



ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
PARISH PROFILE
2019

258 Concord Street, Newton Lower Falls MA

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission today continues the journey started for St. Mary's when our cornerstone was laid in the fall of 1813. We place our trust in the Lord whose guiding hand empowers us all to:

- Worship and sing, pray and reflect through our celebration of the Eucharist. Offer ongoing opportunities for Christian growth in faith and practice.
- Reach outward to support the needs of our parishioners and our growing and ever-changing community, bringing comfort, renewal, spiritual healing, and fellowship.
- Nurture, educate, and challenge our youth to grow in Christ so they can articulate their faith and walk with God throughout their lives.
- Celebrate the richness in our diversity and welcome all who gather with us in the spirit of Christ.
- Honor the historical significance of our past in the uniqueness of our church and its grounds, and strive to preserve and enhance their beauty.
- Recognize and respond to the changes in today's world, and aspire to build and maintain a parish that will acknowledge and be open to the challenges of the future.



INTRODUCTION

St. Mary's is a close-knit community of worshippers with varying theological perspectives, united by a belief in progressive Christian values and the spirit of giving embodied in Christ's mission. We come together each Sunday from every corner of the Boston metropolitan area to enjoy each other's company, reflect on the week completed and the week ahead, and partake in the ceremony of the Eucharist with song and prayer.

Our values closely reflect the classic New England-style white wooden church in which we worship. Our warm and welcoming space lends itself to a relaxed atmosphere and a tolerant service style. In the Episcopal parlance, St. Mary's lands firmly in the category of low church. We perform our service mostly in spoken language interspersed with hymns and anthems sung by our choir, and some of our prayers make use of modern and non-gendered language. We largely eschew the pomp and circumstance of the high church style in favor of a more informal setting and balance our casual feel with the traditional prayers and interludes that every Episcopalian would recognize and perhaps even know by heart.

In keeping with this emphasis on reflection and community, St. Mary's parishioners hail from across the entire spectrum of Christian beliefs, and we seek to meet our members at whatever place in their spiritual journey they happen to find themselves. While some in our community are "cradle Episcopalians," others were part of different denominations or religions before finding a sanctuary within these walls. Given our highly diverse perspectives, we might find ourselves with varying levels of interest in performing deep analysis of scripture, but we come together around the central tenets of Christ's healing and saving vision and our obligation to live life in accordance with that most paramount of commandments, to love one another as Christ loves us.

St. Mary's is a multigenerational and family friendly, faith-based community. Some of our members first came to the church as youngsters and others came upon it while church shopping. Our parish is as diverse in age and hometown as it is in spiritual background, and we celebrate and value this important characteristic of our collective identity.

Many members are active with internal ministries such as Altar Guild, lay readers, coffee hour hosts, greeters and ushers, choir, and more. Keeping and expanding these activities is an ongoing challenge. We are always looking for ways to expand participation.

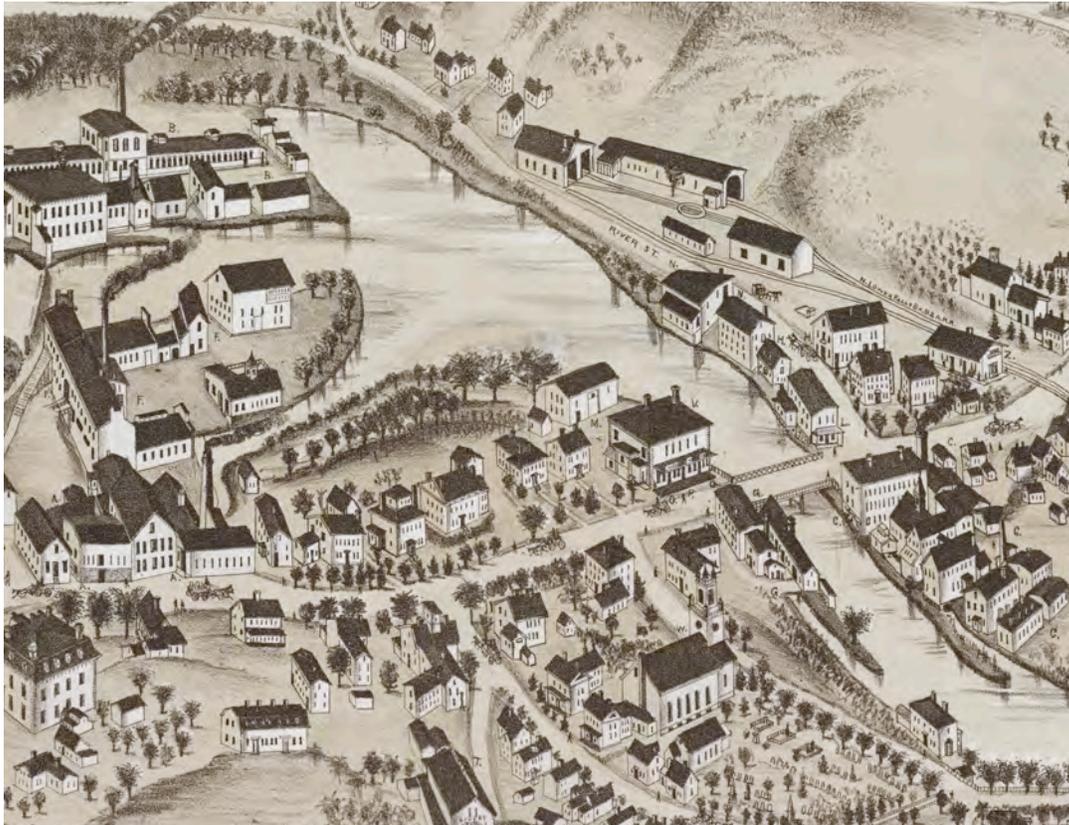


HISTORY OF ST. MARY'S

The beautiful white church on the Charles River has thrived since 1813. In the early 1800's "Newtowne" was a growing town of mills, taking advantage of the falls in the Charles River that later gave Newton Lower Falls its name. In 1811 a group of residents started meeting for religious services in a school house on Washington Street. The "congregation" was led by a lay reader who was studying to be an Episcopal priest. On April 7, 1812, a group organized themselves into the Society of Protestant Episcopalians. Priests from established churches in Boston and Cambridge came to conduct services for the nascent parish. In June of 1813 The Episcopal Society of St. Mary's was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



Drawn by a homesick teenager at boarding school, this is the only image of the original church shown with four windows in the nave before its length was expanded.



Newton Lower Falls in 1880: St. Mary's is located in the lower right-hand corner.

The thirty-three founders of the church were mill owners and local businessmen. The estates of these men were taxed to raise money for worship. In addition, individual pews were sold and that money was used to fund the activities of the church. Pews continued to be owned into the 1940s.

Discussions soon began about building a church and a budget of \$5,000 was approved. Samuel Brown of Boston donated over two acres to the church for a building and churchyard. On September 29, 1813, the cornerstone was laid and building began. Seven months later, the church was consecrated. The architecture was loosely based on Christ Church Boston (Old North Church). St. Mary's was the first Episcopal church built in Massachusetts after the Revolutionary War.

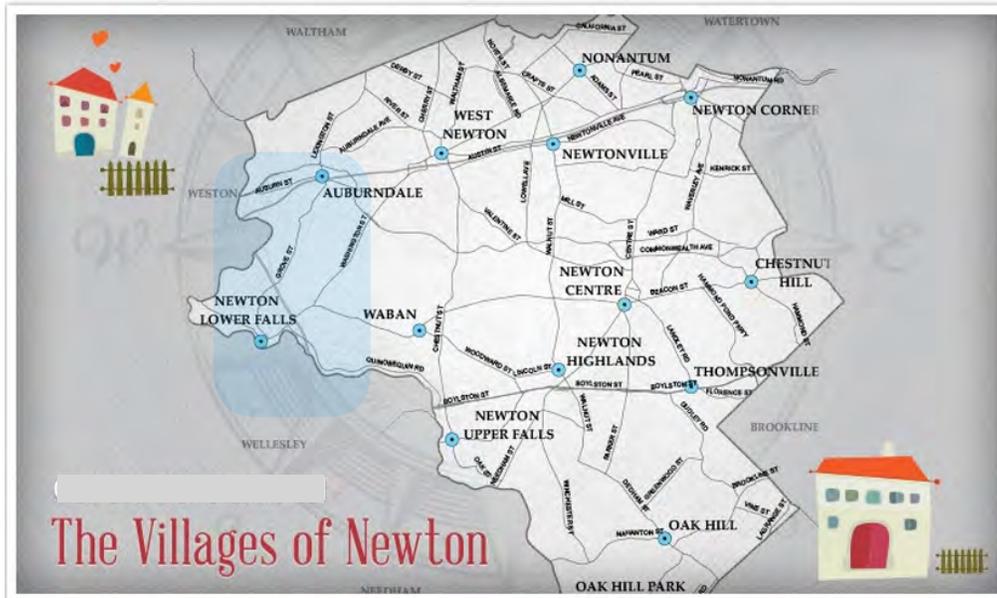
The church struggled financially in its early days, but was rescued by the Reverend Alfred Louis Baurly whose tenure as rector lasted from 1822 until 1851. The church thrived, serving mill owners, workers, and their families.



Gravestone of Zibeon Hooker, drummer boy at the Battle of Bunker Hill.

OUR LOCATION

The city of Newton, Massachusetts is made up of thirteen distinct villages. Saint Mary's is located in the village of Lower Falls, a historic community located on the Charles River. It is situated about ten miles west of downtown Boston. In its earliest years Newton Lower Falls functioned as an industrial village, with the first dam built along the Charles River in 1704 as a means to power an iron works. By the end of the 18th century more dams had been built and the town was prospering. By then, most of the mills were paper mills.



St. Mary's Episcopal Church and the adjacent residential area on Grove Street are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Newton Lower Falls Historic District. Today the Lower Falls commercial area extends across the Charles River into Wellesley and includes coffee shops, restaurants, retail shops, and professional offices. Newton is known for the high quality of its public schools, low crime rates, and low unemployment. Runners of the Boston Marathon pass the church on their way to the brutal Heartbreak Hill, the most difficult section of the course. The city also has another claim to fame—lending its name to the Fig Newton!

Newton offers residents a small-town atmosphere with the big-city advantages of living so close to Boston with its rich history and cultural diversity. Founded in 1630, Boston was the scene of numerous significant events during the American Revolution. Zibeon Hooker, the drummer boy from the Battle of Bunker Hill, is buried in St. Mary's churchyard.

Known as a cultural city, Boston is a hub for music and arts. The Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Pops Orchestra, the Boston Ballet, and the Museum of Fine Arts are a few of its world class institutions.

Of course, no discussion of Boston is complete without mention of its beloved professional sports teams which collectively have won twelve championship titles since 2001. Perhaps most beloved, the Boston Red Sox play their home games at Fenway Park. All Boston activities are accessible by public transportation from Newton.

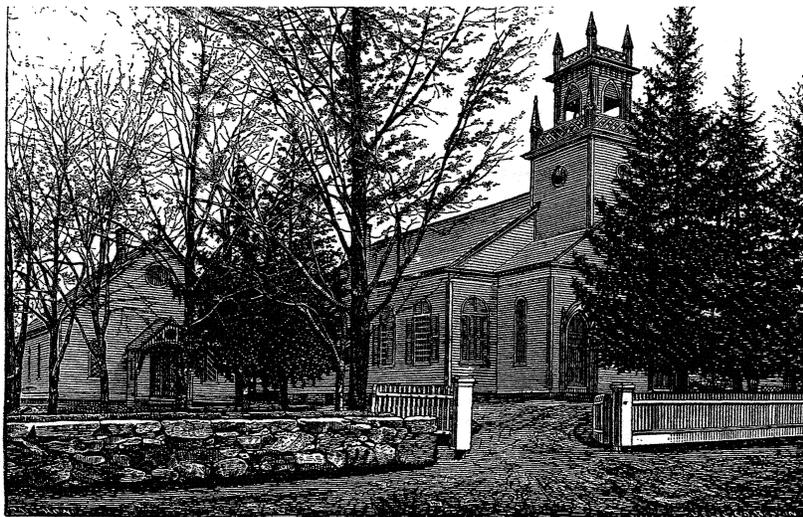
In its ideally situated location, Saint Mary's draws families from the following towns:

	FAMILIES	PERCENT
Wellesley	31	21%
Newton	30	21%
Needham	10	7%
Boston	9	6%
Natick	8	6%
Weston	7	5%
Wayland	5	3%
Framingham	3	2%
Other MA towns	29	20%
Out of state	13	9%
TOTAL	145	100%

CHURCH AND GROUNDS

The classic wooden church built in 1813 is on the National Register of Historic Places. The property is over two acres in size and incorporates the historical churchyard and the rectory. The rectory is a four bedroom, two-and-a-half bathroom house built in 1948. Updates to the house are being made in anticipation of a new rector. The spacious church yard is used for many events including the Blessing of the Animals, annual picnics, the Easter egg hunt, and summer punch on the lawn. Our children share the Hills and Falls Nursery School playground.

A chapel, built in 1866, and parish hall, built in 1903 were added to the original church structure. In 1939 this wing was destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt and again fire brought it down in 1940. In 1941 the current parish hall was built on the other side of the church.



The original parish hall was located to left of the sanctuary.

Today the church still retains the original box pews and much of its original structure. Past non-historical changes have been undone and the original look restored. The pews are labeled with the names of the original owners.



During the celebration of the church's 200th Anniversary in 2013, we raised over \$600,000 that was used to update the infrastructure of the building and to complete a major renovation of the parish hall. The new parish hall complements the interior of the church and has revitalized use of the facilities. It hosts an Alcoholics Anonymous group that has been meeting at St. Mary's since 1971. A yoga group uses the space weekly. The buildings are in sound physical shape and up to date.



MUSIC AT ST. MARY'S

Music is instrumental to our worship and through hymns, psalms, and anthems, we praise God. We are blessed with a music director and two choirs who provide us with rich and varied music that enhances and invigorates our worship. Concerts and other musical events provide occasions for fellowship and opportunities to include the neighboring community in non-religious activities at St. Mary's.



The Adult Choir helps lead the 10:00 a.m. Sunday service each week from September through June, singing the service music, psalms, hymns, and special anthems. In addition, the Junior Choir sings once a month. The church's wooden interior, with high ceilings and box pews, is acoustically ideal for music and speech. Our worship is invigorated by special music services throughout the church year that include Lessons and Carols in Advent, special music on Christmas Eve, and a special music service during Lent that is often a musical setting of the Mass. The choir also sings on Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday and at other occasional services such as Evensong or a Taizé service. The music on certain occasions and some Sundays is enhanced by guest instrumentalists, such as a trumpet, string trio, flute, or oboe.





The baroque pipe organ was built by Fritz Noack in 1965. A Steinway grand piano in the sanctuary allows for a completely different sound for musical preludes and postludes or to accompany singing. When the piano was donated a few years ago we altered the chancel so that it can be reconfigured to allow for occasional concerts. Whether held in the sanctuary or in the parish hall, these concerts provide an opportunity for our community to meet and enjoy music outside of worship, and for us to invite others to join us in appreciating good music.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

St. Mary's offers a welcoming, diverse Christian education program for infants through eighth graders. Sunday School is comprised of three multi-age classrooms to meet the spiritual needs of the youngest members of our congregation. We look forward to serving between eight and twenty families each Sunday. Attendance can vary from twelve to forty children.

A Godly Play member church, St. Mary's classrooms invite children in the elementary grades to move through the liturgical year with wonder. Our middle school students enjoy a custom curriculum based on the principles of Episcopal tradition and faith exploration.



Younger children participate in our nursery classroom with Bible stories and crafts. St. Mary's Director of Youth Ministry and Religious Education is a credentialed Montessori teacher who holds additional certification in Godly Play, Peace Education, and Non-Violent Communication.

Our youth participate in parish life through a variety of ministries including Junior Choir and St. Mary's acolyte program. They can also be found making pies for our neighbors living in affordable housing, flipping pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, bringing pets for blessings, and acting in the annual Christmas pageant. Older children join in reading and serving at special services.



OUTREACH MINISTRIES



St. Mary's is committed to an outreach program that includes our local community as well as the nation and the world. We support Episcopal Relief and Development and also schools such as Epiphany School in Dorchester and Esperanza Academy in Lawrence, which provide education to underserved families. Closer to home, we work with our neighbors at New Falls Apartments, a federally-funded housing community, supporting them as we can throughout the year with school supplies and backpacks, Christmas gifts, and other individual payments.

We recently initiated a new ministry for students at Mass Bay Community College where we have provided scholarships to seven "Dreamers" and other undocumented students who need financial assistance but have few other sources of scholarship support. Church members act as mentors to several international students.



A biennial yard sale raises several thousand dollars that are donated to local food pantries and Common Cathedral for support of their feeding programs. We support the United Way Cafe in Framingham (dinner program for the needy), Rosie's Place (women's drop-in shelter), and B-SAFE (Bishop's Summer Academic and Fun Enrichment program). All these programs draw parishioners to serve these organizations.

Importantly, we are looking to expand outreach programs in the future and look forward to working with our new rector to keep ongoing programs energized and future programs in the pipeline.



FINANCES

St. Mary's is blessed to be fiscally sound. The total operating budget for 2017 was \$443,660. Our pledge and plate income was \$301,934. We drew on our endowment for \$123,433 and received \$79,066 in income from our tenants and other incidental users.

St. Mary's is home to the Hills and Falls Nursery School, which has been a tenant since 1944. For the past nine years the Presbyterian congregation of Christ the King has shared our sanctuary and other facilities. These two major tenants contribute much to the life and finances of the church.

In 2017 our endowment stood at \$2,430,062. The Investment Committee employs a three-year average balance drawdown methodology. The maximum recommended drawdown is designed to maintain the endowment's constant purchasing power. The endowment draw is determined by the Vestry and is normally between four and five percent.



STAFF

St. Mary's employs a full-time Rector, a half-time Director of Music who serves as organist and choir director, and the Parish Administrator who works thirty hours a week. In addition, the Director of Youth Ministry and Religious Education and a second teacher keep Sunday School thriving. Care for babies and toddlers is provided by paid caregivers.



WHAT WE SEEK IN A RECTOR

As a vibrant and richly diverse congregation with a progressive outlook, but also with a profound respect for our deep historical roots, St. Mary's seeks a leader who will enthusiastically bring us forward into the future while remaining mindful of and grounded in our proud past.

St. Mary's is fortunate to have had a series of rectors highly committed to the pastoral care of our congregation and associated members of our community. We principally seek a pastor who is approachable, relatable, friendly, and who feels called to care for members of our community as a priest.

We seek a preacher who is open-minded and sharply cognizant of our members' different places in their spiritual journeys. This preacher's inspired spirit will come across readily in succinct sermons that are firmly anchored in the relevancy of Christ's mission to our modern lives and apply the Bible practically to daily living. Our rector should be able to communicate as easily with our youngest members as with our oldest and should be comfortable engaging with all of our members and offering advice and guidance as a spiritual mentor, as a community leader, and as a friend.

We look for a rector who will bring an informal style to the pulpit, in keeping with our low-church worship format, and ideally will pepper in some humor! We thrive with an engaging and conversational preaching style. Our rector should be able to speak directly to the congregation, doing so without heavy use of notes, with an awareness of the tense state of affairs in our nation and world, and be willing to articulate that our identity as Christians demands both vigorous Christian worship and the pursuit of social justice.



We seek a leader who is an able administrator and highly capable manager of our staff. Our rector will need to provide energy and vision that can fuel our efforts inside and outside the church doors. This person should be highly respectful of and deferential toward our seasoned and passionate lay leadership, taking care to build positive working relationships with our various committees and stewards. Our rector needs to have an interest in music, a deep appreciation for our wonderful choir and junior choir, and a close connection with our music director.

The new rector will join our strong lay leadership in drawing in new, younger parishioners and families that will form the core of our community for years to come. The rector will bring skills and enthusiasm to work with the parish to develop and implement new programs that will strengthen our faith community.

St. Mary's Parish Prayer for a New Rector

Almighty God, source of all wisdom and understanding and giver of every gift: Look graciously on your Church, and guide the minds and hearts of those who are discerning the person you are calling to be rector of this parish.

Keep us patient, prayerful, open, and joyful.

Grant us the clarity of vision to discern your will, the courage to pursue it, and the grace to accomplish it.

Help us work together with mutual forbearance and respect.

Draw our hearts to you and make us wholly yours, so that we may receive a faithful pastor who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; all this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



APPLICATIONS

The rector search committee is receiving applications for the position of rector of St Mary's Episcopal Church until May 11. Candidates wishing to apply for the position should send their OTM profile, cover letter, and CV or résumé to stmarysrectorsearch@gmail.com.

Queries or questions about the position may also be sent to the same e-mail address.