

Christ Church Episcopal
671 Route 28
Harwich Port, Massachusetts 02646



Parish Profile
2019

508 432 1787
christepiscopalharwich.org
christchurchharwichport@comcast.net

Table of Contents

*“Holy God who calls us to Christ Church,
we thank you for this sacred space that is our true home,”*

Welcome to Christ Church	2
Prayer for New Ministry	3
Harwich Quick Facts	4
Our Community and Cape Cod	5
A Brief History of Christ Church Episcopal	8
Our Parish Organization	10

“for the mission and vision of this Church”

The Mission Statement of Christ Church	11
The Vision Statement of Christ Church	11

“for the many ministries of this Church that are our proper task.”

At the Center of Our Life Together: Our Worship, Music, & Education ...	12
The Core of Our Christian Vocation: Service and Ministry	13

*“We pray you guide us as we seek to receive a
faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries.
We pray that we may more fully engage our baptism, and embrace the joys only you can give.”*

Our Strengths and Challenges	15
Our Core Values	17
Our Hopes for a New Rector	17

“Move us beyond ourselves to a deeper vision of your plan for us.”

Welcome to Christ Church

Located in Harwich Port on beautiful Cape Cod, Christ Church is a vibrant Episcopal community dedicated to reaching out to all people, so that they may know and live in God's love in Jesus Christ. Our parish is open and welcoming to all people — families, singles, young, older, married couples, children, those who are differently-abled, those with alternative families, those who are experienced church-goers, those who are lapsed, those who are new to church and those who are seekers. People of all nationalities, creeds, color or race are all welcome at our Communion Table, just as all were welcome at Jesus' table.



In the fall of 2018, the Search Committee mailed a survey of four questions to the parish. Over 50% of the surveys were returned. The parish came together after a combined service in November to discuss the results and verbalize our thoughts during an Appreciative Inquiry. Parishioners were able to share their experiences of the church and their understanding of our core values and wishes for the future. Through the Parish Questionnaire, we learned about the composition of the parish and qualities desired in our new Rector. We know we have the challenge of attracting new members, but it is an opportunity we welcome. As one parishioner said during the Inquiry, “We are a small but mighty church.” Another noted “We are Christ Church Strong.”

We invite you to get to know us through this Parish Profile. We know that the search for a new Rector is a time for the parish to grow in faith and understanding of our ministry and mission and to come together in prayer as we learn more about ourselves, our hopes and dreams, and plans for the future of this special place. We know that our prayers for a faithful pastor will be answered and that God is guiding us on this exciting journey.

Prayer for New Ministry

Almighty God, giver of all good things, you know us better than we know ourselves. Guide us in our search for a new rector. Empower each of us to share openly and honestly our thoughts, to respect the opinions of others and to encourage humility, patience and joy. Instill in us a vision of this parish family, that guided by your Holy Spirit, we will be united in love and joyfully accomplish this mission, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Move Us Beyond Ourselves: A Prayer for Christ Church in Transition

Holy God, who calls us to Christ Church, we thank you for this sacred space that is our true home. We thank you for the mission and vision of this church, and for the many ministries that are our proper task.

We pray you guide us as we seek to receive a faithful pastor who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries. We pray we may more fully engage our baptism and embrace the joys only you can give. Move us beyond ourselves to a deeper vision of your plan for us. Make us ready and open for this journey. We pray this in the name of the Risen Christ. Amen.

Harwich Quick Facts

Population

12,677 year round

37,000 (approximate) seasonal

Land Size

20.93 square miles

Tidal Shoreline

10.94 square miles

Town Government

Town Administrator/
Selectmen

Open Town Meeting

School System

Monomoy Regional School
District

(combined with Town of
Chatham in 2012)



Median Home Value (per Zillow)

\$445,700

Tax Rate

\$8.80

Internet Resources

harwich-MA.gov, capecodchamber.org

Our Community and Cape Cod

The town of Harwich is a resort, residential and retirement community located on the south side of the Cape Cod peninsula about halfway between the Cape Cod Canal and the outermost tip of the Cape. It is approximately 80 miles southeast of Boston, Massachusetts and 260 miles east of New York City. Harwich is about 12 miles from Hyannis, the major shopping and commercial area on Cape Cod.

Harwich was originally settled in 1665 and incorporated in 1694. Its history has included both agricultural and maritime industries. Tourism has been a component of the economy since the first resort hotel opened in 1880. Today tourism remains a substantial part of Harwich's economy.

The year-round population is 12,677 with a seasonal increase to 37,000. Harwich offers a wide range of activities for both residents and visitors including eleven saltwater and freshwater beaches, a championship municipal golf course, three harbors, a large portion of the Cape Cod Bike Trail, conservation land for hiking, an excellent public library, local public access CATV station and a community center. Services and activities are available for all ages in our community, from young children to seniors.



Located within the town of Harwich, the village of Harwich Port is full of sand and sea and life. It boasts lovely beaches along Nantucket Sound, fun little shops and galleries along Route 28, cozy pubs and restaurants, beautiful spired churches and public nine-hole golf course.

As its name implies the sea played a central role in the village's history. With its face to the sea and its welcoming shoreline, "The Port" was settled by seamen and fishermen before the American Revolution. Boatbuilding, sail-making and carpentry employed many residents and beautiful homes built by sea captains dot the village. With the end of the age of sail and the coming of the railroad, the focus changed until more people came to "see the sea" than to work on it. The tourist industry and the automobile transformed the little village into a visitors haven. Inns like the Snow Inn and The Melrose housed the summer people, restaurants appeared and shops opened. Today, though the large historic inns have been converted to other uses, summer in Harwich Port retains much from its past.



The Harwichport Golf Course is a 9-hole, par 34 executive length course within walking distance of the village center. Easy to walk, with gently sloping hills, seniors and infrequent golfers can try their skill and not feel overmatched. Cranberry Valley Golf Course is an 18-hole championship golf course owned and operated by the town of Harwich. It is rated 'excellent' by Zagat Golf Guide and has been given four stars by Golf Digest.

Saquatucket Municipal Harbor Marina is a full service marina offering berths for 190 boats, charter fishing and sail boats, as well as slips for short term visitors. It offers seal-watching cruises to Monomoy Island and a day-trip service to Nantucket. There's waterfront dining at an adjacent restaurant which offers outdoor dining on its terrace in the summer.

Harwich and surrounding communities support vibrant arts programs. There are community theaters throughout the area, many of which offer year-round productions and classes, including our own Cape Cod Theatre Company (formerly Harwich Junior Theatre). Other outstanding arts programs include the Cape Cod Symphony, the Pilgrim Pops, the Chatham Chorale and the Cape Cod Museum of Art. Summertime brings the Cape Cod Baseball League. This League, sponsored by the NCAA and Major League Baseball, showcases the best collegiate baseball players in the country. Harwich has its own team – the Mariners.

The annual Cape Cod Cranberry Festival, held in September, includes a huge craft fair, fireworks display, musical concerts, and draws people from near and far.

In 2014, the towns of Harwich and Chatham combined their public school systems and established the highly-rated Monomoy Regional School District. The district includes the newly built state-of-the-art Monomoy Regional High School in Harwich, Monomoy Regional Middle School in Chatham, Chatham Elementary School and Harwich Elementary School. A large percentage of graduates, 79.8 percent, go on to higher education. Harwich is also home to the Cape Cod Regional Technical High School. Cape Cod Community College, located in West Barnstable, offers a wide range of certificate, two-year and four-year programs.

The town provides excellent emergency services, including police, fire and ambulance. Cape Cod Hospital, a nationally recognized facility, is located in Hyannis. Fontaine Medical Center in Harwich provides urgent care and other medical services and is affiliated with Cape Cod Hospital.

Harwich is home to many faith communities such as Congregational, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Christian Scientist, Methodist, and our own Christ Church Episcopal.

The unique environment and ecology of Cape Cod, separated from the Massachusetts mainland by a canal, offers both endless natural beauty and the responsibility to properly manage it. Our town is not immune to the challenges faced by many communities. For Harwich, the challenges include affordable housing, preservation of open space, responsible management of residential and commercial development, and proper waste disposal to protect drinking water, fresh water ponds and saltwater estuaries.

A Brief History of Christ Church Episcopal

Christ Church is nestled between Saquatucket and Wychmere Harbors on Main Street in Harwich Port, Mass. The weathered shingles with the red trim exterior, coupled with the beauty and warmth of the interior, provide a welcoming entrance into our worship space and community. The light that shines through the stained glass windows telling the story of biblical women and some of the founders of our church creates an ideal setting for prayer and meditation.

Christ Church had a highly unusual beginning. In 1925 a remarkable group of 12 women felt there should be an Episcopal Church in Harwich Port. After meeting in homes, an inn, and a social hall, the women decided to work toward building a permanent sanctuary. Mrs. Harold Van Buren solicited the help of a Roman Catholic friend in France, Charlotte, the Marquise de Sers, who donated the seed money of \$5000 for a chapel to be named Christ Church to encompass all faiths. Additional financial gifts and the gift of land gave the ever-expanding group of women new hope for a building.



The large window over the altar depicts “Christ the teacher” with a special relationship to the women of the New Testament. The window at the rear of the nave brings “Christ, the Good Shepherd,” to life in the blues, greens, whites, and reds of the stained glass. The stained glass windows along the side aisles depict women of the Old and New Testaments.

The church was incorporated and dedicated in 1926, followed by the consecration by Bishop Sherrill in 1931. Summer attendance averaged 200 and in 1958, the parish hall and Sunday School classrooms were built. In 1961 the church became a full-time parish with the call of the first permanent rector, The Rev. Arthur H. Richardson.

Under the Rev. Walter Hurley (1966-1980), Noah's Ark Thrift Shop was started. The parish grew to 400 communicants and a wing for more classrooms was built which now houses the still thriving Noah's Ark Thrift Shop.

Under the Rev. Thomas Shepherd (1981-2000), Christ Church founded the Harwich Ecumenical Youth Ministry and a number of other outreach programs. The summer Lobster Roll luncheons began in 1982 and are still very popular. The Wednesday morning Eucharist and discussion also began during his tenure.

The Rev. John Perris (2001-2006) worked hard to include youth more fully in the worship of the church. A group of laity inaugurated the annual retreat with the rector's support.

The Rev. Dr. Judith Davis (2008-2017) continued the emphasis on outreach, expanded worship using other Anglican liturgies and deepened our commitment to welcome everyone.

Christ Church celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2000 with a festive dinner and a visitation by the Bishop of Massachusetts. Christ Church continues to have strong mutual ministry and mission between clergy and laity. We are ever mindful of the faith and perseverance of our spiritual predecessors who journeyed forward with hope in Christ, who makes all things possible. We look forward to celebrating our 100th anniversary in 2026!



Our Parish Organization

The Vestry

Our Parish Vestry is comprised of up to 12 members, with the Rector in attendance at meetings. At Christ Church our Vestry is a strong group of people who represent a cross-section of the church. Members are nominated and elected for 3-year terms. Their participation on the Vestry allows for all to work together ministering to the needs of the parish.



The Ministry Teams

After an extensive visioning process conducted throughout much of 2005, Christ Church elected to conduct the work of the parish using a ministry team structure. There are currently five ministry teams at Christ Church: Buildings and Grounds, Finance/Stewardship, Outreach/Fellowship, Pastoral Care, and Worship. The goals and work of each team are outlined on our website christepiscopalharwich.org. Each team is comprised of parishioners who volunteer to work on a team based on their interests and to share their God-given talents and experience. Some teams are more active than others and new members are always welcome. The work of each team continues and has been successful.

The Staff

At this time the paid staff at Christ Church includes a part-time Rector (Bridge Priest), as well as a part-time Parish Administrator, a part-time Minister of Music and a part-time Sexton. The Parish Administrator works directly with the Warden. There are often functions that may need attention for set up and cleaning in addition to the daily care of the physical plant.

Cristalyn Searles, Parish Administrator



Todd Woolley, Sexton

Christ Church Mission Statement

Our mission at Christ Church is to invite all people to celebrate with us in our worship and service of God so that together we may make Christ's love known in our world.

Christ Church Vision Statement

Christ Church is a welcoming, inviting and nurturing community where all people, wherever they are on their spiritual journey, experience God's life-giving love in Jesus Christ. Seven days a week, through worship, study and training, we joyfully renew our identity as followers of Jesus, engaging in Christian service, witnessing to God's love, and being generous stewards of God's gifts. Christ Church seeks and embraces growth and change, so that today's and tomorrow's generations become increasingly faithful followers of Christ.

At the Center of Our Life Together: Our Worship, Music, & Education

Our life together as a community is centered in the celebration of the Eucharist each Sunday. Through worship we strive to invite parishioners and newcomers alike into a deeper relationship with Christ. The liturgy is celebrated at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. We could be described as traditional, but we are open to new and fresh ideas. We worship with *The Book of Common Prayer* and the *1982 Hymnal* on a regular basis, along with its supplement *Wonder, Love, and Praise* as we as *Lift Every Voice and Sing*. We have also supplemented our liturgy with *The New Zealand Prayer Book*.

Recently we have had a combined service at 9:00 a.m. on the second Sunday of the month to bring the 8:00 a.m. group and the 10:00 a.m. group together. This has also been a Healing Service with a Laying on of Hands following the Eucharist.

Music is well integrated into the liturgy and life of our parish. Our Minister of Music, Maggie Ribb, leads our choir who sings every Sunday during the year. Their gifts and commitment add to the joy of our worship. We often break into applause to acknowledge our delight in the music.

Weekday worship at Christ Church is important to our spiritual life. Our Wednesday Holy Eucharist at 8:00 a.m. is followed by breakfast and spirited discussions of theological topics and typically draws 10-15 people. Our seasonal liturgies take on their own personality. At Advent we have sung Lessons and Carols. On Shrove Tuesday we have had a pancake supper and Mardi Gras celebration. Holy Week has included a Tenebrae service, a Maundy Thursday service followed by the stripping of the altar. The Good Friday liturgy has been at Noon and 5:00 p.m.



We are fortunate to have the talents of three retired priests in the parish who are willing to conduct liturgy and preach as needed, which is especially helpful during this time of transition. Our parishioners also serve in liturgical ministries as ushers, lectors, and eucharistic ministers, and eucharistic visitors. The Altar Guild provides essential support to the liturgical life of Christ Church. They are dedicated to caring for the altar, its vessels, and vestments.

For many years in the 1970s and 1980s, the church school was a vital and lively part of the parish. With changes in adult work obligations, and the demands for young people's time for other activities, as well as in the escalating cost of housing for young families on Cape Cod, we

have seen a decline in families with young children. Our last Confirmation class in 2006 was intergenerational; five young people and one adult were confirmed. Four adults were received. Children of the parish have also attended the Barbara C. Harris Camp, a diocesan facility in New Hampshire, during the summer. The parish has provided scholarships for this experience in the past. We have also held parish retreats at the Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center.

The Tuesday Book Discussion group was initiated in 2006 and the weekly Wednesday group mentioned above has been active since the 1980's.

The Core of Our Christian Vocation: Service and Ministry

From its earliest days as a summer chapel for seasonal visitors to Cape Cod, Christ Church has extended hospitality. Newcomers appreciate the warm welcome extended by ushers, greeters, clergy, and parishioners who take the time after the worship to greet those who are in their midst. The tradition of giving cranberry bread to each new visitor has been in place for many years. In our Parish Questionnaire, friendship was named often as a reason for affiliating with the parish. In the last several years, there has been particular attention paid to getting to know newcomers. We encourage them to return for worship and fellowship by inviting them to coffee hour and by following up with phone contacts.

As we seek to bring people into the church, we are blessed with two long-standing traditions that bring in new faces and contribute to our outreach: The Lobster Roll Luncheons and the Noah's Ark Thrift Shop.

Lobster Roll Luncheons have been a summer time tradition for 40 years at Christ Church. The first lobster roll luncheon was begun by the women of the church. It was not until 1982 that it was held every Friday throughout the summer under the direction of the Men's Club. In 1984 an average of 147 lobster rolls at \$5.00 each were served each Friday. During the summer of 2018, 14,000 lobster rolls were sold. Profits after costs are given to the parish. In 2018, over \$14,000 was donated to the church.



Approximately twenty volunteers share the duty of preparing and serving the lobster rolls, Cape Cod Potato Chips, pickles, homemade coleslaw,

coffee, tea, lemonade, and slices of homemade pie are also available, along with free peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for children. The lobster meat is purchased fresh each Friday from a local fish market. Of course, the price of the lobster roll luncheon has increased since 1984; however visitors from all over the country and even the world have attended. Many who came as children are now bringing their children to this Harwich Port tradition.

Noah's Ark Thrift Shop. In 1954 when the church became open for the entire year, the Women's Guild undertook to raise money to pay for the heating system. Initially the Thrift Shop was located in a barn. It was not until 1971 that the shop was reorganized and moved to the church and became known officially as the **Noah's Ark Thrift Shop**.

In 2004 the shop had enough volunteers to expand its hours of 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. from three to



five days a week. The replacement of the rugs with new vinyl flooring throughout the four rooms and hallway has given a whole new look to the facility. And the gift of teak racks from a young woman outside of the parish has made displaying clothes more attractive.

This hard work by the co-chairs and volunteers made possible a donation of \$34,000 in 2018 to the parish budget. In addition, the shop also contributed between \$1,500 and \$2,000 in used clothing to charities such as the Salvation Army. Unsold bric-a-brac is given to the Harwich Treasure Chest.

As people become more incorporated in the life of the parish and as we learn of their needs, we seek to reach out to them in their daily lives through the **Pastoral Care Ministry**. Team members visit parishioners in their homes, the hospital, and nursing homes. Altar flowers and meals are delivered on a regular basis. Lay Eucharistic Visitors take our church to those who are unable to attend worship. This is also a time of exchange about the life of the parish and of the concerns of parishioners.

The Prayer Circle is also part of the Pastoral Care Ministry. Prayers are offered every night at 7 p.m. for those on the parish prayer list and for other special requests. Regularly a volunteer sends cards to members of our parish family.

Our **Ministries of Outreach/Fellowship** are an extension of the ministries that are offered within the parish community. We contribute to Habitat for Humanity, Cape Cod Times Needy Fund, Independence House, Child & Family Services, Cape Cod Challenger Club, We Can, the Cape Cod & Islands Veteran's Outreach, and the Harwich Conservation Trust. In 2018, almost \$9,000 was distributed. We also give an annual scholarship to a Harwich High School graduate. We also support the Cape Cod Family Pantry.

The use of our building is also an outreach ministry. Groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, the Boy Scouts, and other community organizations use the building as an extension of the hospitality of the parish.

Our Strengths and Challenges

How Do Our Strengths and Challenges Influence Our Life Together?

Christ Church has entered a new stage in our journey in ministry and mission. We are a faithful, active, welcoming, and determined parish, much like our predecessors that believed that they were called to establish an Episcopal presence in Harwich Port. We continue to have a strong ministry here on the Lower Cape, but in the last few years, like many other Episcopal churches, we have experienced a reduction in weekly attendance. We believe we can and will grow to be a more vital and diverse congregation that makes Christ's love known in our lives and in the world. We have an extremely high level of excitement and belief in the strength of our parish. As one parishioner noted during our discernment, "We can do great things." We know our gifts to the community are the Thrift Shop and the Lobster Roll Luncheons, and we look forward to creating other opportunities to engage with our community, such as our scheduled Noah's Ark Thrift Shop yard sale this summer.

Worship and music form the center of our life together with fellowship and outreach as the outward and visible signs of our liturgy. We extend our eucharistic life of the altar to our parish

gatherings of potlucks, coffee hours, and luncheons where we welcome all people as an expression of our care for them and for each other. One parishioner calls us the “eatingest” parish. It is no surprise that cranberry bread is our gift to newcomers, lobster rolls are our welcome to visitors, and the Wednesday morning Holy Eucharist, breakfast, and discussion are a regular and well-attended weekday event.

We are a mature population with a young spirit and a strong work ethic. We are open to new ideas and we fervently hope that more families, children, and young adults will join us as we seek to live out our baptismal call to be Christ’s hands and feet in the world. Our outreach programs are vital.

Our continuity in financial planning has been strengthened by our capable Treasurer. We have a newly reconstituted finance committee. The church and the parish hall are well maintained as are our grounds and our memorial garden where many parishioners are interred.

We have an average Sunday attendance of 67 worshipers, however our 2019 pledge budget has decreased approximately 11% and there is a 6% decrease in the number of pledges. We had six parishioners die in 2018, and others that have moved away which has impacted our pledge budget. Our attendance is lower in the winter as many parishioners still travel South, however our numbers increase in the summer months as parishioners return and tourists are warmly welcomed.

Our endowment is now approximately one million dollars. It is our hope that with a part time rector, and part time support staff, we will not need to rely on the endowment to cover expenses.

The past year has truly been a year in transition. After our rector retired we were blessed with a bridge priest that became our interim priest, however, she accepted a position in Washington DC and left in October. In December, we welcomed a new bridge priest that we truly enjoyed. She was with us for four months. Since then, the Diocese has struggled to provide a bridge or interim priest.

Our lower entrance level and our parish hall have been renovated and new appliances have been installed in our kitchen. There is no debt load on any of our properties or on other obligations. We are grateful that so many parishioners who preceded us decided to include the parish in their planned giving. We believe that their donations were given with the intention of strengthening Christ Church.

Our Core Values

We seek to bring hope and promise to a troubled world. We place a very high priority on outreach and service. There is always room for growth and we know that God will continue to challenge us to look outward to those in need of strength, solace, and personal, and financial support. Faith in Christ as our shepherd, teacher, and redeemer is our primary core value. We believe that we are nurtured in that faith through active participation in the music, preaching, prayer, and Holy Communion of the liturgy. Another core value is reaching out to others. We demonstrate this through our strong ministries of hospitality, joyful interaction, and pastoral care.

From the returned surveys, as well as our Appreciative Inquiry, we learned that what we love about our church and parish is the loving space and loving and welcoming people, that we are “a community of faith that welcomes all people regardless of ones’ differences, striving to follow God’s word and teachings, and to help those less fortunate than us.”

Our Hopes for a New Rector

It is clear from our Parish Questionnaire that we seek a pastor and shepherd who will join us in our spiritual journey. We value meaningful sermons with a dual emphasis on scripture and messages to motivate us during the week.

We pray that our new rector will feel passionately about his/her life of faith centered in Christ, but will humbly meet all people on their spiritual journeys. Personal qualities of compassion, accessibility and openness to new ideas, effective listening, and a sense of humor are important to this parish. We are searching for a leader who will inspire and challenge us to grow in depth, who has strong administrative skills as well as the gift of giving reassurance and comfort to those in need.

We hope for a pastor who will share in the mutual ministry of Christ and who celebrates the ministry of the laity. We are fortunate to have strong lay leaders to assist with pastoral care, as well as mission and outreach and serving on various ministries.

Having suggested our hopes, though, we are entirely ready to be surprised by the Holy Spirit.

With Thanksgiving

This Profile has been the work of the Search Committee but with a great deal of help from the Vestry and others who have contributed their gifts of writing, analysis, and photography.

Elizabeth Salomé and Sheila Moss-White, Co-Chairs

Ann Brown

Janet Cassidy

Greg Meier

Tina McGrath, Vestry Liaison



We look forward to receiving your ministry portfolio, along with whatever else you would like to share with us. Please send all correspondence to cc2019rectorsearch@gmail.com.