

CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS



PARISH PROFILE  MARCH 2020



**"COME, DISCOVER, AND SHARE
CHRIST'S JOY"**

***CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, 160 ROCK STREET,
FALL RIVER, MA IS AN INNER-CITY PARISH IN THE
EPISCOPAL/ANGLICAN TRADITION***

We are located in the highlands neighborhood of the city, surrounded by a commercial and residential area, within walking distance of downtown.

Fall River is located on the south coast of Massachusetts approximately 53 miles south of Boston, along the eastern shore of the Mt. Hope Bay at the mouth of the Taunton River.



The City of Fall River has a population of 89,661 and is ethnically diverse with a large Portuguese American population.

Along with many public schools the city is also home to a vocational technical high school, several private and parochial schools and a community college.

Fall River is known for its many 19th century textile mills, remnants from its past as a leading textiles manufacturing center. In recent years, vacant mill space has been utilized for art and performance studios with a proposal to revitalize the downtown area by the creation of an Arts District.



The City of Fall River is home to a variety of noteworthy museums, cultural attractions and places of historical significance. Among them, Battleship Cove Maritime Museum, the world's largest collection of World War II naval vessels.

A BIT ABOUT OUR HISTORY

How our church was formed:

Our church was founded in 2008 when three Fall River parishes voted to merge. The three parishes were St. John's/St. Stephen's Partnership Church, St. Mark's Church and Church of the Ascension whose (former) building we now call home.



St. Stephen's Choir

St. Stephens had a annual Holly Berry Christmas Bizarre.

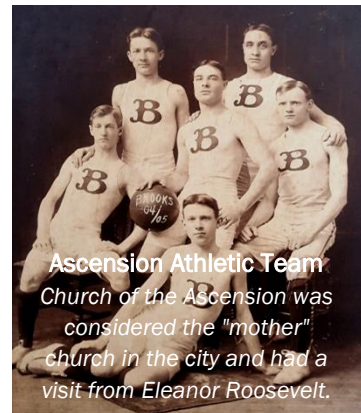


St. Mark's

St. Mark's had the Flying Lion Teen Cafe and many meals including the Potato Pie Supper

Traits that the parishes enjoyed about their former parishes and combined in Church of the Holy Spirit were a family atmosphere, a feeling of being included and a love of children and music. Because of the deliberate and prayerful process that led the parishes to the merger, a newcomer would soon not be able to tell that this was three joined parishes.

The Reverend Matthew Stewart was appointed Priest-In-Charge at the time of the merge and would later be installed as rector on December 4th, 2010. Rev. Matt was active right from the beginning helping the newly formed church get off to a great start. He inspired both church staff and lay leadership starting many new ministries. He was very involved in the community, writing a monthly article in the local newspaper and meeting with area clergy. Rev. Matt was also instrumental in beginning our joint parish involvement. He was very involved with the diocese, serving as Dean of the Mt. Hope -Buzzards Bay Deanery and as part of the Mission Hub.



Ascension Athletic Team
Church of the Ascension was considered the "mother" church in the city and had a visit from Eleanor Roosevelt.



St. John's

St. John's merged in the early 90s with St. Stephen's to become St. John's/St. Stephen's Partnership

In 2010 Jeremi Colvin came to us as a transitional deacon. The following year she was ordained Priest and became our Assistant Rector for Homeless Ministry. Rev. Jeremi started the Bayside Fellowship, an outdoor ministry that provided pastoral support on the streets to the homeless. She was beloved by the community for both her great sense of

humor and compassion for those less fortunate.

How our parish and community has changed over the years:

Over the past 10 years our congregation has declined in numbers due to many factors. People have moved to different church communities, older members have experienced declining health and some have passed away, while others remain members but do not attend church regularly.

In recent years we have begun to partner more often with other local churches. We regularly hold our vestry retreats with the vestry members of Church of our Saviour, Somerset MA. Church of our Saviour has held a parish retreat for many years and in 2017 invited our parish to join in. The retreat now includes two other local Episcopal churches.



We have very few children who attend regularly and currently have no Sunday School or nursery. Most of our children were very close in age and have not been regularly attending or have moved to other church communities after confirmation.

We have a large faithful group of seniors in our congregation and used to have, as of 2018, a strong senior group that included not only members of the church but seniors in the greater Fall River area from different religious backgrounds. This senior group stopped meeting shortly after the resignation of the Senior Coordinator and has not yet been reformed under a new coordinator despite being missed by



many. However, in just the last few weeks a new Game Day has been started. It has quickly become very popular. Each Tuesday many parishioners meet to play games and share a homecooked lunch provided by the coordinator. This time of fellowship has taken the place of senior group for many who once attended and attracted some newcomers.

What has been a constant in the life of the parish?:

We have always opened our doors to whomever needs a helping hand. We have a very large Thrift Shop that has been in operation for many years. Many groups use our church among them a soup kitchen as well as NA and AA groups.

Food is a constant in our community. Whether we are having a Potluck, outside BBQ, bake sale or pancake supper there is always enough to go around and great fellowship around any meal, cream puff or raisin square!



Music is very important to a lot of us. Our Choir and Choir Director have been a very important part of our worship service and community for many years.

We also have a great sense of community. We have a genuine love and respect for one another that extends to all that join us, making all feel like our brothers and sister.

A significant event that stands out in our history:

For all, the merger of all the churches that became Church of the Holy Spirit was a very important event. In 2006, Church of the Ascension, St. John's/St. Stephen's Partnership Church, and St. Mark's Episcopal Church formed a Joint Parish Resource Committee to pray and discuss how they might work together and share resources. The committee engaged the services of Rev. Canon Dexter Cheney to guide them in their deliberations. Subjects discussed were financial survival, long term outlook, cooperative planning and joint services. Joint services were agreed upon and one was held each month rotating through each of the three parishes as host.

In February of 2007 it was decided that yoking or a cluster was not an option. A letter of understanding was presented to the parishes which included an agreement to commit to explore new relationship using a variety of different options including the possibility of merger.

On January 9, 2008 the Inter-Parish Council voted to merge and make their new home the former Church of the Ascension. The date for the unification of the three parishes would be Easter Sunday, March 23rd, 2008. Forms previously had been presented to all parishioners requesting their suggestions for a name for the newly formed church. The results would be announced Easter Sunday.

It was known early on that if the merger happened that for the new church to have a fresh start that none of the present clergy could be a part of the new parish. The Bishop appointed a Priest-In-Charge and Reverend Matthew Stewart began his duties July 15th, 2008.

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

A time in our church life we consider to be a success:

While there are many things over the years that we might point to as a success there is one outreach that has become a neighborhood favorite. In early 2014 we received a grant to hold a summer fun day. As it developed we decided that it would be a free summer



carnival open

to, not only children from the parish and their friends and family, but to all local neighborhood children. We planned a bounce house, dunk tank, games, face painting, horse rides, magician, music, hot dogs, popcorn and cotton candy.

That June we held our first free carnival after our 9:30 AM Sunday worship service. After church was over we were surprised and thrilled to find hundreds of neighborhood children and their parents on the church lawn. Local children have been enjoying this free carnival annually since then. Each year we try to do something new, one year providing transportation for children in family homeless shelters in a nearby community. For the last two years we have used this event to advertise and allow children to sign up for our free Breakfast with Santa a new outreach that we hope will also become a favorite.



A time that was a big challenge:

The biggest challenge that we have faced in our time together was the resignation of our Assistant for Formation and Homeless Ministry, Senior Coordinator and Parish Priest all in 2018. Those losses in close succession led to feelings of grief and anxiety for many of us. These vacancies also led to the end of some important ministries that have not yet been restarted. An intentional community using one of the parish rectories, that was started as a part of the South Coast Mission Hub, was affected by the loss of leadership and other issues and led to the decision to permanently close it. The closing of this ministry posed even more challenges. In the end we feel thankful to have come through these challenges, with the help of our current Interim Priest, as a stronger, wiser, leadership team and congregation.

Our Worship Style and special worship moments we like:

Worship at CHS is varied and reflects the heritage of its predecessor churches. What most characterizes it is a spirit of flexibility and welcome. Children are welcomed in worship and allowed to be children (some movement and noise are expected). Change is also accepted, especially if explained in advance. When being introduced to the contemporary Lord's Prayer in a sung version, many in the church were resistant. But after repeated use, most have become tolerant and others actively like the new version.

While the Book of Common Prayer provides much of the liturgy, other Eucharistic prayers, collects and confessions are incorporated (especially from *Enriching Our Worship* and the *New Zealand Prayer Book*). The music is balanced between traditional hymns from the 1980 Hymnal and gospel/praise music from *Lift Every Voice and Sing II*, with some other praise and contemplative music added. Generally having a broad-church feeling, worship does contain some "higher church" elements, such as the ringing of bells during the Sanctus and the honoring of Mother Mary in May.

Church of the Holy Spirit provides a Blue Christmas service to the community on a weeknight in Advent. It has a tradition of celebrating Candelmas (the Presentation), the Crowning of Mary in May, and outdoor worship several times in the summer, in addition to Christmas Eve and Holy Week special services.

How do you care for each other:

We try to create an environment that is like family where everyone even newcomers feel like they are "coming home". A part of creating that environment is showing compassion and understanding, listening, and letting people know they are not alone. We strive to keep in contact with each other even outside of Sunday service so that we are aware when someone is sick or in need of encouragement or help. In addition, one member regularly sends out cards to members during different seasons. We are more than just a Sunday church!

Outreach in our community and the wider world:

- Our thrift shop provides clothing and comfort to hundreds each year
- The Recovery Groups that utilize our building, such as NA and AA provide healing to many in the greater Fall River area.
- Our visiting Soup Kitchens provide food and dignity
- Our Summer Carnival and Breakfast with Santa allow us to connect more deeply with our neighbors
- We help to raise money for the Joint Parish Retreat that provides funding for families that would otherwise not be able to afford it.
- We collect food for veterans.
- Each year during Advent we have a "giving" tree. A charity is chosen each year to be represented on the tree and bows hold gifts that can be donated.

A ministry just started:

During Advent of 2018 we held our first Breakfast with Santa. This breakfast is free and is held early in December after Sunday morning service. The breakfast is open to parish children as well as advertised throughout Fall



to our local community and those that hunger for a community of hope and love.

River. Children and their families join us for breakfast that is prepared by volunteers followed by a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus and receive gifts. It is our hope that through this free breakfast we can more deeply connect



How we see ourselves over the next five or ten years:

We are an inner-city church with a large cared for church building and two rectory homes. We have a small but joyful congregation that communicates honestly and that care for and respect each other and those outside of our walls. We have enjoyed our collaboration with other faith communities in the greater Fall River area and have a willingness to do more. We see ourselves using our many resources and gifts to build on the outreach that we already offer. Our community has many great traditions that are important to us but we are also open to and excited about exploring new and creative ways of being church

How stewardship is practiced in our church:

Several weeks before pledge Sunday the Stewardship Committee comes up with a theme for that Stewardship season. Some of the past themes have been "The Church is one Foundation" or "We are all a Piece of the puzzle" We begin the season by sending out a stewardship letter to all parishioner centered around that year's theme. Along with monetary donations the emphasis is also on time and talent. In the weeks prior to pledge Sunday members are invited during the sermon to witness what the church means to them. We have also held Ministry Fairs during this time. This involves each of the churches ministries setting up a table in the church with information about that ministry and how parishioners can become involved and share their time or talent. Pledge cards are sent out a week prior to collection.

How we resolve conflict:

We try to create an environment for people to express their opinions and feelings to avoid conflict. When conflict does occur, we resolve it by encouraging open discussions in a safe environment, talking and listening with respect to all parties involved.

Gifts and skills that we would like our new leader to bring:

At Church of the Holy Spirit we are looking for a priest who will companion us through the coming years and is:

- Genuine, caring, compassionate and patient
- Preaches from the heart tying the gospel lessons to our daily lives
- Is experienced and skilled in church revitalization
- Interested in outreach and the community
- Concerned about the needs of the elderly, keeping in touch with those who are homebound, sick or hospitalized
- Has a sense of humor
- Good at motivating staff and lay leadership
- Has a love of music
- Has organizational & business skills

What gifts and skills that we can offer:

Church of the Holy Spirit is an open, tolerant, and down-to-earth community. We have many established outreach ministries and traditions but are willing to try new things. Our community is not only faithful and welcoming with a positive attitude about the future we believe our best quality is our sense of humor that keeps us joyful and fun!

Current Staff

Interim Priest
Parish Administrator and Bookkeeper
Minister of Music
Property Manager

Note: All current staff members, excluding our interim Priest work part-time. The expectation is that our new rector will be full-time.

Vestry and Search team

Warden: Amber Vieira
Treasurer: Dave Higginbottom
Cathey Mayo Thomas Whalen
Gayle Velozo Joanne Baker
Judy Higginbottom Judi Nunes
Maureen Kosa

Clergy Compensation

Financial Compensation: Negotiable within diocesan guidelines per the calculation of Total Clergy Compensation (TCC). Minimum of \$90,465

Healthcare and dental: Provided, options are available and negotiable

Vacation: 4 weeks per year

Continuing Education: 1 Week per year

Retreat Provision: 1 week per year

Housing Available: Church of the Holy Spirit currently owns two rectories. Option 1, is a 3 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath. Option 2, is a 4 bedroom 1-1/2 bath. Both are located approx. 1.5 miles from the church. Utilities included

Contact information

Phone number: (508) 672-5571

Email: chsfallriver@gmail.com

Website: holyspiritchurchfr.org

Search Team Chair: David Higginbottom

Search Team Chair Email: htiverton@cox.net

Diocesan Transition Minister: The Rev. Canon Kelly A. O'Connell

Diocesan Transition Minister email koconnell@diomass.org

Interested candidates please send cover letter, resume, a link to your audio/video sermons and a complete OTM form to:

The Rev. Canon Kelly A. O'Connell - koconnell@diomass.org