

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Parish Profile 2014



**27 Babcock Avenue
Plainfield, Connecticut 06374
(860) 564-3560
<http://stpaulplainfield.org>**

Statement of Participation in God's Mission

Saint Paul's is a community which honors its history and traditions, and yet remains open to the Spirit moving among us. We seek to accept and love all who come through our doors, while striving to become more and more the persons and the community God created us to be. We try new things; we share stories; we support one another; we pray and learn together; and we have fun!



Who we are

We are a small, closely-knit congregation of families and single members whose life together in Christ is centered within the Eucharist we share on Sundays and special feast days. Some of us are "cradle Episcopalians" while others were raised in another denomination (or perhaps no denomination at all). Several of our members live in Plainfield, but others of us come from homes in other towns in the surrounding area. Many of our members come from families which have been active in this parish for generations; others are more recent additions, coming to us as they move into the area or seek out a spiritual home for themselves and perhaps their children.

Here at St. Paul's, we place an emphasis on the ministry of the laity, as lay people play a significant role in the parish's decision-making and governance. Lay persons are involved in every aspect of our parish life, from finances to teaching to leading our worship services.



Our Lay Leadership

At St. Paul's, we value highly the skill, vision, and leadership of the lay members of our parish. Lay members of the parish play an active and vital role in governing the temporal affairs of the parish, including property and finance. Officers of the Vestry, Members-at-large and our delegate to the Diocesan Convention round out the roster of this important group. Beyond these elected leaders, however, most of our members play a variety of roles in the parish. For some of us this means serving at the altar on Sunday mornings as a chalice bearer, lector, or acolyte. For others of us, God calls us to a different kind of service: teaching Sunday school, working on the Altar Guild, helping to maintain our beautiful building, or serving in some other capacity.

Guiding Our Mission: In order for St Paul's to openly welcome and serve the people of this community we look for a Rector who can provide leadership and guidance from his/her own experience to help us reach new potential opportunities in ministering to the community. Specifically, we look for a Rector who can continue or extend the energy beyond Sunday and help us engage the parish in God's mission.

Community Outreach Group (COG)

St. Paul's Community Outreach Group (C.O.G.) is a group of lay people who are actively involved in supporting those in need in the local community. They regularly collect both necessities and niceties for distribution to, for example, residents of the local domestic violence shelter. Through the efforts of the parish we are able to serve those most in need.

As part of its commitment to those less fortunate than we beyond our borders, C.O.G. sponsors a child through Child Fund International. Saio is a Muslim member of the Yalunka tribe who lives with his parents in a small village in the Deindemben area of Sierra Leone. His family runs a small farm which nets them about \$140 per year, most of which is spent on food. He and his relatives live in a small hut that lacks basic facilities.



Faith In Action Team (FIAT)

A group of parishioners meets about monthly to discuss various ways and issues related to living out their ministry in the world. In addition to these meetings supporting the individual members in their everyday ministries, the Holy Spirit has led to the group to organize a parish-wide late summer Annual Backpack Drive which provides fully stocked school backpacks to local elementary school students who need them. In 2013, the parish provided 80 backpacks, fully stocked with all the necessary tools and equipment for local children returning to school.



We see our building here at St. Paul's as one of the assets that we share with the community.

Bike-and-Build

Each Spring the parish opens its doors and hearts to a group of college-aged bicycle riders who are making their way from Providence to San Francisco to raise money and awareness of the need for affordable housing in the United States. In addition to providing them with a place to sleep and access to showers, we also provide them with a very much



appreciated picnic on our lawn and breakfast before they leave on their first night of their trip. It is also an opportunity for fellowship with them and among parishioners (who have also been known to enjoy a good picnic!). This stop on their trip consistently rates among the most enjoyable among riders.



Following this years Bike and Build in early June, we received this email from one of the riders parents.

"As a parent of one of the Bike and Build riders, Todd (red haired young man), I want to thank your members for hosting the team. And feeding them! One of our

concerns with sending Todd off was the food they would have knowing good nourishment for such intense physical work would be needed to keep them healthy and strong. While not a Christian organization, their efforts to serve the poor and needy are what we are called to do and that resonated deeply with our son. He has a strong desire to serve God and we are proud of him for being the man he is. Thank you all! Meribeth and Karl"

Hospice of NE Connecticut "Tree of Life"

Each December, Hospice and Palliative Care of Northeast Connecticut offers a multi-site fundraiser and remembrance of those who have died in the past year. The parish is one such site offering its facility to this wonderful program and helping the community to grieve its loved ones who have died in the months prior.

Blessing of the Bikes

Each Spring, the parish conducts a "Blessing of the Bikes" at the beginning of the motorcycle riding season. Offered at no cost to the community, it is a manner of outreach to the large group of motorcycle riders in eastern Connecticut, providing an opportunity for fellowship and to invite God's blessing for a safe riding season.



P.I.N. Ministry

St. Paul's is an active member of the Plainfield ecumenical community's food pantry, known as Project P.I.N. - People In Need. Members of the council continue to look for ways beyond the food pantry to assist people who are in financial crises. In addition to our year-round service of giving two weeks of groceries to families in need, the pantry last year gave out over 250 Thanksgiving baskets containing a 16lb turkey and all the traditional foods to complete the feast. Members of Saint Paul's remember the poor by placing non-perishable food items in the P.I.N. box in the church narthex.



Advent Giving Tree

The members of the parish join together to provide gifts and necessities for those struggling with providing Christmas presents to their children. Many of these are women and their children in residence at the local domestic violence shelter, but the generosity of the parish has exceeded the need in recent years. Accordingly, the list of recipients has expanded to families identified by local school social workers or pediatricians.

Guiding Our Liturgy: Sunday worship is a cornerstone of our parish, a weekly gathering of body, mind and spirit. We look for a Rector who proclaims the good news, teaches and connects the gospel and lessons to our daily lives as we carry on with traditional prayer and explore alternative services.

Worship

Prayer is an important part of our life together as the Christian community of St. Paul's. We gather each week to pray, celebrate, ask for God's forgiveness and blessing, and to remember, as Jesus directed us to do.

We have two services Sunday morning, Rite I at 7:30 and Rite II at 9:30. Children attending Sunday school join their families at the sharing of the Peace during the 9:30 service.

St. Paul's offers a Wednesday Eucharist with a rector-led Bible Study at 6:00 p.m. in our Parish Hall. This informal setting allows an intimate discussion on the lessons of the day.



Music

In March of 2014, the guitar Choir will start its seventh year of providing music for St Paul's Church. The choir continues to learn new songs, and experiment with new arrangements of older songs. In addition to playing music at St Paul's, in 2013 the choir represented our church at the Palm Sunday Concert in Putnam as they have for the past several years. The Choir led the singing during the 100 year parish celebration with Bishop Douglas presiding. Also, for the first time, the choir was involved in a "Lessons and Carols" Service at St Paul's on December 29.



Blessing of the Animals



In early October each year, around the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the parish offers the community a traditional "Blessing of the Animals" in recognition of Francis' love for animals and, indeed, all of God's Creation. Recognizing how important our pets and other animals are to us, we take time to give thanks to God for their presence in our lives.

Blue Christmas

In recognition of the fact that the "Holiday Season" is not always the happy time for some members of the community, we offer a special non-denominational service during Advent, close to Christmas. This service tends to be more ecumenical as we hope to minister to those who may be experiencing a difficult time during the holiday season. We are usually assisted in this service by the Plainfield High School chorus, contributing to the involvement by the wider community.



Alternative Eucharists



For the last five years during the summer months, the parish went on a liturgical adventure with different forms of worship including alternative Eucharistic Services. We celebrated services from the *"New Zealand Prayer Book"*, both Eucharistic and Morning Prayer. We have also enjoyed a service from the Celtic tradition, an ancient style of Christian worship that developed in Ireland and Scotland. We also have celebrated Alternative Eucharistic services from

"Enriching Our Worship". We have celebrated outside under tents on beautiful, sunny summer days with music provided by our Guitar Choir and also celebrated in our Parish Hall where it allowed for seating to be arranged in a manner that made the service feel more intimate. Oh, and we could also use the air conditioners to stay cool!



Guiding Our Flock: We look for a Rector who will join our welcoming environment and who will facilitate more opportunities for spiritual growth of parishioners and nurture new members.

Fundraising Activities

We regularly hold events which serve to provide financial, material, and spiritual support to other organizations. The parish as a matter of principal requires ALL of the proceeds from these events, such as our well-known “Spaghetti Supper” and “Craft Fair”, go to outside organizations. In recent years, the parish has made significant contributions to the “Access Agency”, the “Bishops’ Fund for Children”, the local “Domestic Violence Program”, and “Episcopal Relief & Development” among other worthy causes.



Fellowship

An important part of our life at St. Paul's is our fellowship. On most Sundays we have Coffee Hour following the 9:30 worship service which offers us the opportunity to share with one another. We celebrate special occasions, such as the "Feast of Epiphany", "Feast of Pentecost" and "Pledge Sunday" with our famous Potluck Luncheons. We also gather for yard clean ups, picnics and during our fundraising events.



Ministry to the Homebound

Another important part of our life at St. Paul's is to bring Holy Eucharist to our homebound parishioners and also those that may be in nursing homes. Recently we have had a licensed Eucharistic Visitor assisting our Rector with these visitations. When our Eucharistic Visitor would go forth after church on Sunday we would send them with this prayer; *"For we who are many are one body, for we all share one Bread and one Cup."*



The Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas
The Rt. Rev. James E. Curry
The Rt. Rev. Laura J. Ahrens
The Rev. Canon Timothy L. Hodapp
The Rev. Vicki Baldwin
The Rev. Scott J. Stevens
The Rev. George Chien

Bishop Diocesan
Bishop Suffragan
Bishop Suffragan
Canon for Mission Leadership
Interim Rector St. Paul's Church
Deacon, St. Paul's Church
Diocesan Consultant

We invite you to join us in worship, fellowship, ministry and fun as we grow in God's Mission. Please email your OTM Profile, Resume and Letter of Interest to the Rev. Canon Tim Hodapp, Canon for Mission Leadership at thodapp@ctdiocese.org

Discernment Team Members

Debbie Devillez
Betty Jenkins-Donahue
David Hoffman
Myra Ambrogi
Nina Jackson
Wayne Langlois

Chair
Secretary
Chaplain

Recruitment Team Members

Alisha Knox
Nora Walden
Nina Jackson
Ken Phaiah
Cliff Chapin
Marilyn Crocker
Alyssa Lanphear
Larry Ouillette
Kathy Dubois
Gregory Berndt

Co-Chair
Co-Chair
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Senior Warden
Junior Warden

