

# R C I A



We have a wonderful group this year discerning the Catholic faith or seeking full initiation, including a number not pictured! Praise God!

## Service Committee Dinner

In September, the Service Committee organized a special dinner to recognize our parishioners who serve locally in our community. They also invited representatives from the local organizations which we support through our parish tithes, who shared information about their ministry to those present. Everyone enjoyed a wonderful spaghetti dinner prepared by the Knights of Columbus and the Columbiettes. The evening was a great success, with the social hall completely full and 40 parishioners signing up to get involved. We hope to offer the dinner again as a way to help strengthen our volunteer presence throughout the Beaufort community.



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# A Light for *Beaufort* Shining Brightly

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## Fall Blessings

### Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Many of you have been members of our parish family for decades, and you remember the days when Beaufort was still very small and St. Helena Island was largely undeveloped. For those who are newer, it is inspiring to hear about our parish's history of outreach.

Today, citizens of Beaufort benefit from a number of charitable organizations, but sixty years ago, this was not the case. Our parish offices on Pigeon Point, down the street from our original church, became a focal point for service to the needy and evangelization. In 1967, the St. Peter's Women's Club opened a thrift store on this property, which was a tremendous support to the needy of our area. The women led many outreach efforts, including reading local news for the blind two times a week, helping with local youth, prison ministry, and offering a summer camp for migrants.

In 1968, the parish established Holy Cross Center on St. Helena Island as an outreach to the African American community. Beginning in a rented store on Highway 21, the center flourished under the leadership of Sister Thecla and Sister Veronica. With help from parishioners, the center offered the local children after-school programs, tutoring, crafts, field trips, and religion classes. They gave a beautiful example of the Catholic faith. These efforts eventually led to the purchase of the current property on Seaside Road, and in the 1980s, our outreach ministry gradually grew into what is today the St. Francis Center.

These are just some of the efforts that led to St. Peter's being widely recognized as the most generous and active church in Beaufort, despite our small congregation. We continued to build on these efforts when we moved to our current campus. What a beautiful heritage we have inherited as a parish family!

*Father Andrew*



The thrift store offered clothes and other items to those in need, with proceeds supporting local charities.



Sister Veronica helps one of the local children in the after-school program at Holy Cross Center.

# A Model of Service

## Mrs. Martin Saw a Need



In 1986, Ida Martin looked around her and recognized that there were many working families and senior citizens in need in Bluffton. Although there was an organization on Hilton Head Island that provided assistance to those living there, there was no similar assistance available in Bluffton.

Armed at first with nothing more than an empty refrigerator, she began working to fill the need. She received food and clothing from family and friends, as well as by going door to door. At first, she distributed these items out of her garage.

As the ministry grew over the following year with support from local churches and community leaders, she chartered the organization as Bluffton Self Help. As the first permanent location, she was able to secure the old police station downtown. Locations changed over the years as more space was needed. In 2011, it moved to its current building in Sheridan Park of 6500 square feet.

## Bluffton Self Help Today

The seed planted by Mrs. Martin has now grown into a non-profit community center which helps thousands of people a year. Its focus is feeding, clothing, and educating locals in need. These are some of the services it offers:

- **Wellness Food Pantry**

Neighbors are offered access to healthy, fresh food options, as well as other essentials such as toiletries, diapers, and baby formula.



The Food Pantry offers fresh foods and other essentials.

- **Confidence Clothing Closet**

To enable people to dress for success for job interviews and for daily work, professional items of clothing are available for individuals to choose.

- **Emergency Financial Assistance**

Hundreds of families are helped each year as they experience a crisis, such as loss of employment or medical emergency. Individuals fill out an application and are interviewed one-on-one. Those who qualify are given assistance with housing, utility, or medical support to help them get through their period of crisis.

- **Holiday Services**

Staff and volunteers coordinate a variety of service projects, including Thanksgiving dinners, coats in winter, toys at Christmas, Easter baskets, and school supplies at the beginning of each school year.

Bluffton Self Help is supported by grants, private donors, commercial businesses, and local churches of many faiths, including St. Gregory the Great and St. Francis by the Sea.

## Expanding to Meet New Needs

In recent years, the leadership of Bluffton Self Help recognized that when they worked with families going through a crisis, there were often other underlying problems that needed to be addressed, such as unemployment or debt.

The Director of Bluffton Self Help, Kimberly Hall, began exploring what could be done through their center, especially in coordination with other non-profits in the area. After eight months of research and preparation, they began operating an Education and Resource Center out of their building.

The Education and Resource Center has gradually grown the number of services it offers. The staff treats each person with kindness and dignity, and tailors the services to meet their individual needs. For example, if an individual needs a job, the staff and volunteers can help with résumé writing, job applications, and make sure they have access to nice clothes for the interview from the Confidence Clothing Closet. Or if an individual is without their diploma, they can attend free GED classes in the center.

The Education and Resource Center partners with a number of non-profits which operate out of their building. For example, representatives from the Consumer Credit Counseling Service come from Savannah to offer free budgeting classes. The Lowcountry Legal Volunteers come to offer help with wills and other legal needs.

*The Education and Resource Center offers budgeting classes and assists with legal needs.*



## Come Hear For Yourself!

The Executive Director of Bluffton Self Help, Kimberly Hall, will be coming to Saint Peter's this coming Sunday, November 3, at 11:30am. She will give a presentation in the Walsh Palmetto Room, sharing the different ways that her organization bears fruit in Bluffton. She has some inspiring stories to share! The presentation will help you imagine how a center like ours could gradually grow and make a huge difference in the Beaufort community!



## A Model for Us To Follow

In recent weeks, we have been introducing the idea of purchasing the property next door to serve as a parish center for serving those in need. Bluffton Self Help is one of the organizations that uses the kind of model that we would like to imitate here, using local volunteers and partnering with local organizations to fill needs that are not adequately met.

Since the needs in our area will be different from those in Bluffton, our center will not be a carbon copy of Bluffton Self Help. But in a similar way, we will do research to identify the most pressing needs in our area, and we will develop a 5-year plan to start addressing some of those needs through our parish center.

