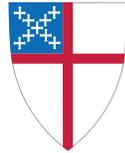


# St. John's Episcopal Church

Westwood, MA



profile 2022



We are:

Christ's beloved community

ENERGIZED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

For service to the world

*Mutual care*

A WIDE WELCOME

And loving and wise formation of children and youth

## THE RECTOR WE SEEK

St. John's is a healthy and loving congregation, engaged in our clergy transition and feeling blessed and full of hope. We seek a full-time Rector whose energy and creativity will help us grow into the future. We desire to strengthen the commitment and participation among all parishioners and add new members and families to our church. Our new Rector should be eager to be a part of the Westwood community. We are working in collaboration with the Diocese of Massachusetts in our search. Interested candidates should contact Thomas Viti, Chair of the Rector Search Committee at [stjohnsrsc22@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnsrsc22@gmail.com).

*“Sermons at St. John's are essential to my spiritual life. We live in a secular, consumer society, so connecting with the Gospel and the teachings of Jesus is vital.”*  
– Lynne



*“St John's is the place where everyone knows your name.”*  
– Ellen

## WHO WE ARE

Founded almost 70 years ago, St. John's is a welcoming and inclusive community that strives to love God, love our neighbor, and serve God's purpose in the world. We invite people of all ages, backgrounds and experiences, without exception, to walk in faith with us. We believe children and youth energize all aspects of parish life. We practice active discipleship by giving ourselves to the service of others.

Our search for a full-time Rector comes after 7 years under the loving and inspiring care of the Rev. Dr. Jennifer Phillips, who retired last summer. We are fortunate to have Rev. Noble F. Scheepers as our Interim Rector during this period of transition. His warm and welcoming manner, engaging sermons and embrace of our youth programs has been well received by the Parish. Our parish leaders include Deacon Chris Beukman and Priest Associate Karen Fraioli.

We believe our faith calls us to care for one another and to be good stewards of the earth. We welcome spiritual inquiry and questioning to better understand our faith. Children and youth are given full and delighted acceptance by clergy and members, and formed from an early age to have hearts for service. We joyfully embrace and work for social and racial justice.

For over 30 years, we have joined together in worship and fellowship with the parishioners of the Church of the Holy Spirit in Mattapan. We provide tutoring for CHS after school students and also are involved in the B-SAFE Summer Program with CHS. St. John's and CHS have made six intergenerational service trips to Honduras, to work on community construction projects and to tutor school-age children.

Through our 22-year partnership with Ecclesia Ministries, St. John's high schoolers have helped meet the needs of Boston's homeless community. Students participate in Ecclesia's annual CityReach overnight program. St. John's and the Ecclesia community join together for a winter bowling outing and spring picnic hosted by the parish.

The parish recently expanded its solar panel array on the Church roof. This will meet the electricity needs of the Church. The excess energy credits will support the needs of the Rectory and our sister parish, CHS, at a discount.



*"I like the way we live our faith in service to others.  
And what's great is that all ages take part."*

*– Tom*

## OUR RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

We believe our experiences of the past two years can help to deepen our faith, strengthen our connections to each other and increase our understanding of the importance of long-standing service missions. During the Pandemic, we followed Diocesan guidance and that of our in-house Safety Committee to safely continue our worship and community connections. We were steadfast in continuing our Mission and service programs, albeit reduced in scope.

- Held worship services via our Facebook page and held outdoor services when possible
- Met health protocols with limited numbers and social distancing
- Conducted virtual Sunday school lessons and Bible Study
- Visited sick and infirm parishioners with Eucharistic offerings
- Continued to provide nourishing meals for Boston's homeless community in partnership with Oasis Ministries
- Completed the Sacred Ground race awareness program in partnership with two neighboring parishes
- Initiated new model of Children's ministry based on 'Love First: A Children's Ministry for the Whole Church'
- Maintained all regular salaried staff positions
- Conducted regular monthly Vestry meetings via Zoom
- Initiated online giving, using Tithely in lieu of in-person plate collections
- Continued regular e-mail communication with parishioners



*“St. John’s is a caring, supportive and welcoming community.”*  
– Jackie

## WORSHIP

Our parish includes about 50+ families, with a typical Sunday attendance of approximately 50 at our 10 am service and a small faithful gathering who meet on Wednesdays for Morning Prayer. We provide professional nursery care during our weekly Sunday services. Children of all ages are welcome to join our worship services and to serve.

### Spiritual Formation:

- Observance of Holy Week and Easter, including the Great Vigil of Easter
- Path to Easter activities and prayer walk for children
- Christmas pageant
- Preparation for baptism and full Sunday celebration
- Spring Rogation Day blessing of the land
- Fall blessing of animals for St. Francis Day
- Services and programs with Church of the Holy Spirit, Mattapan
- Sunday preaching by graduating High School students

### Liturgical Ministries: Lay Participation

- Worship assistants and leaders
- Lectors and prayer leaders
- Chalice bearers
- Choir and Choir director
- Acolytes
- Altar Guild
- Pastoral Care Team for 'at-home' parishioners



*“I have been at St John’s for 26 years. It has always been a place to call home. My kids were swaddled with warmth and love always, and after my husband died, it was a place that felt normal, a place we called home.”*  
– Meredith



## Youth Formation

For many years our children have been nurtured by our loving Children's and Youth Minister, Emily Sugg. A dynamic and experienced teacher, Emily is a recognized leader in the Westwood community.

We recently began a new scripture-based curriculum with lessons based on the book "Love First: A Children's Ministry for the Whole Church," by Colette Potts. The Love First model is personal and action-based. As such, it closely aligns with the core values of St. John's. The Love First program draws on the talents and interests of the whole congregation and shows our children how we trust, celebrate and practice God's love for us. We initiated a monthly Children's service with participation from all ages.



Children are divided into four groups: Pre-School, Elementary, Middle and High School. We have a separate Confirmation Preparation program for high school students.

**Elementary School:** Souper Bowl of Caring, making cards and sending letters to our elderly or infirm parishioners, helping with food drives and school supply drives

**Middle School:** Helping onsite at the Norwood Food Pantry

**High school:** Engaged with outreach beyond our town—this includes an array of events that create a close relationship with the homeless community that celebrates with Ecclesia Ministries in Boston. Youth serve as Nursery care assistants.



## Service Learning, Mutual Care & Fellowship

St. John's has forged deep, lasting relationships with fellow faith communities and partner organizations both locally and well beyond Westwood. Through these relationships, St. John's youth and adults cooperate on multiple service initiatives, many of which have continued for decades. Through these and other partnerships, St. John's members of all ages enjoy many opportunities to answer God's urgent call together, and to experience joy through service. Some examples of Service Learning for parishioners of all ages:

- Food collections for Westwood Food Pantry
- B-SAFE (Bishop's Summer Academic & Enrichment Program) for children at CHS
- Ecclesia Ministries City Reach overnight for youth
- Serve dinner/collect school supplies for Epiphany School, Dorchester
- Thanksgiving turkey donations for the Mattapan Center for Life
- Mission Trips to Urban Promise, Honduras and U.S. cities
- Coffee hour hosts
- Prayer shawl knitting group
- Spring Plant sale
- Christmas Fair and St. Nicholas Day
- Progressive Dinners
- Concerts and Art shows

*"Raising our children at St. John's was a wonderful experience in community support, outreach opportunities and joyous celebration."*  
— Jane



*'As someone who is gay, I've never felt the need to hide that side of myself at St. John's.'*  
— Victoria



## Leadership / Administration / Financial

Our parish has historically thrived under the stewardship of lay leaders in thoughtful partnership with our Rectors.

### Staff positions:

- Children's and Youth Minister
- Organist and Choir Director
- Parish Administrative Assistant
- Nursery Caregiver

### Leadership and Administration:

- Clergy, wardens, officers and vestry members
- Property, Finance, Stewardship and Fellowship committees
- Communications through notices and monthly Messenger



*“For a rather young parish, we have started and maintained great worship traditions and ministries that involve parishioners of all ages.”*  
– Jamie

### Our Financial Condition

Thanks to the careful stewardship of our lay leaders and the reliable support of our parishioners, our future rests on a strong financial foundation. We have a balanced budget and no debt, other than a recent 10-year Diocesan Green Loan in connection with our solar program extension. With a stable financial position, we can focus on growth, ministry and strengthening our worship community with purpose and intention. The following factors have contributed to our stable financial position:

Our Stewardship drive funds the operating needs of the church each fiscal year, with a nearly consistent number of pledging households over the last 5 years.

Our financial policies are regularly reviewed and updated by the Vestry and Finance Committee.

A history of favorable parishioner response to special appeals, capital and diocesan campaigns. With the 2013-18 Together Now Fund we made capital improvements, enhanced programs, and helped finance staff and Rector costs.

A history of successfully partnering with the Diocese to obtain benefits of financial programs, like the Diocesan Green Loan which in part funded the recent solar panel expansion.

An added source of income is rent of a wing of the church to St. John's Nursery School. The nursery school was started by a group of parishioners 50 years ago, and shares our name, but its affiliation is now limited to its tenancy in our school wing. We enjoy a good relationship with the school and both parties intend for this mutually beneficial arrangement to continue.

We are blessed to own a rectory on our property which is currently being rented. The rectory is an attractive housing option for our new Rector.

## CHURCH RECTORY

St. John's rectory is a lovely home adjacent to the church nestled among shady trees and a flower garden with an easy walk to the center of town, schools and our state-of-the art library. The rectory has 4 large bedrooms, 2 full bathrooms, a living room with a working fireplace, an eat-in kitchen, a dining room, a study, a shaded outside porch, a full basement that provides plenty of storage, and an attached two-car garage. The location is ideal with plenty of privacy but conveniently located.



## THE TOWN OF WESTWOOD

Westwood is a community of 16,000 residents located 12 miles southwest of Boston. It's situated at the junction of Route 95/128 and 93, providing easy access to Boston, yet with all the elements of a beautiful suburban community. Westwood is an easy drive to the mountains of Maine, Vermont or New Hampshire, the beaches of Cape Cod or the restaurants, arts and culture of downtown Boston. Westwood also has two commuter rail lines and full MBTA bus service as well as an AMTRAK station for high-speed rail service from Boston to New York and Washington. It's within close proximity to several world-class medical facilities in and around Boston.



Westwood is recognized for the quality of its education with five elementary schools, a middle school and high school. Westwood has many recreational areas and facilities, including numerous conservation areas, playgrounds, ball fields and an indoor pool. Residents benefit from access to 1,137 acres of open space at Hale Reservation. These woodlands include four ponds and 20 miles of trails, offering a variety of outdoor educational and recreational opportunities, including camping, boating, swimming, hiking, biking, guided nature walks, and a renowned summer camp. Westwood has two libraries, a senior center, and community-sponsored events for the Town's residents such as fireworks, Westwood Day, road races and outdoor concerts.

