Trinity Episcopal Church
91 Main Street Bridgewater, Massachusetts 02324

Parish Profile 2019

Weaving our faith into our daily lives
Weaving our faith into our daily lives

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We are seeking a new rector!

This profile is provided for prospective half-time rector candidates to learn about our parish. Trinity’s next rector position will be half-time.

Interested candidates from Provinces 1, 2 or 3 may send a cover letter, resume, a link to their audio/video sermons and a completed OTM form to:

TrinityRectorSearch1920@gmail.com

Weaving our faith into our daily lives
Welcome to Trinity
We are a small and diverse parish where a welcoming atmosphere is always abundant and fellowship is always felt. Our friendliness and inclusiveness help to make all feel accepted and like they belong. We are supportive and dedicated to each other and come together when we are faced with challenges, such as aiding a parishioner who lost her home to fire and supporting a family of our parish who lost their son in the opioid crisis. Over the years our face has changed both inside and out, but what has remained constant is our resilience and dedication to the parish, to each other, to our community, and to our beliefs. Even though we are a small church, we are committed to our overall wellbeing.

Our Vision Statement
United in celebration of our faith in Christ, we weave His love into our daily lives by striving to help others while making a difference in our community and in the world.

Our Mission Statement
We, the members of the Trinity congregation, create a welcoming environment to celebrate our unity in Christ. We strive to provide spiritual and educational opportunities for all. We reach out to care for and meet the pastoral needs of others. We support each other to weave our faith into our daily lives and work together to make a difference in the name of Christ. All are welcome here, wherever you are in your spiritual journey.

Our Strategic Plan
In November 2014, our Vestry met with ESC consultants and created a five-year strategic plan for Trinity Church based on an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (S.W.O.T.) identified during our parishioner interviews conducted in the spring of 2014. The analysis identified four areas of concentration: Active Outreach, Sunday School, Sustainability and Volunteerism. Our goals have met with mixed success and as a result we will be prepared to initiate another plan once our Rector is installed. See the Challenges at Trinity section of this profile for more discussion about the Strategic Plan. We can provide a copy of the Strategic Plan if applicants are interested.
Expectations for Our New Rector
We seek a leader who will nurture, promote and draw from our parishioners’ strengths and their passion for a church that they love. We look forward to elaborating upon the following qualities when we have an opportunity to speak with applicants.

Liturgy – Sermons
Sermons are important to us. We appreciate sermons that we can relate to, that clearly connect to the weekly scripture and Gospel. In these difficult times, when we are touched by challenges of addiction, climate change, political upheaval and so on, we treasure sermons that lift us up, that suggest ways to make meaning of our daily lives, that help us feel connected to the speaker, where we all are joined in a mutual search for meaning and hope. Above all, we seek sermons that are relevant to our daily lives.

Characteristics/Qualities
Every parish desires a Rector who is engaging, fair, consistent and down-to-earth. Trinity especially needs a person who literally becomes “one of us” and, as a result, earns our trust, admiration and appreciation. Our parish has had a variety of Rectors over the years, some of whom have satisfied those criteria well while others have, sadly, fallen short. This perhaps is not unusual but it is a reason why we want to be sure that our new Rector is humble, approachable, transparent, and a person of integrity.

These seem to be obvious traits which any prospective Rector would possess, but our church family values simple, human interactions along with a strong, spiritual background. An outgoing, warm sense of humor is also important because we are a congregation that enjoys laughter and likes to have fun. We look for a Rector who is not only committed to the health and wellbeing of Trinity but also to him/herself.

Communication
The age-old concern of “communication” exists in any organization but it is perhaps nowhere more important than in a church parish. Because Trinity’s members run the age range from the very young to the very “not-too-young,” and because our laity is called upon in so many ways to help bridge the gaps where ordained staffing may not be available, it will be incumbent upon our new Rector to possess insightful, proactive communication skills in order to make everyone feel as if they are truly valuable to the life of the parish.

Chief among these communications skills is the art of active listening. While our Rector will, in fact, be seen as the leader of our congregation, it will also be extremely important for him/her

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to possess the ability to listen to the concerns, ideas, joys and fears of every member so as to be an effective, caring pastor to us all. In addition, he/she must efficiently and effectively reach out to parishioners when necessary. Our Rector also must be comfortable in “out-of-the-office” duties such as visiting shut-ins and working with the Bridgewater community.

It will be incumbent upon him/her to be in close working contact with the Vestry and other guilds in the parish so as to accurately serve all our members’ needs. This interaction would also serve as a valuable training tool to empower and expand our congregation to use the pastoral skills they may already possess.

**Leader/Delegator**

As has already been mentioned, Trinity is a small parish that depends in many situations on the talents and motivation of her parishioners to fill in gaps if directed. For this reason, it is critical that our new Rector be comfortable in the role of Leader and Delegator while possessing a strong sense of integrity and a belief in confidentiality. We know that it will be impossible for our Rector to be everywhere s/he may be needed at any point in time, so it will be necessary that s/he knows how to foster parish growth, increase the participation of lay leadership, delegate appropriate responsibilities to others, support parishioner-led activities and evaluate and improve all activities in the future. Leading others is an important skill, as is the supervision of staff. Whether it is from the pulpit, in a Vestry meeting, in the office or at coffee hour, our Rector will need to guide our congregation and its staff so that everyone feels as if their contribution is not only important but understood and appreciated. In addition, we are a parish that values diversity and inclusion. We strive continually to put those values into action. As a result, it will be necessary for our new Rector to share in our values and help us to continue to hold true to and share Our Mission. As Our Vision Statement illustrates, we want to be a force in the larger world by expanding our outreach capabilities but we have to stretch ourselves to do that. If we are successful in so doing, we will also reach inward and improve our ability to serve each other.

As unfortunate as it might be, the ability to facilitate conflict resolution will also be required. In any group setting, differences of opinion will exist among people in an organization and it will be very important that our new Rector possess the various skills needed to successfully deal with conflict. If left to “work themselves out”, problems often become worse and interpersonal relationships can deteriorate. A proactive approach to conflict resolution, while perhaps distasteful, will be essential. Finally, but no less important, will be our Rector’s interest and direction in the musical ministry at Trinity. We love our music and we love to sing, especially when the music is familiar to us.

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In summary, we at Trinity are a mixture of old and young, traditional and innovative, male and female, gay and straight, “high” church and “low” church but we all love our parish and want it to succeed. Trinity is seeking a Rector who is as committed to us as we will be to him/her. Conversely, our members will be able to help our Rector grow in spirit and skills as he/she ministers to us in our daily lives. We seek an enthusiastic Rector who can facilitate our journey.

**Challenges at Trinity**

At Trinity, as at any other small parish, the challenges we face are numerous but not daunting. In the previous sections, we alluded to many of these items as a part of the larger examination of the parish. There are two positive aspects to this examination. First, as can be seen in the Strategic Plan that was adopted by the Vestry in 2014, these items were identified, addressed and, in some cases, acted upon by our Vestry and congregation. Second, when the congregation was asked at the beginning of this Profile phase, additional challenges were identified. This tells us that the congregation is engaged in the parish and wants to be a part of any solutions that may be adopted.

Specifically, the Strategic Plan’s S.W.O.T. analysis identified five particular areas that were either seen as Weaknesses or Threats. These were addressed in the Strategic Plan. Indeed, some of these items continue to challenge us today. Those items seen as Weaknesses were: 1) Improve the Sunday School, 2) Create a more communicative Vestry, and 3) Alleviate poor parish planning. More immediate were the identified Threats: 1) Current financial status is not sustainable, 2) Clergy and volunteer burn out.

The Strategic Plan specifically identified ways in which to improve Vestry communication and parish planning. Both those have been addressed after the various strategies for improvement were implemented but, as we know, those areas always need to be monitored. The biggest issue at the time continues to be financial sustainability and, even though this was a specific goal in the Strategic Plan, it continues to be one of our biggest challenges.

The comment cards received from the congregation at the outset of the Profile process have also identified some excellent areas to address in the future. The entire list of these comments is available upon request but the most numerous of these addressable areas include: spreading out the work load across the entire parish so only a few volunteers do not get “burned out”; create strategies that can help us grow the membership of the parish, particularly young families; create more opportunities to socialize outside of organized services (dinners, trips to the theatre, etc.); offer regularly scheduled adult Bible classes; and offer more consistent visitation to shut-ins.

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Challenges in a healthy parish are always numerous but they also indicate that the parish is engaged, interested and eager to help Trinity grow. We seek a new Rector who shares that passion and enthusiasm for the entire congregation.

**What a Rector Can Expect from Us**
The Trinity family is warm, friendly, and open. We are always willing and ready to help, even more so when we are asked directly. Our parish family is supportive of leaders. At the same time, we do not expect our Rector to carry the load! From weekly liturgy to special events, we have a history of collaborating with our leaders. Over the years, programs and events such as Friends of Emmett and Prayer Shawls, have been initiated and carried out by parishioners. The Vestry collaborates well within itself and with the Rector. We are eagerly awaiting a new Rector to continue our ministries and to help us grow in the Spirit, which will, in turn, grow our membership, increase our visibility in Bridgewater and surrounding communities and maintain our presence in the Diocese while remaining an independent parish capable of maintaining our own integrity.
Woven Words of Trinity Compiled from responses to Profile survey question: *What do you love about Trinity Church?*
Church History
Trinity Church was founded in 1747, making it one of the oldest parishes in the Diocese of Massachusetts. The church, located in Bridgewater, serves all the surrounding communities such as East Bridgewater, West Bridgewater, Halifax, Raynham, Taunton and Brockton to name a few. The first church building was established in 1748 in the vicinity of what is now 529 Main Street.

Historical Highlights of Trinity
1836 - First church sold; the cornerstone of second church laid.
1839 - The church bell was cast.
1882 - Land for the present church purchased.
1884 - Current Trinity Church consecrated.
1922 - Parish Hall completed.
1983 - Church Rectory was sold.
1984 - 100th Anniversary of 3rd (present) church; 6 stained glass windows added.
1989 - Interior of the Church refurbished.
2012 - Major renovation to historic Williams organ completed.
2015 - Major restoration of church exterior followed a complete renovation of the kitchen.
2016 - New altar handcrafted by a parishioner.
2018 - Stained glass “Good Shepherd” windows above the altar were restored.
2019 - Search process begins for new Rector. Profile and search committees formed.

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Our Facilities

Trinity Episcopal Church, Parish Hall, and unattached garage comprise our physical plant and are maintained by the Property Committee. We are most proud of the care and support of our historic Williams mechanical action organ.

Trinity Cemetery - located approximately 6 blocks from the church - Main Street, Bridgewater, MA. This cemetery was founded in 1756. The cemetery is co-owned by Trinity Church and the Town of Bridgewater. Trinity Church Cemetery

Trinity Cemetery has been the recipient of a healing garden as well as a kiosk detailing the history and location of each of the 130 headstones. The first burial was in 1763 and the last burial in 1876.

Our cemetery has the distinction of being mentioned in several volumes of Massachusetts history, including Vital Records of Bridgewater, Massachusetts to 1850, Old Cemeteries of Southeastern Massachusetts, and Epitaphs in Old Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

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Worship

Our Parish Life
From September to May, we have services at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., with coffee hour following each.

- The 8:00 a.m. service consists of a small, close-knit, congenial group of parishioners usually numbering between 15 and 20. It is an intimate service without music, and is often conducted in the choir pews. This setting allows for a quieter, contemplative atmosphere which creates a personal involvement with the sacrament.
- The 10:00 a.m. service includes families whose children attend Sunday School during the first part of this service. The service is enhanced with music by the choir and Organist. Parishioners can request healing prayers, which are administered during communion by the clergy.
- From Memorial Day to Labor Day one service is offered at 9:00 a.m. followed by coffee hour.

We enjoy special events throughout the year: The Blessing of the Backpacks at Welcome Back Sunday in September helps get our school age parishioners off to a good start. The Blessing of the Pets in October allows parishioners to bring live pets (or pictures) to be blessed in recognition of St. Francis. A visit from St. Nicholas is always a highlight during Advent when children of all ages learn about the Bishop of Myra and are taught the connection to the celebration of Christmas. The Christmas Pageant follows shortly thereafter and gives our youth the opportunity to act out the Christmas story. Youth Sunday, where the children perform all the ministries during the service, is held each spring and gives the older children firsthand experience in administering important roles of the service. The Palm Sunday procession proceeds from the Parish Hall, (outside weather permitting) to the front of the church to begin the celebration of Holy Week. Holy Week activities conclude with our annual Easter Egg Hunt which follows the Easter service.
Our Ministries

One Family Ministry – Our parish assists with serving breakfast to families in need once a month at All Saints Church in Attleboro. Trinity serves as the breakfast “host” twice a year which provides an opportunity for our parishioners to donate food items and volunteer to prepare and serve the meals. Additionally, Trinity, along with four other parishes, collects an assortment of items from our parishioners that are given out to families following breakfast. Also, two of our parishioners serve on the One Family Advisory Board.

Mercy Street/Bridgewater – This ministry is an evolution of the Friends of Emmett Addiction Ministry. Friends of Emmett was created following the overdose death of one of our young parishioners. Mercy Street provides a safe and supportive gathering place for those affected by addiction. It meets the last Wednesday of every month with supper and fellowship at 6:00 p.m. For the past three years, Friends of Emmett/Mercy Street has also hosted a Night of Remembrance for those who have died due to addiction. A community supper and speaker are followed by quiet time in the church sanctuary for reflection, candle lighting and prayer.

Bridgewater Food Pantry – Parishioners donate a variety of food items to support the needs of members of our community.

Caring Casserole Ministry – Parishioners provide frozen casseroles to those in our congregation in need of quick, nutritious meals. Parishioners providing the casseroles benefit from knowing they are supporting those in our congregation who might be in need of a meal while those receiving them benefit from the convenience.

Parish Life Committee – This committee is focused on new members of our parish and supporting fellowship of our parish family. It serves the people within our church and our community in an effort to be a welcoming presence. Fellowship opportunities that it supports and promotes are coffee hour, special meals, prayer shawls, annual church picnic, Autumnfest, and Christmas on the Common.

Property Committee – Maintains all parish property, assists the Vestry in evaluating potential capital expenditures, makes recommendations on specific proposals, and performs tasks and special projects at the request of the Vestry.

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Fundraising Committee — Oversees the raising of all funds needed to fully resource the life of the parish, including pledges and all other fundraising projects. Many volunteers are needed to make the following annual events fun-filled successes.

- Fall Fair
- Yard Sale
- Paint Night
- Red Sox Ticket Raffle
- Dining for Dollars

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Our Sunday Service Ministries
Parishioners can participate in one or many of our Sunday Service Ministries such as Altar Guild, Ushering, Chalice Bearing, Lay Reading, or as a Choir Member. Unique to our parish, we offer the opportunity to be a Verger who are lay leaders who come before the Sunday 10:00 a.m. service to ensure that all the services are staffed appropriately. Since we are a small parish, acolytes can be as young as 9 years of age.

Christian Education and Youth Groups
With the church’s support, a lifetime foundation of faith and Christian growth can be built. The goal is to provide and maintain a program emphasizing the development of Anglican tenets, faith, tradition, and reason to children through young adults. Our Education Program is designed for parishioners of all ages to learn about God’s love in our lives. We offer age appropriate Christian education that is based on learning opportunities throughout the school calendar year.

Nursery: infants to 3 years. Stocked with toys, books, puzzles and music. Available during the 10:00 a.m. and then during the summer at the 9:00 a.m. service. This service is based on need.

Godly Play: 4 years to Grade 2. Children discover who God is through the art of storytelling. It has a Montessori approach with "hands-on" materials. Circle time includes a church calendar project and individual attendance calendar creations.

“Tweeners”: Grades 3 to 6. The class lessons focus on one or more themes from the Old and New Testaments, Life and Holidays. This curriculum uses Legos to get the children more engaged in the stories of the Bible as they get to recreate them with Legos afterward.

Rite13: Grades 6 to 8. This is the first 2 years of the confirmation program. Through creative activities and exploring conversations, this program is designed to celebrate the individuality of each youth member, while exploring Biblical stories of God and his people.

Journey to Adulthood (J2A): Grades 8 to 12. This is a youth ministry program of spiritual formation. Its program uses Bible study, prayer, activities, outreach and mission work to help the youth learn about the role of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit in their own lives and in the world. This is the final step of confirmation.
Special Youth Activities are planned and facilitated by the youth group and its advisors. The activities include movie night, J2A Lock-In and the annual Pancake Supper which is open to the entire parish but planned and facilitated by the youth and their adult advisors. The youth group works to collect donations in order to sponsor a child from El Hogar, Honduras.

**Adult Group** is open to all. Blocks of weekly sessions are offered at varying times throughout the year. The format and content of each session can vary from Biblical readings to watching DVDs, such as *The Shack*, with a discussion time following.

**Leadership at Trinity**

**Paid Staff:**

- **Rector** – 50% time

**Organist/Director of Music**

We are actively in search of a new Organist/Director of Music. Our Organist/Director of Music retired after nearly 25 years with Trinity.

**Office Administrator/Bookkeeper**

**Other:**

- **Deacon** - A Deacon has served at Trinity since 2015 to assist the Rector. Our current Deacon’s contract has been extended through the spring of 2020 during our discernment to find a new Rector. We hope to continue to have a Deacon serve here after a Rector is called.

- **Vestry** – Historically, the Vestry has played an active and integral role in managing the parish and all related functions, including working cooperatively with the Rector.

- **Volunteer** – Many parishioners volunteer their time to fill gaps to support paid staff. These include:

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Financial Summary

Stewardship

In the years since 1998, the number of pledging units has ranged from a high of 90 (2002) to a low of 59 (2001 and 2018). Currently the number of pledging units for 2019 is 52. The good news is that the total amount of funds pledged to Trinity in 2018 when the number of pledging units was only 59 totaled $97,260 which is the highest amount pledged in the 1998-2019 time period. The average weekly pledge for the latest completed fiscal year (2018) was $31.70 and 100% of the pledged amount was received. It is possible that decreased pledge income is a reflection of increased "special projects' giving as indicated in the examination of our Stewardship Committee.

The Pledge Reconciliation from the two most recent fiscal years (2018 to 2019) does indicate a downward trend in pledging units as well as in total pledged income. In 2018 there were 59 units that pledged a total of $97,260. Of the 52 pledges received for the current fiscal year, 26 pledges remained constant from 2018 to 2019 while 19 increased and 4 decreased. The biggest concern at the present time is that 12 units that pledged in 2018 have not done so for 2019. Finally, the projected pledged amount for 2019 totals $85,823, a decrease in pledged income of $11,437. This reconciliation information is similarly available in chart form on page 12 of the 2018 Annual Report.
The decreased pledge amount has a negative effect on our operating budget. Over the years the Vestry has done an outstanding job of appropriating funds in such a manner as to maintain a balanced budget but decreased income puts a strain on even the most diligent spending practices. For example, the operating budget for 2018 was $131,241. Even with the unbudgeted expense put into a house that was donated to the parish (which was sold in August 2019), Trinity was able to balance the budget after paying all outstanding debts and obligations. However, because the pledges for 2019 have decreased significantly, the budget for 2019 operations is only $113,918. This lesser amount will necessitate some “belt tightening” when it comes to programs and services that can be offered for this coming year.

The Stewardship Committee for the 2019 fiscal year coordinated the annual giving campaign. In addition to the Stewardship Committee’s work, the parish also had recent special donation “drives” dedicated specifically to maintenance and facility issues. Specifically, the parish has been generous in funding special projects such as replacing our 40+ year old furnace and restoring the three antique windows over the high altar. These two projects followed closely on the heels of our $250,000 Capital Campaign to restore the exterior of the entire church. Historically, the parish has always supported funding special projects that have arisen. It should be noted here that the introduction of semi-annual fiscal updates from the Treasurer to the congregation on their updated pledge status has been very well received and has given the Vestry useful, updated information.

Our Finances
The number of our pledging units in the specific time frame of 2010 to 2018 has ranged from 59 to 75. Looking at this most recent time period, Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) is as follows:

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<th>Year</th>
<th>ASA</th>
<th>Pledging Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>78</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen, the ASA has remained relatively stable even if the number of pledging units has decreased. The employment of our current Bridge Priest has helped us save some salary money because he is retired so our obligation to his pension fund is not necessary. Endowments and Restricted funds continue to be strong and are consistently well-managed. As can be seen in the April budget report, Restricted Endowment funds total $147,272 while Unrestricted Endowment funds total $420,000. Our total assets amount to $2,009,174.32. In his Transition Review Report, John Woodard, a member of the Diocesan Congregational Consultants, concluded “it is evident that Trinity Church can continue to support a clergy at the same level (approximately 63%) of the previous rector”. He also commented on the effective management of Trinity’s endowment funds: “Trinity Church draws modestly on its endowment funds ($6,796 in 2017) to support operations.” His entire report is available for review.

Our Community

The Mission of the Diocese of Massachusetts:

We, the people of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, are living members of the body of Jesus Christ.

As Jesus gathered his disciples, took bread and blessed it, and then offered his body for us in order to bring reconciliation, forgiveness and healing, so may we offer ourselves in Christ's name.

The Diocese of Massachusetts is among the oldest and largest, in terms of baptized membership, in the Episcopal Church. It officially dates from 1784 when delegates from a few struggling parishes around Boston met with others in the first convention of the Episcopal Church since the Revolutionary War. It took a great sense of mission to build a diocese out of a handful of 18th century parishes, but the spirit matched the purpose. Under the 19th-century leadership of bishops Griswold, Eastburn, Paddock and Brooks, the church in Massachusetts entered the 20th century as the second largest Episcopal diocese in the country—growth that resulted from a focus on ministry in mill towns and emerging cities.

The diocese historically has been in the forefront of efforts to bring about social justice, racial harmony and economic equity. Beginning in the early 19th century the diocese made a commitment to founding parishes in cities, relating not only to the wealthy and influential, but also to the working poor. As a result many, if not a majority, of its congregations are in or near urban areas.

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The accelerated pace of social and economic change in the late 19th century gave enormous opportunity for mission. By 1900 the church’s responsibilities threatened to become unwieldy. Bishop William Lawrence pushed for the establishment of the new Diocese of Western Massachusetts in 1902, and immediately sought to unify the now compact eastern Diocese of Massachusetts in a common mission around a physical symbolic center. The vision for a cathedral church was brought to fruition in 1912, when the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston was commissioned to be the “People’s Church.”

The diocese faced in the 20th century the issues of expansion and change that the high tech industry brought to the two major beltways of eastern Massachusetts, which in turn initiated suburban growth and the contemporary metropolitan area.

The diocese has a long tradition of public witness, and its bishops throughout the 20th century and into the 21st--Sherrill, Nash, Stokes, Burgess, Coburn, Johnson and Shaw--provided leadership and awareness to the issues of their day, from war opposition, civil rights and urban affairs, to death penalty opposition, AIDS healing, public education equity, immigration policy reform, gun violence, marriage equality and LGBT civil rights. They also exercised leadership within the denomination on issues such as the ordination of women, antiracism, world mission and debt forgiveness for developing countries.

The Diocese of Massachusetts is known for some auspicious firsts. In 1970 the late Rt. Rev. John M. Burgess was installed as the diocese’s 12th bishop, thus becoming the first African-American diocesan bishop in the Episcopal Church. In 1989 the Rt. Rev. Barbara C. Harris (bishop suffragan, now retired) was ordained and consecrated, becoming the first woman to be consecrated a bishop in the worldwide Anglican Communion.

https://www.diomass.org/
**The Town of Bridgewater**

Bridgewater is a charming, residential, suburban community. Located approximately 25 miles south of Boston, the town is accessible by bus, commuter rail and highway at the junction of routes 24 and 495. Originally an industrial and agricultural center, the town of Bridgewater was chartered in 1656. Its historic character and unique landscaping are prominent throughout the community, particularly in the downtown central common area.

Today, Bridgewater is a growing community of approximately 27,000 and serves as home to Bridgewater State University. Founded in 1840, as one of the first normal schools in America, BSU is a premier public university of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Offering a diversity of activities, Bridgewater maintains a caring, friendly, small-town, community atmosphere.


[Map of Massachusetts showing Bridgewater]