

# All Saints Episcopal Church

## Parish Profile



**44 Park Avenue**  
**Whitman, MA 02382**  
<https://www.allsaintswhitman.com/>

## **Our Parish Family**

All Saints Episcopal Church is located in the Town of Whitman, Plymouth County, Massachusetts, approximately 20 miles south of Boston. We are a very close-knit and diverse family parish with parishioners from all over the South Shore. Besides Whitman, our parishioners come from the towns of Abington, Bridgewater, East Bridgewater, Easton, Halifax, Hanson, Kingston, Marshfield, Middleboro, Pembroke, Plymouth, Raynham, Rockland, Scituate, West Bridgewater, and Weymouth.

All Saints is a welcoming Episcopal community for people of all walks of life, including those who are searching for a church home or want to begin a new faith journey. Grounded in Jesus' call to love one another and serve those in need, we welcome those of all races, rich or poor, young or old, whether you wear tattoos or a bow tie, regardless of sexual orientation and whatever religious background you have come from. This is God's house and all are welcome.

All Saints is a trained, dementia friendly congregation and a member of Dementia Friendly Massachusetts.

## **Our Mission**

All Saints Parish is a welcoming Episcopal community committed to sharing faith, fellowship, talents, and Christian values in our worship, in our communities, and in our lives. All Saints invites spiritual growth for all of our members through conversation, communication, and collaboration, serving those in need, and teaching the words of Jesus as we pray to be guided by the Holy Spirit.



## History of All Saints

Episcopalians began meeting for worship in Whitman in 1898 and two years later purchased a machine shop as a meeting place. Our current church building was built in 1910. All Saints remained a mission church until 1958 when it became a parish. Thirty rectors have served All Saints as lay readers, shared rectors, interim rectors, co-rectors, and rectors since the church was built. The parish hall was added in 1954 and is named in memory of Rector John Matteson, who was the longest-serving rector of All Saints from 1914 to 1939. The church faces the Whitman Town Park and its historic bandstand.



## History of Whitman

The area that is now the town of Whitman began in the early 1600s as a tract of land in the northeast corner of Old Bridgewater crossed by a major trail, known as Satucket Path. This trail ran north and south, connecting the Wessagusset section of Weymouth to what is now East Bridgewater.

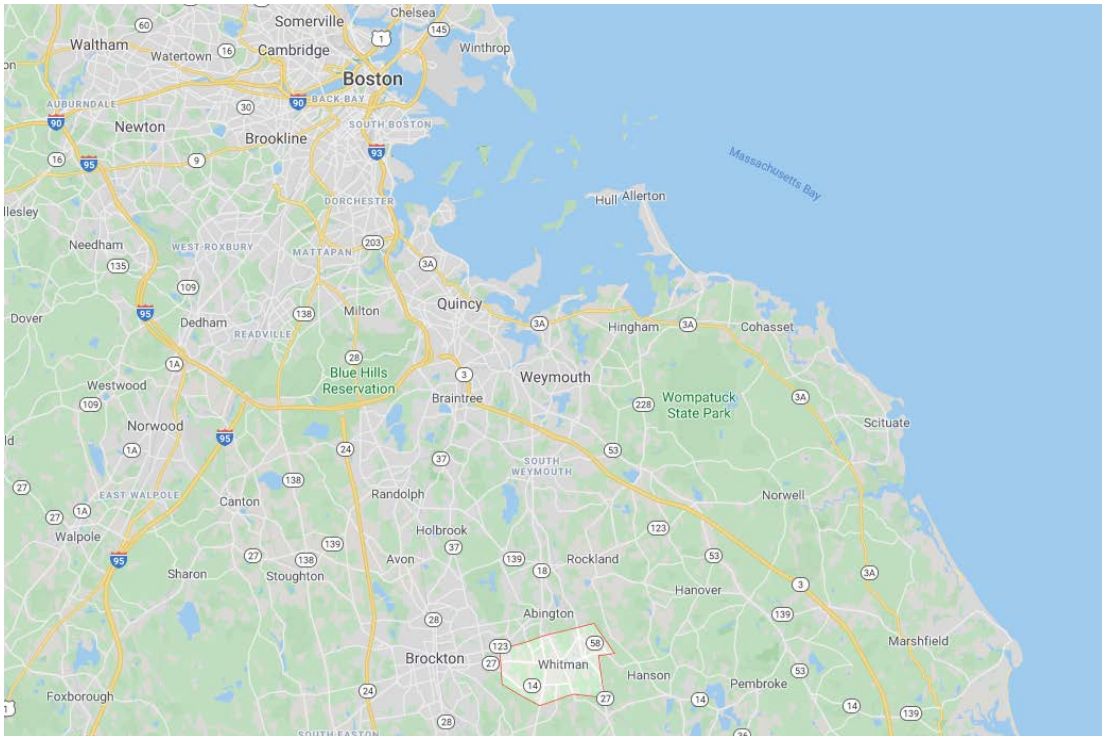
Following King Philip's War (1675-1676), three large land-granted parcels were purchased by families from Wessagusset; two in the now Washington/Walnut Street area and one between what is now Washington and Plymouth Streets (sometimes called Little Comfort) where the first local sawmill was erected in the hopes of attracting settlers. By 1713 after organizing a movement for town status, 31 families in this corner of Old Bridgewater became the township of Abington with their own church and town government.

Nearly 100 years later in 1806, a controversy over religious jurisdiction prompted a group of Congregationalists to request that the state legislature

set them apart as a new parish. The "Second Parish" was then incorporated in 1808 with a jurisdictional boundary fairly close to present day Whitman.

In 1875, an argument over school costs brought the part of Old Abington then known as South Abington in conflict with the Centre of the town. South Abington with a section of Auburnville and a part of East Bridgewater around the Toll Road was made a township by the state legislature. At a town meeting in 1886, a vote was taken to rename the town Whitman in honor of Augustus Whitman, a prominent town citizen.

Located 30 miles south of Boston on that old Toll Road, now Bedford Street, Whitman is a residential community of seven square miles with a population of 14,489 (per 2010 census). Its industrial history includes the production of plank timbers for ship construction with specific fame as the source used to build the *U.S.S. Constitution*, Old Ironsides. Whitman is also noted as one of the first areas in the country to cast church bells and cannons. Later manufacturing importance came as a small cottage industry grew producing both parts, such as tacks, and completed shoe and boot products. The new shoe factories became the largest employer in town through the mid-1900s, giving Whitman the nickname Shoe Town, U.S.A.



Today, Whitman includes a distinct center with churches, banks, shops, and restaurants; a beautiful Frederick Law Olmstead Park with town swimming pool, baseball and softball fields, skating pond with summer fountain,

walking paths and sledding hills; and the character of a close-knit New England community complete with a church steeple on that second parish Congregational church. Parades for the opening seasons of children's sports and patriotic holidays and local chocolate chip cookie contests (the chocolate chip cookie was invented in Whitman) are part of the fabric that makes up the town of Whitman.



So, while Whitman began as a pass-through from East Bridgewater to Weymouth on an Indian trail called Satucket Path, it has grown into a charming community with a historical connection to the earliest settlers of our country. Little remains of Whitman's colonial past but a few names of people and places from its history. One is a street right in the center of the town, South Avenue, a link to its time as part of Old Abington. It is in that town of Abington, to its north, where you will find its corresponding street, North Avenue, located.

For further information on our town and the local area, please visit <https://www.whitman-ma.gov/> and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitman,\\_Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitman,_Massachusetts).

## Worship

We celebrate Rite II Eucharist at our two Sunday services.

- The 8:00 a.m. service is without music
- The 10:00 a.m. service is our family service

We have an organist. Aside from the hymnal we utilize the "Wonder Love and Praise" and "Lift Every Voice" books for music. Our Sunday School Directors lead our children's choir who perform during selected services throughout the year.

Special Services include but are not limited to the following:

- Monthly Morning Prayer: held on a Wednesday
- Holy Week: Maundy Thursday and Good Friday

- Labor Day Weekend: either in Whitman Town Park and/or sharing our building with other Whitman churches
- 12-Step Recovery Prayer Service: held the last Wednesday of the month
- Intergenerational Christmas Pageant: held on the last Sunday before Christmas and involves those of all ages in our parish



### **Christian Education**

Sunday School meets starting at 9:45 AM, and the children join the regular 10 A.M. service following the sermon. We currently have co-directors, both teachers in South Shore public schools. As they have stated in the Annual Report: "As our parish continues through a period of transition, one thing remains constant. Our group of children exude joy and faith every day and no two weeks are the same and life in our little classroom is never boring." There are 11 children in Grade 3 or older registered for Sunday School, as well as several toddlers who are in the nursery. The Sunday School uses the "Dig In" curriculum, which is a wonderful program that provides a variety of age-appropriate activities to illustrate Jesus' teachings. Once the last Sunday of every month, the children assist with the church service as readers, acolytes, and ushers. In past years the Sunday School has worked on service projects. Last year the children were charged with planning a service project from start to finish, from choosing a recipient as well as brainstorming and completing fundraising events. The group chose to make and sell cookies, lemonade, and fruit smoothies to support a local animal shelter. After achieving a sense of accomplishment and charity with this

successful project, the children are anxious to move forward to partake in additional service activities.

For adults we have short term Bible studies led by the Rector throughout the year e.g. Lent and Advent. The adults meet either on Sundays or a weekday afternoon, and often participate in discussions based on an assigned, seasonally relevant book.

## **Community Outreach**

Though we are a small parish, we provide outreach to our community in many ways.

- Thrift Shop: We have a thriving thrift shop open twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. We have also established a connection between the Thrift Shop and the Whitman Food Pantry to further assist the needy in our community.
- Services for the Elderly: We established a lay-led ministry with Colony Nursing Home in Abington. Along with Joy in Christ Lutheran Church in Abington, parishioners visit those in the Nursing Home at least one time a month. During Advent, parishioners young and old gather at Old Colony to carol with the residents, both in Old Colony's meeting room and through the halls to ensure residents with limited mobility can also join in the Christmas cheer.
- 12-Step Recovery Prayer Service: This special service is held on the last Wednesday of each month to support those who are in recovery, both in our parish and beyond.
- Winter Indoor Yard Sale and Cookie Contest: Each February, to break up the cold winter months of New England, we hold an annual winter indoor yard sale. During this indoor event, our talented parishioners of all ages enter to compete for the best chocolate chip cookie recipe, in honor of the Whitman restaurant "The Toll House" that invented the chocolate chip cookie.
- Corned Beef Supper: This event is held on a Saturday in March. Parishioners donate, prepare, and serve corned beef and all the fixings to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. For many years, a talented parishioner has donated his time at this supper to entertain guests with Irish music.
- Annual "Ride for Shauna and Mike": A motorcycle event is held each summer in loving memory of a parishioner's daughter and friend, whose lives tragically ended in a motorcycle accident in 2014.
- Craft Show: This event is held in October and brings regional crafters into our parish hall to display their wares for the community to purchase.

- Church Fair: This event is held on a weekend in November, where our own parishioners contribute their creative and culinary talents to showcase and sell to the community. We serve our famous Harvest Soup at this event, to which townsfolk look forward every year.
- Homeless Family Project: Each Advent, All Saints sponsors two families through the Friends of the Homeless of the South Shore. We provide each member of the families four gifts, including clothes, personal items, and toys to make Christmas special in their time of need.

## **Fellowship**

All Saints holds many fellowship activities throughout the year. Some of these serve as church fundraisers, but each event allows our parish to enjoy time together and often enjoy fellowship through eating as well!

- Trivia Contest: This is held on a Saturday evening in January or February and allows parishioners to put on their competitive caps!
- Church Auction: This is held on a Saturday evening in May and gives parishioners the opportunity to donate goods or services that can be auctioned off.
- Senior Lunch: This is held during the day on the first Thursday of the month. Individuals bring a sandwich and a local restaurant provides soup.
- Meditative Coloring: This is held throughout the year during designated weekday afternoons.
- Bible Studies: These are held periodically throughout the year and may include a book that is read/discussed.
- Monthly Church Breakfast: The first Sunday of each month, between services, our culinarily talented members cook and serve breakfast for all parishioners to enjoy.





## Our Facilities

All Saints' current facilities include the Sanctuary, which was built in 1910, and the Parish Hall, which was built in 1954. The Sanctuary seats approximately 100 individuals with room for 16 more in the choir loft. The Parish Hall includes the Sacristy, a kitchen, and a handicapped restroom on the main level, as well as three Sunday School classrooms, an office and two additional restrooms on the lower level.

In 2007 a winter storm caused serious damage to the kitchen wing, destroying the roof and requiring a complete renovation of the kitchen. In 2014 due to the need for additional income, the Sunday School rooms under the Sanctuary were taken over by a new Thrift Shop, run by a small group of parishioners. Thanks to the donations of slightly used clothing, personal items, and home goods, this enterprise has been very successful over the years since its establishment, both by helping the local community and supplementing our church income.

With the closing of our sister church, Saint David's in Halifax, we welcomed a number of members as well as Saint David's Memorial Garden, which was transferred to the backyard at All Saints. The transfer of the Garden included the moving of some cremains from Halifax and others have been added since its dedication in Whitman. A playground has been added, along with other gardens in the backyard, for our Parish's children to use during coffee hour in the warmer months.

Both the Sanctuary and Parish hall are handicap accessible by using an elevator from the paved area on the right side of the church and via a ramp from the walk along the side of the hall to the door in the rear of the building, respectively. There is accessible parking in front of the Parish Hall and plenty of parking on the street that is shared with the town park.



Our Sanctuary is the home of many beautiful stained-glass windows, most notable are the John LaFarge Memorial Windows, which were restored in 2019. The windows were originally created by John LaFarge, a distinguished and world-renowned artist, in 1883 as loving memorials to two deceased younger Mason sisters, Anna and Clara. Though they began their life in the Mason family chapel, later becoming part of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, they have shared a place in the lives of parishioners at All Saints Episcopal Church for over 100 years. After over 20 years of research, interview, discovery, fundraising, and seeking guidance, the restoration of two historically notable and beloved John LaFarge windows was painstakingly and thoughtfully completed by the Italian-trained Michael Martino of The Martino Stained Glass Studio. A rededication event with presentations by our organist, our resident historian, and Michael Martino himself was topped off by being honored with a blessing from Bishop Alan Gates.



## Parish Goals and Objectives

Our parish has a universal objective to encourage young families to join us and grow our church. In doing so, we hope to eventually be able to support a  $\frac{3}{4}$ - to full-time rector. We are a well-oiled machine that needs a rector who can help us forge ahead toward our goals. As a parish in the 21st century, we understand that church is not a given for families, and there are many other activities and events that keep even our parishioners from attending Sunday services regularly. To that end, we are looking to think outside the box in order to engage more members. The following are ways our parishioners have suggested we do this:

- Offering church at a different time (even if only monthly) to accommodate those who have other Sunday events such as sports
- Offering different styles of service but balancing traditional liturgy with other services that may be more modern/engaging to a younger audience
- Involving more music in services (growing the choir, a bell choir (adult and/or children), etc.)
- Addressing the goals of parishioners in relevant community and world change as outreach and volunteerism is a priority for many people and families in our current society
- Offering more opportunities for our young members to participate in activities (youth groups, community service projects, etc.)
- Focus on the attraction versus aggressive promotion of new members



## **Challenges and Opportunities**

In 2010, we had a parish wide concern when information that a registered sex offender was attending our 10:00, child-friendly services came to light. The vestry decided that our parish wasn't an appropriate place for registered sex offenders to participate, particularly in the child-friendly services, as we had been trying to grow our young family attendance. Out of this challenge, our parish instituted Safe Church training for all vestry members and Sunday school teachers. The attendee mentioned was redirected to an adult parish in Taunton in an attempt to support both sides.

In 2013, during the Reverend Colette's term as priest-in-charge, we faced our biggest challenge in recent history. The topic of same-sex marriage was brought up at a vestry meeting, which led to a parish-wide meeting to discuss individual feelings on the subject. There was a tremendous divide between parishioners and it came to pass that those against same-sex marriage in the church broke away from All Saints. We lost approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  of our members and a significant amount of pledges. The diocese assisted us through this emotional hardship and financial burden. Since that time, we have regrown our parish to include more families and have regained a majority of our financial base in pledges. This challenge was an opportunity to really see ourselves and who we want to be – an environment that is open and welcoming to diversity. We have same-sex families, mixed-race families, mixed-faith families, many former Roman Catholics, and some members of other faiths who have found more support and community in our parish than they had in their childhood church, temple, or mosque. We have all reached deeply into our pockets and given generously of our time to rise up and flourish anew.

## **Strengths**

Well-known in the surrounding community as "The Little Brown Church," All Saints has been a fixture in Whitman for over a century. We pride ourselves in having families who have been attending for generations as well as welcoming new members with open arms. As a church family, we support each other in celebration, hardship, and sorrow, assisting our brothers and sisters through loving prayer as well as emotional and tangible support.

We also feed each other spiritually and literally! With Bible studies, meditative coloring, and other group events, we find ourselves closer to God by coming together. There are many great chefs in our Little Brown Church, both young and not-so-young, and there is no shortage of parishioners willing to sacrifice a few calories to show their support.

Our desire to help each other and others around us, near and far, grows as our hearts grow. We have enthusiastically established local and global outreach programs: from supporting Whitman Food Pantry, to fulfilling Christmas wish lists of homeless families on the South Shore, to collecting supplies to donate to the Syrian Refugee Project. We are hungry to support those in need as we thank God for the gifts He has given us.

In this time of transition, we have come together more than ever to support each other. We realize that we are All Saints, and our Rector is a bonus who will help to guide our spirits closer to God. We look forward to opening our hearts to the next spiritual guide of our Little Brown Church.



### **Questionnaire Results**

In the summer of 2019, the Search Committee began to gather data from the members of the parish to obtain a clear picture of where we are as a parish and where we'd like to be in the future with a new rector. We gathered data through a questionnaire as well as from informal small group meetings. Over the summer of 2019, a survey went out to the parish via hard copy written surveys as well as a digital format that could be completed online. While a majority of responses from the written and online surveys were from older members, there were representatives who contributed to answering the survey from each age group, and our small group meetings

allowed us to delve more deeply into the vision parishioners have for our future. In reviewing all of this information, a few common threads were revealed in what we, as a group, are seeking for the future. First, there is a strong desire to grow our church, specifically with younger members and families as well as improve our diversity by being more attentive to LGBTQ and minorities of all races/ethnicities who seek a supportive community in Christ. By increasing membership, we hope to also increase stewardship beyond our current means. Next, many members are interested in getting out into the community to have a bigger presence; we can do this by engaging all of our members and by encouraging participation in community events. Lastly, many parishioners commented on their openness to change, a challenging thought for some, and are excited to bring about new ideas for all aspects of our church community. The common theme among most of the parishioners has been to be open to both new ideas and outreach with the goal of encouraging a diverse group of new members and support the success of our church family as well as our spiritual growth.

Section 1: Personal Information

Respondents were asked to provide information on their gender, age, how long they've been attending All Saints, how often they attend services, and if they participate in any ministries, programs, or activities in addition to Sunday Worship. Those who responded to the questionnaire ranged in age from 30 to 80+, with the average age in the late sixties. Additional information regarding the respondents include:

- Over 55% are women
- Over 60% have been attending more than 11 years
- 80% attend services weekly
- 84% participate in other ministries, programs, or activities

Respondents were asked about their current involvement. 55% stated their involvement was the same over the past two years, 29% stated their involvement had increased, and 16% stated their involvement had decreased.

Finally, the respondents were asked how well All Saints meets/fulfills their spiritual needs. The following chart shows the results of this question:

Very Well	71%
Somewhat	18%
Neutral	11%
Not enough	0%
Not at all	0%

## Section 2: Why All Saints?

In this section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to look at what All Saints does well and identify areas they believe have a need for improvement. The top 5 areas that the respondents felt All Saints is very effective/does well include:

- Vestry Leadership
- Welcoming Visitors/Parishioners
- Sunday School
- Sunday Worship
- Fellowship

The 5 areas that the respondents felt All Saints needs improvement with include:

- Youth Ministries
- Adult Education
- Stewardship
- Music Ministries
- Community/Outreach



## Section 3: Church Leadership

In this section, respondents were asked what strengths, gifts, and talents they believe are important for a Rector to have to lead All Saints Parish at this time. The chart below captures those areas the respondents found to be high on the importance scale:

Communication Skills <i>Listens, warm, welcoming &amp; extroverted</i>	92%
Pastoral Caretaker/Spiritual Guidance <i>Counseling, visitations, crisis ministry</i>	92%
Strength of Character <i>Approachable, down-to-earth, relatable</i>	89%
Liturgy/Preaching/Public Speaking <i>Sermons, conducting worship/liturgical services</i>	89%
Family-oriented Ministry <i>Families/singles: youth/elders: male &amp; female</i>	82%
Stewardship <i>Lead in the development &amp; use of resources</i>	82%
Community Ministries <i>A strong presence in our local community</i>	76%
Outreach Ministries <i>To persons in need within &amp; beyond parish</i>	68%
Administrative Skills <i>Organized, efficient &amp; able to delegate</i>	66%
Teaching Skills/Christian Education <i>Youth Education/Adult Education</i>	66%
Music Ministries <i>Support parish ministry through music</i>	53%

#### Section 4: Future of All Saints

Lastly, respondents were asked to choose rate areas that they see as concerns or goals for All Saints as we envision our future for the next one to five years. The following is the combined total percentage of those areas the respondents consider to be most important:

Communication among leaders/parish	87%
Sunday Worship	87%
Welcoming Visitors/Parishioners	84%
Sunday School	84%
Pastoral Care	82%
Vestry Leadership	82%
Fellowship	79%
Community outreach	74%
Stewardship	71%
Youth Ministries	68%
Adult education	66%
Facilities/Building & Grounds	63%
Music Ministries	58%



## **What We Seek in a Rector**

We are looking for an enthusiastic rector of any gender, color, or orientation who will welcome setting us up to a new vision of our church. While being able to support the traditional Episcopal liturgy during regular services, our new rector should be able to enthusiastically think outside the box to provide a fresh perspective and opportunities that will encourage buy-in from old and new parishioners. We would be open to exploring alternative service styles and times to encourage more participation/enhanced enjoyment of church. We seek someone who is fully committed to helping us grow and flourish within our walls as well as outside in the community. As a parish, we feel most drawn to increasing our youth ministries as well as our outreach and adult education opportunities as top priorities for spiritual fulfillment.

While we do not expect our rector to attend town meetings, it would be helpful to have him or her engage the community in some way to make our presence and the benefits of membership known, including being available to support our nursing home ministry. We are a dementia-friendly parish, so keeping some tradition will support these members.

The children of our parish have offered some suggestions and requests as well. They would love to see more music in the services. Several years ago, a member offered a children's bell choir in which they enjoyed. Our children are extremely engaged in helping others and would welcome the opportunity for youth groups, community projects and missions. They enjoy participating in the services when able, and are praying for a rector who is loving, brave/ready to take on challenges, considerate, smart, funny, and understanding of children. Our youngest parishioners feel like All Saints is their home and we would like to build on that feeling with our new rector's help.

## Financial & Membership Information

### Financial Information

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Revenues</b>				
Pledges/Offerings/Gifts	\$82,843	\$90,331	\$79,606	\$62,392
Other Income	\$37,034	\$34,997	\$20,987	\$17,997
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$119,877</b>	<b>\$125,328</b>	<b>\$100,593</b>	<b>\$80,389</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Clergy & Staff	\$75,468	\$68,434	\$69,063	\$59,841
Mission & Outreach	\$367	\$250	\$246	\$250
Other Expenses	\$33,987	\$42,480	\$30,943	\$26,727
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$109,822</b>	<b>\$111,164</b>	<b>\$100,252</b>	<b>\$86,818</b>

### Membership Information

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Total Active Baptized Members</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>129</b>
Baptisms	1	5	3	0	2
Confirmations/Reaffirmations	2	0	1	9	0
Marriages	0	0	0	0	0
Average Sunday Attendance	48	52	50	48	44

