRae
Pat Smyth

ST. JAMES Episcopal Church – Daytona Beach
Cathy Fitzsimmons

ST. PAUL's Episcopal Church – Winter Haven
Jo Hoffses

* * * * *

CENTRAL FLORIDA DIOCESAN ALTAR GUILD (DAG) BOARD:

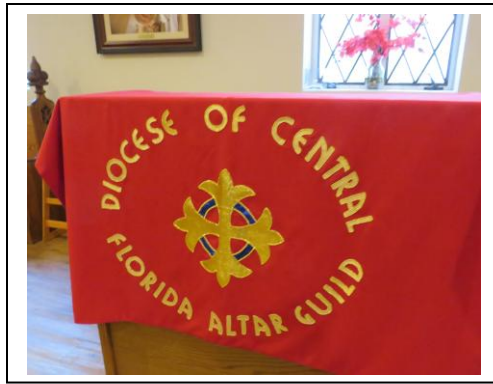
- President: Sandi Hendriks - Cell 386-748-1186 -- sandihendriks@yahoo.com
- Vice President – VACANT
- Secretary: Karen Stewart -- 407-625-7615 -- kstewart1208@yahoo.com
- Treasurer: Cyndy Berry – Home 863-875-7043 - Cell 203-215-0125 – cyndy.berry@usa.net
- Newsletter Editor: Judy Henderson - Home 321-327-3175; Cell 321-536-3965 – jem2415@earthlink.net
- Membership
 - Sandi Hendriks -- Cell 386-748-1186 -- sandihendriks@yahoo.com
 - Carol McFarlane -- Cell 845-721-1588 -- cmcfarla@aol.com
- Chaplain: Rev Garcia Barnswell-Schmidt – Phone 954-600-7876 - gschmidt@cfdiocese.org
- **Central Deanery:**
 - Kathy Shearer – Cell 407-230-4350 – wwdassoc@gmail.com – Immediate Past President
 - Eve Hyatt – Home/Work 407-880-3416 – samias@aol.com
 - Beth Hyatt-Burgess - Home 407-884-6058 – Cell 407-252-4934 – es23hyatt@gmail.com
 - Carol McFarlane - Cell 845-721-1588 -- cmcfarla@aol.com
 - Karen Stewart – Phone 407-625-7615 -- kstewart1208@yahoo.com
- **Northeast Deanery:**
 - Sandi Hendriks - Cell 386-748-1186 -- sandihendriks@yahoo.com
 - Dawn Foster – Cell 386-852-5676; humbird4wd@aol.com
- **Northwest Deanery:**
 - Dianne Casson – Home 352-787-0508 – Cell 352-255-5444 – dcasson@embarqmail.com
 - Barbara Miller – Phone 214-773-3464 - barb.miller@earthlink.net
- **Southeast Deanery:**
 - Judy Henderson - Home 321-327-3175; Cell 321-536-3965 – jem2415@earthlink.net
 - Paul Lagassey – Cell 772-473-5900; sacristan@trinityvero.org
 - Lynn Howell – Phone 949-432-1120; lynnhowellusa@gmail.com.
- **Southwest Deanery:**
 - Betty Seckinger - Cell 863-221-4103 – bettyboop100100@gmail.com
 - Cyndy Berry – Home 863-875-7043 - Cell 203-215-0125 – cyndy.berry@usa.net

[NOTE: If you would like to join the Diocesan Altar Guild Board, please contact President Sandi Hendriks. We especially need additional representatives from the Northeast, Northwest, and Southwest Deaneries.]

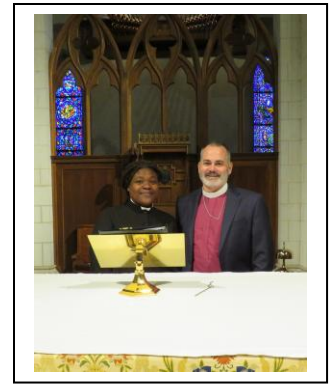
ADDITIONAL PICTURES FROM THE DAG ANNUAL MEETING AT THE CATHEDRAL – 14 FEBRUARY 2026:



Carol White, Sandra Davis, & Sandi Hendriks -- Linen Demonstration



DAG Banner



Chaplain Garcia Barnswell-Schmidt & Bishop Justin Holcomb



Carla Gintman, Hillary Gintman, & Dawne Miles



Candy Philbrick & Debbie Bryan



Lisa Mouton, Donna Ogletree, Jane Gabrielson, & Stephanie Byington



Karen Stewart & Wilna Brown



Shirley Caballero, Gail Hencken, & Mary Nan Johnson



Deg McCracken & Claudia Smith



Advance Planning Team members – Kathy Tindal, Cathedral Altar Guild Co-Directress, and Sandi Hendriks, DAG President



Peg Williams, Michelle Naghoon, Linda Jaundou, Elizabeth Sanders, Heather Rose, Dee VanHuesen, & Paulette Smith



Bishop Holcomb & Archdeacon Altenbach