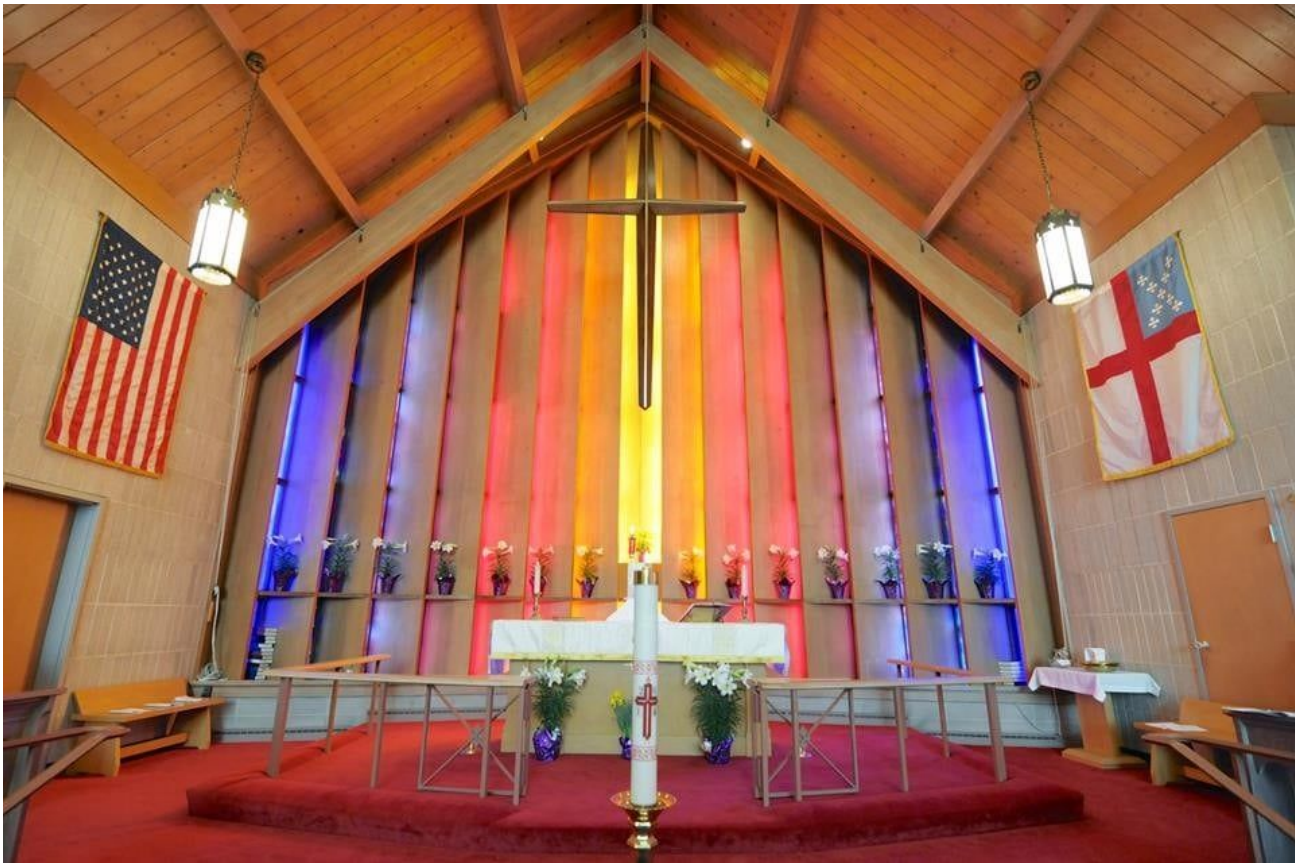


CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR SOMERSET, MA

Parish Profile 2020



Church of Our Saviour's Search Prayer

O God of patient and gentle strength, who knows our needs even before we ask, may your loving presence guide us as we seek the next Rector for Church Of Our Saviour. Give us an open spirit, discerning hearts and clear minds, that we may trust your will for us and become ever more united in your son our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Inspire our conversation, deepen our prayer, and make us a community of humility and grace. Raise up for us, we pray, a priest and pastor who will boldly proclaim your Gospel, faithfully administer your sacraments, and serve your people with love and compassion.

All this we ask through Jesus our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

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Welcome to Church Of Our Saviour

The Episcopal Church of Our Saviour in Somerset, Massachusetts, has entered into the search process to call our next Rector. We are a small, caring, mission-oriented parish located south of Boston, MA, and east of Providence, RI. The Parish Profile that follows provides a glimpse of our parish and the people who make it a church family.



Even though we were formally incorporated as a church more than a half-century ago, we continue to be blessed with some of the original folks who built our building as active parishioners. In addition to the community of Somerset, the membership here is drawn from residents of more than a dozen area communities, bringing with them a blend of religious traditions and upbringings.

Each individual coming to us is recognized as a unique child of God. We strive to make justice and inclusivity a reality, and we support the dignity of everyone. There is room for all of our extended family at our table.

Our Profile will highlight the active ministries of our parish as well as those we are looking to strengthen. We are a community of believers that exhibits joy by simply being together, whether at worship, Sunday morning coffee hour, social gatherings for all ages, fundraisers, educational ministries or during the sharing of the peace. God's love, given to us through our Baptism, allows us to share that love with others.

We offer you our prayers during your discernment process as you get a brief glimpse of our beloved Church of Our Saviour. And we trust in our compassionate God to be with us all, even in the midst of change.

With Sincerity,

Episcopal Church of Our Saviour Search Committee

Joseph Costa, Jane Emack-Cambra, Brendan Hanna, Jessica Martel, Elaine Ojala, Jennifer Paiva

Our History



The Church of Our Saviour began as a mission of Christ Church in Swansea in 1907. We were housed in a barn in the Pottersville section of Somerset, Massachusetts, and known as the Pratt Avenue Episcopal Mission. The organization was incorporated as Church of Our Saviour in 1939. Additions to the space proved inadequate and plans were made to erect a new church building.

Dedicated in 1963, our current home on County Street encompasses a Rectory that now houses the bustling Annelle DeLorme Hagerman Food Bank, and a tranquil Memorial Garden suited for both meditation and worship.

Our parish has been served by full and part-time Rectors, Priests-in-Charge, Interim Priests and Deacons. Our first Rector in the new church building, Rev. Alden R. Burhoe, served the parish faithfully for 37 years, followed by an Interim Minister for three years, until a new Rector was called.

During this transition period there were challenges and changes as the parish grappled with the new church that they were called to be. Following this difficult transitional period, a Priest-In-Charge served for three years and was instrumental in the parish's renewal and rejuvenation.

During these transitional times, the parish community developed strong lay leadership. The two subsequent Rectors partnered with this lay leadership and provided inspiration by fostering the creation of new programs like "Rappin' with the Rev", the Meal Ministry, a Parish Retreat, and Advent and Lenten adult education series. These programs were created with the goal of reaching out to all our parishioners.

Members of our parish family have spearheaded fundraisers, organized events and initiated new ministries benefitting both our church family and the surrounding communities. Church of Our Saviour has sponsored two Mission trips to Kenya, twelve annual retreats to the Barbara C. Harris Camp in New Hampshire and one postulant currently serving as a priest in the Diocese of New Jersey.

Who We Are

Church of Our Saviour in Somerset, Massachusetts, is part of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. We come together to praise and thank God, to hear His word, and to pray for ourselves and others.

We gather as a parish to participate in shared leadership and service in our community. We are inclusive and open, generous to those in need, and welcoming of all. Church of Our Saviour is one of 180 congregations throughout eastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod and the Islands. These congregations make up the Diocese of Massachusetts which, in turn, is part of the larger, global Anglican Church.

The church welcomes and serves our community and beyond with grace and love. We do this specifically through our Food Pantry, Clothing Boutique, and Meal Ministry, where we feed over 200 families per month, treating our guests with dignity and respect.

We are an energetic community, constantly engaged in activities that further our church's mission. We also take time for adult education, hosting an EfM group, in addition to adult education sessions during the Advent and Lenten seasons.

We are the host of a multi-parish annual retreat, a youth group, confirmation classes, special worship services and a food pantry, collaborating with three nearby parishes.

We are spiritually centered around love and grace for ourselves, each other, and the other. We have a legacy of inclusion, welcoming all people regardless of identity or previous religious affiliation.



A Vision of Our Future

Church of our Saviour desires to continue to be a welcoming and inclusive community. We wish to increase our membership, attracting more families with children for whom we can provide a nurturing atmosphere, encouraging families to become involved in the parish.

We would also like to create an active music presence in our worship services by restoring the choir, utilizing a variety of instruments during services, and selecting hymns that are easier to learn and that will encourage congregational participation.

We hope to become a community that supports and encourages youth development and exploration, expanding our youth involvement, and offering programs that will allow them to feel respected, empowered, interested and engaged. We dream of offering special worship services tailored to the youth that will be relevant to their needs.

Church of our Saviour dreams of becoming a community leader in mission, hosting events geared toward the wider community, drawing that community into our parish, and perhaps becoming a faith and learning center geared toward meeting people's spiritual needs. This would also enable us to become more connected to other organizations in the Somerset area.

We would like to create a more centralized Stewardship program along with vibrant and vital church programs that inspire giving.

We have hopes of becoming more welcoming to the handicapped, creating a way for people to easily move between the sanctuary and the undercroft while remaining indoors, and we are currently working to gain training to receive a designation as an "Alzheimer-friendly" community.

We wish to be a source of spiritual transformation, bringing people together to understand and experience God's love, focusing on prayer and discernment during our decision-making processes, especially at monthly committee meetings and meetings concerning our finances.

We look forward to continuing our current Food Pantry, Clothing Boutique, and Meal Ministry while broadening our outreach to include new opportunities.

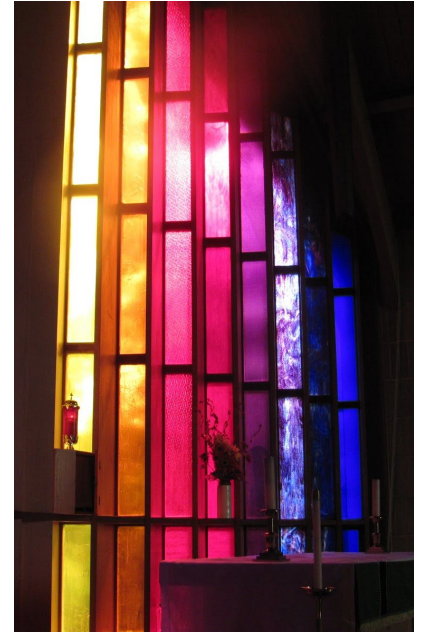


The Qualities We Seek In A Rector

With the assistance of our entire congregation, we have discerned the goals we would like to pursue with a two-thirds time Rector.

We are looking for a spiritual leader who is empathetic and compassionate, someone who will be mindful of the vulnerable population of our Food Pantry, be approachable and a good listener, and be interactive, inviting and understanding of all people, whatever age and in whatever circumstance they find themselves.

Because we have a tradition of inviting all people to God's table, our new Rector would need to embrace this tradition, valuing the Christ in all of us, being open to offering the Eucharist to all, and continuing to make our parish a welcoming and inclusive place for the LGBTQ+ community.



Our new minister should have a strong relationship with God, be someone who can guide us through discernment and prayer, and teach us to do the same in all situations.

Since one of our major goals is to attract more youth, families and young adults, we need a spiritual leader who would be willing to work with us in building these programs; someone who is able to connect with children and teens, involving them as full partners in the faith.

We are looking for a teacher, someone who can convey the weekly readings in a way that they will relate to our lives and to events we see happening in the world, making the message relevant for today.

Through past lengthy periods of transition, Church of Our Saviour has developed strong lay leadership. We seek a Rector who would be willing to partner with us on our journey.

As we look to expand our community involvement, we desire a Rector who is community-oriented, someone who will embrace the collaboration that has been formed with four area Episcopal churches, especially regarding the multi-parish youth group and multi-parish retreat.



Our Community

The town of Somerset is located in Bristol County, its population hovering around 18,000 on 12.55 square miles. First settled in 1677 on the Native American Shawomet Lands and incorporated as a town in 1790, it was named for Somerset Square in Boston which, in turn, was named for the county of Somerset in England.

Somerset is in an envious location in southern New England, easily accessible by Interstate 195 via the Braga and Veterans' Memorial bridges. It offers limited bus service, and the closest rail stations and airports are in nearby Providence, RI and Boston, MA. It has outstanding schools, a library, and full-time fire and police departments. It also has town-wide water and sewerage.

If you're coming to Somerset for business or pleasure, you'll find what you're looking for. Somerset is about an hour's drive from Boston, the cosmopolitan capital of New England, with its numerous museums, historical venues, restaurants, first-rate world-recognized health care, professional sports teams, and a host of arts and cultural institutions.

Somerset is a short drive to historic Plymouth and Cape Cod, and transportation is available to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Island. Outstanding beaches and shoreline, boating, fishing, skiing and golfing are readily available, as are the cities of Providence and Newport, RI.

The town of Somerset and its surrounding communities offer an unprecedented breadth of experiences for everyone, while providing a rich menu of activities and spiritual experiences to foster our community and to invite others to join us.

Our Worship And Liturgy

Church of Our Saviour provides a worship service of Holy Eucharist twice each weekend. Our service on Saturday at 5pm is a shorter service without music. Our Sunday service is at 9:30am and includes music each Sunday, as well as Sunday School during the traditional school year. Our usual worship follows Rite II in the *Book of Common Prayer*. We also utilize services from *Enriching Our Worship* and the *New Zealand Prayer book*.



We have special yearly services, most notably during Lent and Holy Week. During the solemn days of Lent, we begin our service with the Penitential order, including the Decalogue. During Holy Week we incorporate Taize chant with other music. We have a Maundy Thursday service with foot washing and the stripping of the altar. We then begin our overnight vigil with parishioners participating at various times throughout the night. The vigil ends with a Good Friday service at noon, and an additional Good Friday service at 7pm.

On Saturday of Holy Week, we practice the Great Vigil, moving from death to life and incorporating the lighting of the fire, a baptism and a dramatic revealing of the glorious sanctuary for Easter Sunday.

Music

Our music traditionally comes from the Hymnal, LEVAS, or Wonder, Love and Praise. Our organist has begun adding more contemporary music to our Sunday services, and it has been well received.

Currently our choir is in a time of transition. Prior to this, we had a faithful group of six to eight parishioners. Because of a difficult transition with music directors, the choir disbanded. Presently, we have a few singers and instrumentalists who are looking to reignite the music program.

Altar Guild

The altar guild devotedly serves the Lord by preparing the altar for two weekly services, special sacramental services and occasional summer services in our Memorial Garden. This preparation also includes caring for the smaller altar linens and preparing holiday flowers.

Outreach

Annelle Delorme-Hagerman Food Pantry

(<http://foodpantry.church-of-our-saviour.com>)



The mission of the church's Food Pantry is to provide friendship, a spiritual home, and supplemental grocery assistance to our neighbors in the greater Somerset community.

With our current resources, we are able to provide monthly services for our guests. We distribute food

on the second Friday evening and the last two Saturday mornings of each month. All staff associated with the Food Pantry are volunteers.

We are a member agency of the Greater Boston Food Bank and are also certified to receive United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food at no cost. Because of our involvement in these programs, we are able to use our limited resources to provide an adequate amount and a variety of food to our guests.

In 2019, we served a monthly average of 186 households, representing 432 individual guests.. Over the year, we served a total of 482 unique households (representing 1,242 individuals) with supplemental groceries, a warm meal, and clothing. Our guests resided in 17 communities within a 25-mile radius. About 18% came from Somerset and Swansea, 60% came from the city of Fall River, and the remaining 22% was divided among 14 other towns.

Alden Burhoe Meal Ministry

In addition to, and accompanying the Food Pantry Ministry, Church of Our Saviour has a Meal Ministry. This ministry provides a friendly, welcoming environment to our guests as they enjoy a hot meal. They are welcome to attend all monthly meals which are served during the registration process prior to selecting their groceries, although they can only receive groceries once a month.

We also prepare and serve a Thanksgiving turkey meal to all of our guests in the undercroft at Church of Our Saviour.

Clothing Ministry

The mission of the Clothing Ministry is to offer a friendly, welcoming environment while providing gently used clothing to individuals and families. At each distribution, we offer clothing that has been donated by parishioners and others in our community. It is inspected, sorted and hung on racks for display prior to distribution. Any clothing remaining on the racks after a few months is donated to other charities.

Mission Ministry

This Ministry provides assistance in a variety of ways. For example, it helps with copayments for medications, supplies monetary assistance for the Prayer Shawl Ministry and offers assistance to the community and to parishioners new to Church of Our Saviour.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Those in the parish who knit or crochet can be involved in making prayer shawls and lap robes, offering additional comfort to members or friends of the parish or to residents of local nursing homes. These items are blessed at one of the weekend services prior to being presented. Additionally, through this Ministry, baby blankets are presented to children at the time of their baptism.



Lay Ministries

Home Eucharistic Visitors

Occasionally, volunteers who have been trained within the Diocesan Lay Eucharistic Visitors Program provide home Eucharistic visits to those who cannot attend weekly services.

Prayer Chain Ministry

This Ministry offers up in prayer those who have requested shared prayers for themselves or for others.

Greeting Card Ministry

Through this Ministry, monthly cards are sent to shut-ins or ill parishioners who are unable to attend weekly services, letting them know that they are included in our thoughts and prayers.

Hospitality

Our parish prides itself on the caring fellowship we offer each other, and the warm hospitality we extend to all visitors. Our weekly coffee hour after the Sunday morning worship service, and our end-of-the-year Sunday School cookouts are an integral part of that fellowship. We have sponsored Coffee Houses that include Open Mic Night, bringing in musicians from our church, the community and beyond. During the holidays, it has become a tradition to host motivational speaker, Dustin Pari, followed by Christmas caroling in the area.

Sunday School

The mission of the Sunday School at Church of Our Saviour is to educate children in the Episcopal tradition with an emphasis on teaching them to Know God, Know the Church, and Know the Community. We combine education, crafts and community projects to ensure that our youngest children feel like important members of the church family and form lasting and meaningful relationships with God and the greater community.



We have a small Sunday School led by dedicated individuals who have completed Safe Church Training. Our director incorporates new ideas into the curriculum and finds interesting ways to engage the young children.

Children ages three through 5th grade are invited to take part in lessons, snacks, crafts and fellowship. Yearly events in which they participate are Halloween Trunk or Treat, Easter Egg Hunt, and end-of-the-year cookout.

Youth who are 6th grade and older meet with an adult mentor and discuss issues of faith and community and how they can be intertwined. They are also given the opportunity to serve as acolytes, bring up the gifts, or to be readers during the weekly services.

Multi Parish Youth Group

Over the past few years, parishes in the Somerset area have seen a decline in middle and high school age congregants. In an effort to draw youth into our congregations, four parishes have joined to begin a multi-parish Youth Group on the South Coast. We want this to be a ministry with youth, not at youth.

The adult participants serve as mentors to the group, not leaders, hoping to be resources to the youth as they discover their paths. The youth have a strong desire to connect with each other, create a tightly knit community, and build strong relationships.

The mentors hope to provide a safe space for the youth to discover and strengthen their faith as they help them discern how their faith influences their actions in their daily lives.

The youth are also interested in meaningful and difficult conversations that they do not feel comfortable having in other spaces. They have wanted to discuss such topics as finding themselves, conquering inner demons, finding peace, and current political and social themes. We hope to provide a safe environment for these conversations. The youth would also like the opportunity to connect with the community, to be a part of something bigger than themselves, and to be taken seriously. They would like an opportunity to practice leadership.



We began meeting twice a month in November of 2018 with a regular attendance of 10-12 middle and high school youth. The program had seven adult mentors, including four laypersons who are parents of the youth, and three priests who are rectors at the participating churches. We have received diocesan funding for the program and are currently looking for a dedicated mentor to lead this program.

Adult Education

Lenten and Advent Series

Church of Our Saviour has traditionally had an adult education class during Advent and Lent, preceded by a soup supper. For the most part, they have not been well attended. In 2018, our Advent class focused on Christmas traditions through the ages. It attracted a small, but interested, group of six to eight. During Lent, 2019, realizing that we have a large number of parishioners from other denominations, and having not offered an Inquirers' Class for several years, we had a mini-Inquirers' Class, focusing upon basic questions about the *Bible*, Jesus, Sacraments and Sacramental Rites, Personal Prayer, History and the *Book of Common Prayer*. These proved to be very popular, drawing between 13 and 30.

At the culmination of these classes, the group expressed a desire for a more formal Inquirers' Class, and in the Fall, 2019, eight to ten interested people met for several weeks, reading and studying the book *Your Faith, Your Life; An Invitation to the Episcopal Church*. This year, we are lengthening the traditional Lenten program so that we can explore Bishop Curry's curriculum, "The Way of Love."

Education For Ministry

Church of Our Saviour currently has an Education for Ministry (EfM) group which started in 2018. In 2019 we have six returning students and one mentor.

Education for Ministry (EfM) is a unique four-year distance learning certificate program in theological education based upon small-group study and practice. Since its founding in 1975, this international program has assisted more than 100,000 participants in discovering and nurturing their call to Christian service. EfM helps the faithful to encounter the breadth and depth of the Christian tradition and bring it into conversation with their experiences of the world as they study, worship, and engage in theological reflection together.

Multi-Parish Retreat



An exciting Multi-Parish collaboration happening on the South Coast is the annual Four-Parish Retreat. Church of our Saviour in Somerset, Christ Church in Swansea, Church of the Holy Spirit in Fall River and St. Luke's also in Fall River gather for an October weekend retreat at the Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center in New Hampshire. The retreat is loosely structured around a monastic day. We gather for dinner on Friday and close with Eucharist on Sunday.

The retreat was originally formed and designed for a single parish, Church of

Our Saviour. In 2017, our tenth anniversary, we heard God calling us to invite our neighbors at Church of the Holy Spirit in Fall River. That was the beginning of expanding the circle of our neighbors and friends. Since then, we have added a new parish into the retreat each year. Christ Church, Swansea, joined in 2018, and St. Luke's, Fall River, in 2019.

We offer a weekend of formation, spiritual renewal, relaxation, fellowship and worship, with programs for adults, Jr/Sr High youth, and for the younger children. We also incorporate multi-generational programs.

There are four scheduled formation sessions led by our facilitators. Interspersed in these scheduled sessions, participants have many opportunities to practice the spiritual techniques of stillness, conversation, prayer and service that they are learning. The retreat center allows space for community building, conversation, stories and getting acquainted.

Participants also have free time where they may choose from various pre-planned activities or take much-needed time for stillness, prayer and reflection. Free time activities for 2019 included a drum circle, nature mandalas, hiking, essential oils, pumpkin carving and board games.

Attendance at the retreat has remained relatively steady, ranging from 55 – 70 participants.

Our Facilities



Church of Our Saviour is set on beautiful multi-acre property adjacent to the main road (Rte. 138) in Somerset, MA. It is comprised of the main church building (constructed in 1963) with an undercroft, a Food Pantry building (formerly the rectory), a memorial garden and ample parking. It serves not only as a home to our parish community but also as a gathering place for the local community, including groups such as AA.

Within the main floor which houses the large sanctuary, there is a side area for the choir, a large narthex that includes an area suitable for young children to engage in play during the services, an office for the Rector, an area for the secretary, a room for the

Vestry and other groups to meet, a restroom, a sacristy and a large side-entrance area. Church of Our Saviour has handicap accessible entrances to both the sanctuary and the undercroft, but there is no means of indoor transition between the two.

Within the undercroft there is a full kitchen, a furnished living room area, restrooms, and a large fellowship hall to house not only our Sunday School and our Sunday coffee hour, but other church-related activities and events sponsored by the community. The meals provided to those who utilize the Food Pantry and Clothing Boutique are served in the undercroft, which also houses the Clothing Boutique itself.

The Memorial Garden has been the setting for outdoor services, baptisms, Easter egg hunts, our yearly Blessing of the Animals, and other events for children. Ample parking has suited the needs of organizations that meet at Church of Our Saviour occasionally or on a weekly basis.



Participation and Giving

The church's finances have been slowly, but steadily, increasing over the past few years. As shown on the charts below, pledges and plate giving are our major funding source. We also now have an online giving program, where weekly/monthly amounts are automatically withdrawn from individual accounts.

Pledges for 2020 are at an all-time high because of a very successful stewardship campaign aimed at hiring a new rector for more than half-time. We host several yearly fundraisers to add to the pledged and plate income, including a Holiday Fair in November, Clam Boil in the summer, Coffee Houses throughout the year, Golf Tournament in September, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper to begin the season of Lent, and a Palm Sunday bake sale during Holy Week.

We also rent our undercroft to the community for various events throughout the year, and in the summer, we rent the space to a summer day care program. These are all signs of our parish's commitment to remain solvent.

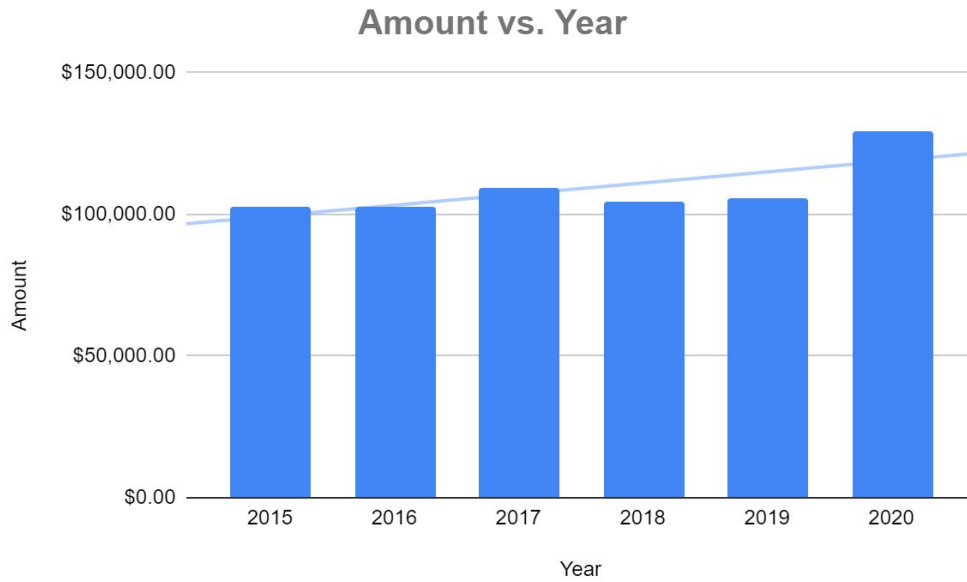
Our expenses are typical of a small to mid-sized church. Our 2019 year end figures were as follows:



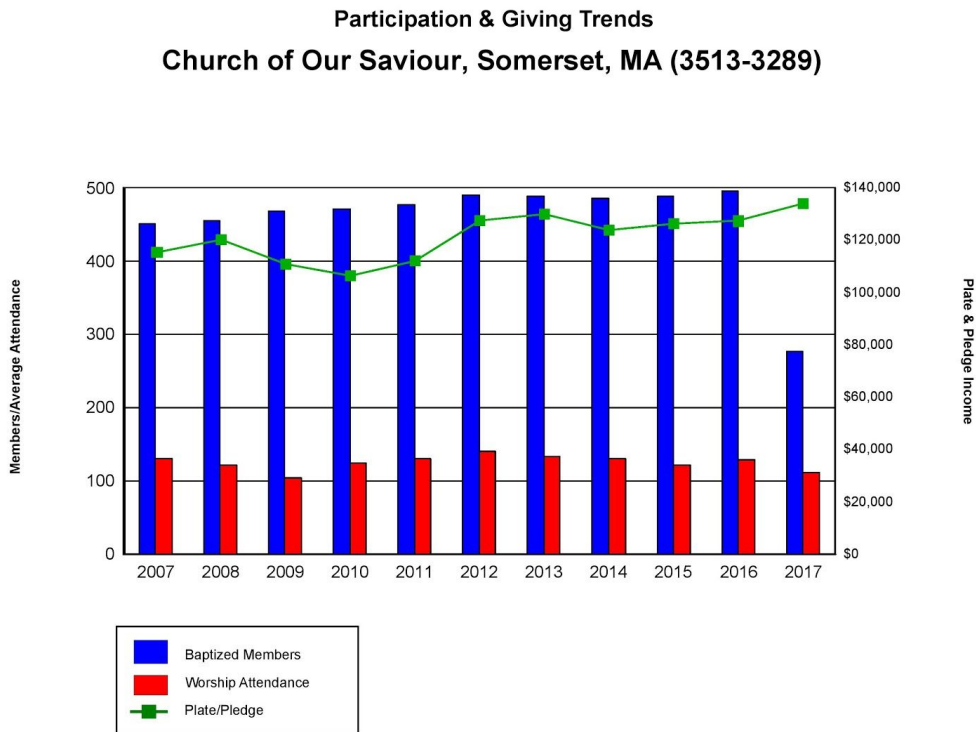
Regular Support	
Envelopes and Loose Offerings	\$131,730
Fundraising	\$15,387
Special Offerings and Flowers	\$7,902
Other Revenue	\$1,185
Building Use	\$4,929
Total Regular Support	\$161,133

Regular Expenses	
Staffing and Benefits	\$109,616
Property	\$25,511
Program	\$3,494
Ministry of Administration	\$8,223
Outside Congregation	\$10,801
Other	\$8,018
Total Regular Expenses	\$165,663

Pledge Data



Participation and Giving Trends



In 2017 outdated membership records were purged, resulting in the large decrease of Baptized Members.

Our Diocese

The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts has 180 congregations in eastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod and the Islands. We seek to be Christ's presence in the world as we answer God's urgent call. 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 we offer ourselves in Christ's name.

The Diocese has a long tradition of public witness, and its bishops throughout the 20th and into the 21st century 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 LGBTQ+ civil rights. They also exercised leadership within the denomination on issues such as the ordination of women, anti-racism, 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.

More information about the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts can be found here:

<https://www.diomass.org/>

Useful Links

Bristol County Chamber of Commerce

Fall River is the closest major city to Somerset

<http://bristolcountychamber.org/our-community/>

Town of Somerset

<https://www.townofsomerset.org/>

<https://www.townofsomerset.org/economic-development-committee/pages/helpful-links>

East Bay Chamber of Commerce

<https://www.eastbaychamberri.org/bristol-county.html>

Youth Ministry Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

<https://www.diomassyouth.org/>