



### *Welcome Home to Holy Apostles, The Very Rev. Barkley Thompson*

On March 19th, Holy Apostles is pleased to welcome home our next guest in our 50th Anniversary Celebration series of visiting former Rectors, Barkley Thompson. Barkley began his vocation in 2003 as Vicar of the Church of the Holy Apostles and helped launch our diminished but faithfully determined congregation into another exciting era of building and growth from 2003-2007.

What was once a flourishing Memphis parish with over 400 communicants, the Church of the Holy Apostles had experienced rapidly changing demographics in the Hickory Hill location. In September of 2000, after attendance fell to about 30 and after much prayerful deliberation, the Holy Apostles Mission Council decided to sell the building and land in Hickory Hill that we had called home since 1965. The proceeds were placed into a trust fund for a new church home and the pipe organ, banners and other church fixtures went into storage.

With the help of Bishop Don Johnson, our small but faithful community found a temporary home in the Agape Chapel of St. George's Independent School in Collierville and Barkley Thompson was appointed as Vicar. Very quickly, average attendance blossomed, and several vibrant programs, a youth group and Sunday evening Bluegrass Mass were implemented.

By December 2005, Thompson had been named Rector, and construction was underway on the first new church to be built in the Diocese of West Tennessee in well over a decade. "From the beginning of this process over 18 months ago until now, I have been impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm of Holy Apostles parishioners toward this task," the Rev. Thompson told *The Commercial Appeal*. "The parish truly believes that our building project is for the work of God's kingdom in East Shelby County."

Even as we prepared to consecrate our new church home in December 2006, the growing congregation already necessitated an expansion. As Bob Capra noted at the time, "The combination of the right priest, the right location and dedicated parishioners has resulted in phenomenal growth." As expansion plans were being drawn and the Rev. Thompson was preparing for his departure from Holy Apostles in 2007, he reflected on this phenomenal growth from less than 40 communicants to about 425 during his four-year faith journey in Collierville. "My time at Holy Apostles has been a faithful adventure characterized by joy," Thompson told *The Commercial Appeal*.

After leaving Holy Apostles, Barkley served as the Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in downtown Roanoke, Virginia. Since February 2013, Barkley serves as the eighth dean and twentieth Rector of historic downtown Christ Church Cathedral, the oldest church in Houston, Texas, and the cathedral

church of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. Barkley is an avid writer and has published essays in several publications. His first book, *Elements of Grace*, was published in December 2013. Barkley also serves on interfaith panels with leaders from other religious traditions and chairs the boards of The Beacon, Houston's largest empowerment day center for the homeless, and the Hines Center for Spirituality & Prayer. He also serves on the North American Committee for St. George's College-Jerusalem, the Anglican Center in the Holy Land.

Barkley earned a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy & Religion, magna cum laude, from Hendrix College; a Master of Arts in Religious Studies from The University of Chicago; and a Master of Divinity from The Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas, on whose board of trustees he serves. He is married to Jill, and they have two children.