

DEACONS OF EAST CAROLINA: THE REV'D DECAON REBECCA BEAN

Rebecca Bean serves as a deacon at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Goldsboro, where she has been for 4 years. Ordained as a deacon in 2015, she was one of the first students in the newest East Carolina School for Deacons.

Rebecca moved to North Carolina in 2009 to marry Cory, her husband. Cory and Rebecca joined St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Goldsboro after they were married and Rebecca learned about the Episcopal Diaconate for the first time in her confirmation classes. It immediately piqued her interest. She continued to learn and explore, entering into the formal discernment process a few years later.

Rebecca's passion for public education has been a focus throughout her life. She was a teacher for 11 years, teaching in 3 different countries and 4 different states in the USA, mostly in middle school and high school mathematics. She left the classroom when her daughter, Sophia, was born in 2009.

Though she has not returned to classroom teaching, she continues to focus much of her ministry work in public education. In 2012 she helped to establish the Dillard Middle School Partnership Project, a partnership initially with St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and Dillard Middle School, a high needs middle school near the church. When she moved to St. Andrew's, the congregation quickly supported the project and it expanded. St. Francis Episcopal Church in Goldsboro has also supported projects related to this partnership.

As Partners In Education, the churches seek to support and partner with the school and build relationships that will help meet the needs of all students. She works to listen to leaders at the school and then connect available resources. That means that projects change from year to year, but include helping with school supplies and other classroom needs, crisis response work to help families with urgent needs, and working directly with students through the Wonderful Outstanding Women (WOW) mentorship program.

The WOW program is beginning its fifth year. Volunteers from St. Andrew's and St. Stephen's meet with 8-10 young women building relationships and helping the students to develop leadership, academic, relationship, and life skills. The group and the volunteers stay together throughout their time at Dillard. The first WOW group graduated last year and they will be working with the school to select a new group of young women very soon.

In addition to work with Dillard, Rebecca found herself involved with disaster relief and response after Hurricane Matthew caused widespread flooding in Goldsboro. She worked with local agencies to support those affected by the storm, reaching out to displaced families, setting up clothing and supply distribution through St. Andrew's and Dillard Middle School, and building relationships with other agencies in the area. This served her well when the community was again faced with flooding following Hurricane Florence. She coordinated "Camp Florence" at St. Andrew's, with volunteers from all three Episcopal Churches in Goldsboro, and the support of several other area organizations. Together, they served over 35 children for the week long camp, which included breakfast, lunch, a take home bag of pre-prepared food for supper, and donations of books for every child.

Recently, Rebecca has been working to find ways to advocate more for public education in her area and in the state of North Carolina. She has participated in learning opportunities and begun doing advocacy work with the local Board of Education and its related committees. She hopes to expand this important area of diaconal ministry in the coming years. As the resident deacon at St. Andrew's, she serves liturgically, preaching about once a month and supports the many outreach efforts of the congregation. She also visits other churches when she's invited to share her work and teach others about diaconal ministry and issues surrounding Public Education. She serves on the Diocesan Commission on Ministry and is a leader in developing and supporting the Diocese of East Carolina School for Deacons.

