



**The Haitian Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan
Bronx, New York haitiangoodsam.org**

Profile of the Haitian Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan
1858 Hunt Ave Bronx, New York
Diocese of New York

Mission Statement

Rooted in the mission of the Episcopal Church as expressed in the Book of Common Prayer, the Haitian Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ by restoring all people to unity with God and one another in Christ. As we worship in the beauty of the Anglican liturgy, our congregation commits to be a beacon of hospitality, healing, and spiritual refuge—faithful to Christ, to our Haitian heritage, and to the Episcopal tradition.

Historical Overview

The Haitian Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan—affectionately known as Good Sam—was founded in February 1972 in New York City by Rev. Louis Dickens Celestin, a pioneering Haitian minister whose vision was to create a spiritual home for the growing Haitian immigrant community. The members of the congregation are scattered all over the Five boroughs, some of the towns of Long Island, New York; while the majority of them live in Brooklyn.

While remaining deeply grateful to various sister parishes where it has been harbored over decades of pilgrimage from All Angels in the upper west side to the Eastside of Manhattan, onto the Bronx, the Haitian Episcopal Church has moved more than 10 times and shown resilience, since each move meant losing some of its most loyal members.

Over 53 years, Good Sam has ministered to Haitian families across all five boroughs of New York City, becoming one of the earliest and most enduring Haitian Episcopal congregations in the United States. That it has been able to celebrate its 50th anniversary on the Day of the Pentecost in 2021, as proud owner of its own place of worship, at 1858 Hunt Ave Bronx, NY 10482, is a testament to God's grace and the faithfulness of its members

Clergy Leadership Through the Years

- Good Sam has been shepherded by a remarkable line of clergy whose dedication shaped the parish's identity and resilience:
- Rev. Louis Dickens Celestin – Founder and first priest-in-charge 1972 – 1980
- Rev. Auguste Pluviose who served as Priest-in-Charge from 1980 to 1985
- The Rt. Rev. Rigal Elizée for a brief period 1987 to 1989
- Rev. Dr. Pierre Andre Duvert who served first as lay reader to become the first member of the Haitian Episcopal Church ordained to the priesthood (1991 – 1995)
- Rev. F. Sanon – Served faithfully for 10 years, that is 1997 - 2007
- Rev. Dr. N. Nathanael St-Pierre who served from 2007 to 2012
- Rev. Sam Owen – Priest-in-Charge from 2012 to July 13, 2025, following his promotion as Canon at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine

Our ministry has also produced two deacons, The Rev Adeline Smith and the Rev. Wilson Estil together with several lay leaders: Gisele Isidore, Lucette Jean-louis, Andre Audige. Each leader contributed uniquely to the spiritual, cultural, and organizational growth of our congregation.

Infrastructure and Parish Home

Throughout its history, Good Sam has demonstrated extraordinary perseverance. The congregation moved more than ten times, worshiping in borrowed spaces, rented halls, and shared sanctuaries. Yet the community remained united, faithful and determined.

Today, through the support and advocacy of Bishop Andrew Dietsche, Good Sam is the proud owner of its permanent home at: 1858 Hunt Avenue Bronx, NY 10462

The property includes:

- A beautiful church building with an 8-rows-of-pews nave plus balcony and space for sacristy and offices
- A large basement fully furnished with kitchen and restrooms to host meetings and fellowship gatherings
- An adjacent parochial hall equipped with a stage, kitchen and bathroom used for receptions, classes, youth activities, and other community events.

The Morris Park / Hunt Avenue Community

This long-awaited stability has allowed the congregation to expand its ministries and deepen its presence in the neighborhood. Good Sam is now located in the heart of Morris Park or the Hunt Avenue / Morris Park Bronx 10462 community, a vibrant and diverse Bronx neighborhood known for its:

- Strong family-oriented culture
- Mix of long-established Italian-American families and a rapidly growing new wave of mostly Muslim immigrant communities
- Small businesses, bakeries, restaurants, and community centers
- Proximity to major institutions such as the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Jacobi Medical Center
- Safe, residential streets lined with single-family homes and multi-unit dwellings. The area's diversity and stability make it an ideal home for a parish committed to hospitality, cultural pride, and community engagement.

Educational facilities

As part of NYC Community School District 11 the following public elementary, middle, schools operate in or are immediately adjacent to the Morris Park area:

Elementary & Middle Schools (K-8)

- P.S./M.S. 083 Donald Hertz: Zoned K-8 school located at 950 Rhineland Avenue, serving the core Morris Park community.
- M.S. 498 Van Nest Academy: A local middle school (Grades 6-8) located at 1640 Bronxdale Avenue.
- Bronx Charter School for Excellence 2: A highly rated public charter school operating K-8 across two local campuses in Morris Park (Elementary at 1804 Holland Avenue and Middle at 1744 Williamsbridge Road). [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

High Schools (9-12)

There are no standalone public high schools located directly on Hunt Avenue or in the immediate geographical center of Morris Park. Students residing in this area typically commute a short distance to larger nearby high schools or access citywide programs, which include:

- Herbert H. Lehman High School: Located at 3000 East Tremont Avenue.

Liturgy and Music

Worship at Good Sam reflects the richness of Anglican tradition infused with Haitian spirituality, warmth, and musical expression.

Clergy & Lay Leadership in Worship

- Rev. Tancred Diègue – Visiting Priest
- Deacon Wilson Estil – Parish Deacon

Lay Leaders: Gisèle Isidore and Lucette Jn-Louis; Andre Audige (of blessed memory)

Good Sam's services are uplifted by the gifted ministry of organist Ural Swanston—an adopted Haitian from St. Kitts—whose family also contributes in various ministries. Their accompaniment enriches the liturgy with a blend of Anglican hymns, Haitian sacred music, and soulful choral traditions.

Membership and Community Life

From its earliest days, Good Sam was built by pioneers whose faith and sacrifice sustained the congregation through decades of transitions. Among them: Noice Louissaint, Fannie Reimbeau, Dorothy Terrier, Beatrice Graham, Kernizan Bertrand, Esteve Moreau, families like Chery, Granvil, Drouillard, Dangervil to name a few.

Attendance Trends

- Historically, Sunday services welcomed 50–70 parishioners
- In recent years, in-person attendance has stabilized at under 25 regular worshipers
- Since COVID 19, a significant number of members now participate faithfully via Zoom, extending Good Sam's reach beyond physical boundaries

Despite demographic shifts, the congregation remains spiritually vibrant, deeply connected, and committed to growth.

Summary of Parish Activities

The parish continues to sustain a vibrant rhythm of worship, formation, fellowship, and community outreach throughout the year. At the heart of our common life is the celebration of the Holy Eucharist every Sunday at 2:00 PM, offered a total of 54 times in 2025. These services welcomed 3,932 worshippers, averaging 72 attendees and 34 communicants per Sunday. In addition to Sunday worship, the parish maintains a regular pattern of prayer through Thursday evening services and encourages members to join the diocesan daily prayers at 12:00 PM. Special liturgical observances and feast day celebrations to further enrich our worship life. Christian formation remains a priority, supported by a weekly Sunday School program, struggling since the aftermath of COVID-19, that nurtures the faith of our younger members. Parish organizations such as the Episcopal Church Women (ECW) goes way beyond Mother's Day and Harvest Day rituals and celebrations, and beyond the efforts put forward to support

fellowship, fundraising, pastoral ministries and contribute actively to fellowship, service, and spiritual growth.

- Music continues to be a cherished part of our worship, led by our organist Mr. Uthrald Swanston and supported by a dedicated parish choir, enhancing the beauty and reverence of our liturgy.

Stewardship Committee

The parish's administrative and missionary commitments are strengthened by a Stewardship Committee, which helps cultivate a culture of gratitude, generosity, and responsible resource management. Our parish website serves as an important tool for communication, visibility, and connection with the wider Episcopalian community.

Community Outreach

Outreach remains a defining dimension of our mission. Along with catechism teaching the faith, worship and discipline of the Episcopal Church, with special emphasis on preparing youth and new members to receive the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Confirmation Good Sam Church offers:

- free literacy and learning classes
- ESL basic and intermediate (on-line) classes for newcomers, helping recent arrivals integrate more confidently the host community.
- Annual concerts and cultural events, opening our doors to neighbors and fostering a spirit of welcome and hospitality.
- translation and, para legal assistance with Immigration issues and partnerships with local schools and churches.

Good Sam's community outreach & ministries is also manifest through occasional food distributions, and pastoral visits to the sick and the elderly.

Together, these ministries reflect the aspirations and congregational priorities expressed by members of a parish that seeks to be as prayerful and outward looking as it is committed to worship, service and Christ-like community engagement.

Neighboring episcopal & community churches

Nearby Episcopal and ecumenical partners include:

- St. Thomas Episcopal Church
- St. Luke's Episcopal Church
- Grace Episcopal Church
- Local Baptist, Catholic, and Pentecostal congregations

These churches form a network of spiritual support and shared mission.

Financial priorities & stewardship

While stewardship remains essential to sustaining our mission, current priorities include:

- Going forward with upgrading and exploitation of the parochial hall & basement
- Strengthening and expanding our music ministry
- Launching of a youth program

- Fully supporting clergy and staff, namely in provide for the housing of a Priest-in-charge, mortgage and building maintenance included
- Launching a parish endowment program

Conclusion

For more than half a century now, the Haitian Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan has stood as a spiritual refuge, cultural anchor, and beacon of hope for Haitian immigrants and their descendants in New York City. Its story is one of faith in adversity, perseverance through displacement, leadership rooted in service, community shaped by worship, music, and fellowship and a mission grounded in the Gospel and the Episcopal tradition. Good Sam continues to honor its founders while embracing a future filled with possibility, renewal, and God's abundant grace.

•Vestry

In addition to the Priest-in-charge, the congregation of the Haitian Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan is led by a vestry, that is a governing body comprised of two wardens (A Senior Warden and a Junior Warden), and a number of elected lay members.

- The Rector: Serves as the spiritual leader and presiding officer of the vestry. [1 , 2]
- The Wardens: Usually elected by the congregation. The Senior Warden leads the parish in the absence of a rector, while the Junior Warden generally oversees church facilities and physical grounds.
- The Lay Members: Elected by active members of the parish to represent the congregation's interests, they typically serve staggered, multi-year terms.

•Annex I

Profile of Priest-in-Charge for Good Samaritan Church

Introduction

Our congregation has journeyed faithfully through many transitions and has, by God's grace, settled into our new permanent home in the Morris Park neighborhood of the Bronx.

Throughout this eventful journey we have managed to remain a community deeply rooted in prayer, fellowship, and service, united by faith and the vibrant spirit of our cultural heritage.

As we step into this new chapter of our journey and, in order to provide the congregation with the compassion spiritual depth, nurturing our faith and strengthening our shared mission in Christ we are looking for a Priest-in-Charge:

- Fluent in French and Haitian Creole, with strong communication skills in English and who will keep the congregation connected with the Bronx's IPC's, the Diocese and the Christian Church at large.
- Spiritually grounded in Episcopal tradition and to encourage us to develop our own spiritual life in prayer and study, yet open to creative and contextual approaches to worship and ministry.
- Experienced in pastoral care, not only demonstrating empathy and wisdom in serving individuals and families across generations, but also helping us grow as a community of faith seeking Christ in all people.
- Strong in liturgical leadership, capable of delivering meaningful sermons and inspiring worship in both languages by making the gospel relevant to people lives.

- Community-oriented, with a passion for local engagement and outreach in the Bronx's diverse neighborhoods as well as the ability to inspire and incorporate youth into the full life and ministry of the congregation.
- Skilled in organizational leadership, able to coordinate with vestry and lay leaders as well as the ECW (Episcopal Church Women) and the Men's Association to offer their life, talent and treasure while strengthening the Vestry or church governance and ministry programs.
- Spiritually mature and approachable, creating a welcoming atmosphere for newcomers and long-standing members alike.
- Strong in Parish Administration: to help Good Sam church meet its financial challenges by leading us in our own leadership program and motivate all members to the responsibility of our own stewardship in terms of time, talent and treasure.

Annex I

Profil Prèt-an-Chaj Legliz Bon Samariten

Entwodiksyon

Kongregasyon nou an te travèse anpil tranzisyon avèk kouraj, jiskaske grasadye, li rive enstale tèt li nan yon legliz ki rele-l pa-l, nan katye Morris Park nan Bronx. Pandan tout vwayaj sa a, nou te reisi rete yon kominote ki anrasinen fon nan lapriyè, nan fratènite ak sèvis, ini nan lafwa san je nou pa dekole sou eritaj kiltirèl nou.

Pandan n'ap antre nan yon nouvo chapit nan vwayaj la, nou bezwen yon pastè devwe, ki ka gide nou avèk konpasyon, vizyon, ak pwofondè espiritiyèl, nourri lafwa nou ak ranfòse misyon nou pataje nan Kris la. Nou ap chèche yon Prèt-an-Chaj:

1. Ki pale byen franse ak kreyòl ayisyen, ak bon jan ladrès kominikasyon an anglè e ki pral kenbe kongregasyon an konekte ak IPC Bronx la, dyosèz la ak legliz Jezikri a an jeneral.
2. Espiritiyèlman byen chita nan tradisyon Episkopal ase pou ankouraje nou devlope pwòp lavi espiritiyèl pa nou nan lapriyè ak etid, pandan l'pare pou eseye apwòch ak kontèks ki kreyatif nan adore ak sèvi Bondye.
3. Ki gen eksperyans nan swen pastoral, pa sèlman nan demontre senpati ak bon konprann nan sèvi moun ak fanmi atravè jenerasyon, men tou ede nou grandi kòm yon kominote lafwa k'ap chache Kris la nan tout moun.
4. Bon jan nan lidèchip litijik, ki kapab preche sèmonj ki gen sans epi ki kondi sèvis adorasyon nan tou 2 lang yo epi fè levanjil la enpòtan nan lavi moun.
5. Bon nan devlopman kominotè, ak yon pasyon pou angajman lokal ak kontak ant divès katye Bronx yo, men jan ak kapasite pou enspire ak enkòpore jèn yo nan tout aspè lavi ak sèvis kongregasyon an.
6. Kalifye nan lidèchip òganizasyonèl, ki ka kowòdone ak manm klèje, lidè layik ak ECW (Dam Legliz Episkopal) ak Asosyasyon Gason yo pou ofri lavi yo, talan ak trezò yo, pandan y'ap ranfòse pwogram gouvènans ak ministè manm Vestry legliz la.
7. Matirite Espiritiyèl ak abòdab, pou kreye yon atmosfè akeyan pou fè rapwochman ant ansyen man ak nouvo manm legliz la.
8. Bonjan nan Administrasyon Pawasyal: pou ede legliz Bon Sam leve defi finansye li yo, epi motive tout manm kongregasyon pou yo potekole avèk tan, talan ak trezò yo pou Pawas Good Sam ka vin non sèlman responsab tèt li, men respekte obligasyon misonè li epi patisipe toutbon nan bati Legliz Jezikri a.