

St. Monica's Episcopal Church

FROM THE VESTRY

St Monica's Senior Warden, Matt Devlin, today announced the call and acceptance of The Rev. Jonathan W. Evans as our new Rector. "We are excited about Rev. Evans upcoming service as St. Monica's new Rector. Many of us are familiar with him and he knows St. Monica's. There is no place he would rather be, and we would not want him anywhere else! "Said the Senior Warden in announcing the call.

Born and raised in Atlanta and Charlotte, Fr. Jonathan returns to Naples, after spending the last four years in Sarasota. He began his career working as a psychotherapist with adolescents in mental health settings. He had a concurrent call of working with children in impoverished countries as a missionary. In his late 20's, he heeded the call and served through a ministry with street children in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2000-2001. During his year in mission, he discerned a call to ordained ministry. At the time, he was a Presbyterian and soon married his wife, Barbara, who was and is an avid Episcopalian. After several years of taking her to the Episcopal Church on his free Sundays away from the Presbyterian Church, the beauty of the liturgy, the reverence, and the mystery pulled him into the Episcopal Church. Just over six years ago, he became an Episcopalian at St. Monica's and then served as a Transitional Deacon with us until becoming an Associate Rector at St. Boniface in Siesta Key.

In his ministry at St. Boniface for the past four years, Fr. Jonathan was instrumental in establishing the Center for Spiritual Transformation (centerforspiritualtransformation.org), a Deaf worshipping community (now meeting at St. Margaret's, a more accessible location for the Deaf), and the Boniface Migration Ministry Workgroup (which has educated hundreds on matters of immigration, has helped immigrant families with legal fees, and now sponsors asylum seekers).

Fr. Jonathan and Barbara (Bryan) have been married for 19 years. They have two children, Luca (11) and Vittoria (six). Fr. Jonathan loves spending time at the beach with his family, cooking, and enjoying anything outdoors - cycling, paddle boarding, fishing, boating, and hiking.

In a show of appreciation, St Monica's will host a welcoming coffee on Saturday August 7th following the 5 PM evening service and again on Sunday, August 8th, following the 10 AM service. Those wishing to welcome Fr. Evans may do so at that time.



FROM THE REV. JONATHAN EVANS

Dear Friends,

I am thrilled to write to you now as your next Rector. I am also deeply honored. When my family and I joined St. Monica's six years ago after having left the Presbyterian Church, you welcomed us with open arms. Simply put, we truly enjoyed being with you, sharing in ministry together, and living into our common faith. Although I was assigned to work with the youth at the time, I felt connected to the larger congregation, and I dreamed of what it would be like to serve as Rector with you.

After serving as Associate Rector at St. Boniface since we left St. Monica's, I found out there was going to be a possibility of an opening at St. Monica's. For the next several months, I kept a steady eye on the developments of the profile and the opening. And at last, I was able to interview with the Search Committee and then the Vestry. During the process I just felt at home. When I visited for the final interview, again, I felt like I was coming back home. I felt lightness and joy. There is no other place I'd rather be than with you all. There is no other position I would rather have than this one with you.

I envision my first months getting to know newcomers, reacquainting myself with many of you, visiting ministry groups, engaging in mission together, and seeing where the Spirit takes us! The Spirit always takes us forward, not backward. I want to imagine with you what this future will look like. I invite you to pray with the Spirit, allowing dreams to form and to notice what is unfolding before us.

God's blessings be upon you!

In Christ.

Fr. Jonathan Evans