

St. Michael's Episcopal Church
1162 Highland Street, Holliston, MA 01746
www.stmichaelshollistonma.org

Parish Profile, 2024

Who We Are

St. Michael's Episcopal Church is an intergenerational community of faith, support, and inclusion striving to make God's love known through action and word. We are a warm and vibrant church family full of parishioners who care deeply for one another and the communities around us.



Our community of faith is Spirit-led. We pray, work, and learn together to explore and grow our faith. We worship God in prayer, music, tradition, and love. We provide Christian education and opportunities for spiritual growth and renewal to those of all ages. We value our children and youth as participants in the life and worship of the parish.

The strength of our community of faith allows us to be resilient and support others within our church family and in the neighboring communities, through ministries such as pastoral care, Loaves and Fishes dinners to support local women's shelters, and much more. During challenging times like the pandemic, St. Michael's worked alongside other faith communities, like St. Andrew's in Wellesley, MA, to provide support and worship. We are always open to opportunities to collaborate with other churches.

St. Michael's is a community of inclusion, where all faith journeys are welcomed and honored; our church continues to grow in strength as we worship together. We welcome all newcomers, as well as honor and respect all members of our parish. No exceptions. All members of God's family are welcome.

Our Region

Our church is in Holliston, Massachusetts, a quiet, suburban community (population: 15,000) located 21 miles west of Boston, but our parishioners include many from the surrounding Metrowest towns of Millis, Medway, Hopkinton, Framingham, Ashland, Milford, and Franklin. This area has a growing population, proximity to beaches and state parks, and a 30-minute drive to the unique sites and amenities of downtown Boston. By and large, this



corner of New England has retained much of its historical and rural charm, but we are also centrally located with easy access to sporting and cultural events, urban and employment centers, and beautiful parks and landscapes. The area is residential, family-oriented, and supports many outdoor sporting and recreational activities. The local towns are especially renowned for their commitment to education and high-ranking school systems, and this tends to draw new young families with children to the area. The median household income for the Town of Holliston is \$150,000, with 3% of persons living in poverty. The most

common race and ethnicity of residents in the Town of Holliston is White (87%), Asian (5%), and Hispanic or Latino (5%); some of the surrounding towns show greater racial and ethnic diversity. We believe that St. Michael's Church is an important spiritual and social resource for our Towns, and we are committed to providing a warm and welcoming place to all as a spiritual home or haven. We invite you to join us to build a stronger community through ministry, friendship, and mutual respect. More information about the Town of Holliston can be found at www.townofholliston.us and more about the Metrowest Boston region at www.metrowestvisitors.org.

Worship

Worship is the most important reason people come to our church. It's an energy driver for members of St. Michael's. Our church has 120 active participants and 108 active baptized members. Post pandemic, our average weekly attendance is 38. We offer two services of Holy Eucharist and/or Morning Prayer at 8 AM and 10 AM on Sundays, with the Sunday service streamed online. We have traditional, but not rigid, Rite I and Rite II services from the Book of Common Prayer. All are welcome at God's table.



We delight in alternative forms of worship, including Lessons and Carols during Advent, Blue Christmas service in December and Blessing of the Animals in October. Music plays an essential role in our worship at St. Michael's. We have a small but mighty choir led by an enthusiastic music director, and we enjoy guest musicians throughout the year.

We have an active group of ushers, lay readers, acolytes, lay Eucharistic ministers and Altar Guild members. We provide a separate room for those needing more private space, but where the service can still be seen and heard.

Our parish has shown resilience in the face of adversity. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we collaborated with St. Andrew's Episcopal church in Wellesley, MA to provide continuing virtual on-line services. Lay people from both parishes were active participants on Sundays, and this collaboration was a special blessing for us during a difficult time.

Church Building & Grounds

Our church building is in a residential area approximately one mile from the central downtown district of Holliston. It was first constructed in 1966 as a tall A-frame sanctuary with adjacent classrooms and outdoor patios. In 2002, a much-needed addition created a larger fellowship hall (“Eva’s Room”), improved



accessibility, and added classroom and meeting space. Our sanctuary now seats 160 people, and we are especially proud of improvements in 2013 that included the installation of six beautiful stained-glass windows which now frame the back of the altar (a gift from St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Millis, Massachusetts, after its closure). The Memorial Garden on the property contains ashes and

memorial plaques of loved ones, and this portion of the grounds underwent substantial restoration work in 2023. Other recent renovations have included resurfacing of the parking lot (2010), re-roofing of the entire building (2022), replacement of heating and air conditioning units (2023), and installation of video cameras with live-streaming capabilities in the sanctuary (2022). We have no mortgage or other long-term property obligations, no significant deferred maintenance, and we are fortunate to have an independent Christian Montessori school renting part of our building (“Ekwall Hall”) under a multi-year lease agreement. Our building space includes a choir loft with piano and organ, family room, choir rehearsal room, nursery, church office, kitchen, sacristy, classrooms, elevator, youth fellowship room, rector’s office, and restrooms on first and second floors. We have a resourceful part-time sexton and a very proactive Building & Grounds Committee. Though our building is relatively new, keeping up with maintenance and repairs is a labor of love, and we recognize the commitment that is needed to support the building and grounds for future generations. It is a goal of our mutual ministry that our rector be relieved of most day-to-day responsibilities for building and grounds.

Finances

While finances are always a challenging aspect of church stewardship, we have maintained a balanced operating budget almost every year since 2000. Like many churches, the recent pandemic years have impacted church attendance and led to member attrition as some members have moved away to be closer to family or to retire. However, the level of total financial stewardship has remained approximately the same, thanks to the generosity of the parish. Regardless, inflationary pressures and rising salaries have led us to transition from a $\frac{3}{4}$ -time to $\frac{1}{2}$ -time rector position. Our annual income of \$220,000 in 2023 will support a priest for one-half time. We also have \$180,000 in 4



endowment funds, \$42,000 reserved for future capital improvements, \$40,000 available from our Employee Retention Tax Credit, and \$16,000 in operating reserves. Our 2024 stewardship campaign generated \$154,000 in committed giving from 42 pledging households, and this provides for approximately 70% of our annual budget. A multi-year

lease for a Christian Montessori school to provide classes on-site provides an additional \$31,000 in annual revenues, and other sources of income include plate offerings, special offerings, fundraisers, etc. Based on our current estimates of operating income and expenses through 2030, we project adequate resources to support a $\frac{1}{2}$ -time rector for the foreseeable future without any significant draw on endowment funds or other supplemental funding reserves. We utilize supply priests and morning prayer worship services on off-weeks to supplement our $\frac{1}{2}$ -time rector. With this change, we recognize the roles that our parish members must adopt to support a mutual ministry that distributes tasks across staff, rector, lay leaders, and volunteers. We are also open and interested in collaborating with other churches in the area who may be willing to share resources or staffing if these opportunities arise. To improve membership and attendance, we are striving to integrate with organizations, programs, activities, and other churches in the area to increase our reach and realize our full potential.

Outreach

Outreach is a core value at St. Michael's. We encourage all to participate in the life of our community in and outside of worship. We carry God's love to others as we support those in our parish as well as our community and beyond. Our



Spring Auction event brings the community together for food and a live and silent auction to provide financial support to local, national, and international charitable organizations doing God's work. We support several local food pantries with food donations from our parishioners on a rotating basis. We cook and deliver monthly meals to two area

women's shelters, where we are thankful to join them for dining and fellowship. During the Christmas holiday, we provide gifts for the women through our *Stockings of Hope* program. Young people at St. Michael's have participated in the *Appalachia Service Project*, a non-governmental organization that addresses

substandard housing using volunteer labor to perform household repairs and renovations for families in the Appalachian region. Our young people visit



for two weeks in the summer with adult volunteers from the parish to work in designated households seeking assistance in Kentucky. Back at home in Massachusetts, our parish also participates in a variety of ecumenical and interfaith activities and events.

Pastoral Care

Our Lay Pastoral Care Committee is made up of several parishioners who administer care through sending cards, phone calls and emails. Meals are delivered where needed. Reaching out to those in need of support provides opportunities to connect and serve our Parishioners. We find it is truly in giving that we receive. We also work with our Parish Priest to bring communion to those who are not able to attend church services in person. A live streaming service is available for homebound parishioners to view church services and stay connected from home.

Fellowship

In worship we serve God. In fellowship, we serve one another. At St. Michael's, we understand that fellowship is an important and necessary component to



being involved in a church community. Every week, we joyfully participate in coffee hour festivities after church services. St. Michael's takes pride in our fellowship, food, and FUN. We enjoy opportunities to nourish and enhance our social connections by holding coffee hours, annual stewardship and All-Parish

dinners, celebratory breakfasts, and our intergenerational Christmas pageant. The warmth and joy of our community is undeniable and open to all.

Learning

Children (PreK - Grade 5): At St. Michael's, our curriculum for Sunday morning formation for children Pre-K - grade 5 is The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. This reflective, Montessori based program is designed to develop a child's relationship with God in a developmentally appropriate way. We meet each week during the 10 am service and join the congregation for the eucharist.

Youth (Grades 6-12):

- **Youth Group:** At St. Michael's, we want our youth to feel welcome and valued for who they are. We provide a space where young people can gather. We are committed to providing opportunities for teens in grades 6-12 to learn, worship, serve and enjoy fellowship.



- **Confirmation:** We offer confirmation preparation classes for interested candidates who wish to make a commitment to the Episcopal faith.

Adults: At St. Michael's we believe in lifelong learning. We offer several opportunities throughout the year to learn from our tradition, the scriptures, and from each other, such as Sunday Forum and Ecumenical Bible Study. Recent topics explored have included discussion of our baptismal vows, and reading and discussion of the books, *The Path: A Journey through the Bible*, and Bishop Curry's *Love is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times*.

Goals for the Future

- To find a rector who will join us in our mission
- To maintain our commitment to being a warm and welcoming community of faith, to welcome newcomers, and to encourage the return of those who have left during the pandemic
- To broaden and develop spiritual growth opportunities for adults and to engage and train those who would like to help in lay ministry
- To improve communications within our parish and the greater community of all parish activities, our outreach and all that St. Michael's has to offer
- To enhance our flexibility so we may accommodate busy families, considering alternative service times other than Sunday mornings
- To explore opportunities for collaboration with other churches



What a new rector can expect from us

- Parishioners who find joy in helping one another and the community
- Strong Vestry and lay leadership, giving our rector time to focus on worship and the spiritual needs of our parish family
- A dedicated choir and choir director, offering a variety of music
- A kind and cooperative parish family who share their time and talents
- A mortgage-free building that is well maintained
- A hard-working and friendly staff

We are seeking a new rector who will...

- Create a community that others seek to join
- Lead us in meaningful worship, guiding us with inspiring sermons
- Offer pastoral care with kindness and compassion
- Encourage spiritual growth and faith formation
- Listen thoughtfully, collaborate, and share in decision making

Challenges

- Like many churches, we have an aging church population that will require new lay leadership and support for future growth
- We would like to find new ways to attract new members and volunteers
- We face the financial pressures of rising staffing costs coupled with a recent decline in attendance during the pandemic



Please come and learn more about us!

Interested candidates should send a copy of their resume and OTM portfolio to Deborah Ervin, ervindeborah@gmail.com and Debi Miller, debimiller108@gmail.com, co-chairs of the Search Committee, by March 15, 2024.

St. Michael's Episcopal Church
1162 Highland Street, Holliston, MA 01746
(508) 429-4248
www.stmichaelshollistonma.org