



Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church

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Holy Innocents' is a thriving Episcopal Congregation in Beach Haven, a beach community on Long Beach Island (LBI) New Jersey. We are a church that welcomes and nurtures people of many cultures and ages. Our church has a robust Music Program and a thriving campus with a Church, Parish Meeting Hall, Playground, Memorial Garden, Community Garden and a renovated Rectory. Our Church has a long history on Long Beach Island, founded in 1881 as the first church on LBI. The church moved to its current campus, one block from the pristine beaches of Beach Haven in 1974.



We worship in a traditional style with Sunday services as well as two mid-week services. In summer, we hold two Sunday services, a Rite I service at 7:30am and a Rite II service at 9:30am. In winter, we hold one service at 9:30 with music and choir. As an early advocate of simulcasting our Sunday services, we were able to maintain a strong congregation connection during the pandemic, as well as continuing to allow our

parishioners and anyone interested to login and view our services online. It has worked very well for those confined to home or travelling. In addition to our Sunday offerings, we host two mid-week online services, Morning Prayer and Compline. Our Rector or Eucharistic Ministers offer home communion to those not able to physically attend church services and our Prayer Group meets to offer prayers to those in need or facing dangerous situations.



Our congregation draws from all neighborhoods of Long Beach Island as well as the neighboring communities on the “Mainland” of Stafford Township. Our Island year-round population is just shy of 10,000 with an increase to about 200,000 people in the summer season.



Our Church is known for our vibrant Music Ministry. Our Minister of Music and Organist leads a program for both Sunday services and a number of special musical events. Music is an integral part of our services with Hymns from The Hymnal 1982 and LEVAS Hymnal. Each fall we host a Messiah Sing, with the New Jersey Chamber Singers performing

selections from Handel's masterpiece and the audience joining for the popular chorus selections. Our hospitality is then on display with a community reception hosted by our church. During Advent, our choir, congregational and community readers present a "Lessons & Carols" service. Other special musical events are hosted throughout the year in a community concert format, including a Spring Concert series.

We are a Community Church and active member of the Beach Haven Community. We host a summer Sunday service dedicated to our Island Mariners, with members of a local Yacht Club serving as Lectors, Chalice Bearers and Greeters. In the fall, we host a Sunday service on the beach and during the year, we have hosted joint picnic/social events with the LBI Barnegat Light Episcopal Church and the Cristo Rey Episcopal Church, Trenton. We also co-host two interfaith services with the Jewish Community Center on the beach for one of their Friday and one of our Sunday services.



Our Church Community – who we are and what we do

We strive to be a part of our Island Community with our Parish Hall used for a variety of good causes. In addition to weekly *AA meetings*, we host a *religious book study*, *exercise and yoga classes*, and offer *rehearsal space* for the Surfflight Theatre. In 2024, we created our *Sandwich Ministry* which makes bag lunches to help an Ocean County outreach program feed homeless people in the county. This ministry joins our congregation's long-standing mission of filling backpacks for back-to-school efforts that help students in Ocean County and an economically stressed community in Camden, NJ. Our holiday Giving Tree allows our church family to help families whose children might not have gifts for Christmas to celebrate the holidays. In addition, our parish members have supported Samaritan's Purse – Operation Christmas Guild's *Shoebox Ministry* for more than ten years. Our congregation also supports the local St. Francis *Food Bank* on an on-going basis.



We support the non-profit *Beach Haven Community Arts Program*, which hosts weekly summer Concerts on the Town Green at Veterans Park, with both a financial contribution and our Rector providing the invocation for holiday and celebratory events. With LBI being a summer vacation destination, this helps raise our profile for visitors. Throughout the year, as an island community, our congregation's *Environmental Committee* hosts a series of workshops on how to be better stewards of

the gifts we enjoy on LBI as well as nature walks and other environmental experiences.

Other special events we host are an Easter Egg hunt for children living or visiting during the Easter Holiday as well as a Pancake Supper for the community on Shrove Tuesday. Our Parish Picnic includes members of our parish, our sister island church and our neighbors for an evening of outdoor fellowship and good food.

We host a fall fundraiser, our *Silent Auction Dinner* at a nearby restaurant. This event includes the opportunity for our parishioners and the community to enjoy a dinner together as well as bid on donated items. Hugely popular this event is a “must do” on people’s calendar and helps keep us on sound financial footing.

Our Episcopal Church Women host a number of activities throughout the year to engage members of our parish with prayer and comradery. An example is their successful “Antiques Road Show” style review and appraisal of neighbor’s treasures. Both our Altar Guild and Flower Guild are active and keep our sanctuary looking beautiful. Most recently, the Greening of the Church for our Christmas Holidays was a sight to see. Our Usher/Greeter teams enjoy strong support to ensure that all who visit are welcomed.

Our Rectors have served as the Chaplain for the Beach Haven Fire Company as well as active members of a local Yacht Club. At the start of every summer, our Rector performs a Blessing of the Fleet bayside asking the Lord to watch over the members and their watercraft. Our past Rectors were fully involved in the community, participating in civic and other events, and we hope that our new Rector will also become an integral part of the community.

Our Rectory



Our Campus covers a full oceanside block in the Borough of Beach Haven. In addition to our Church and Chapel, we offer a Rectory. Fully renovated in 2018/2019 with a new open concept kitchen, the rectory has four bedrooms, 2-1/2 baths, dining & living room and garage. The Rectory is steps away from the beach and Atlantic Ocean!

Our location is walking distance or a comfortable ride by bicycle from downtown Beach Haven and the many amenities offered by merchants and restaurants, including Veterans Park, the Surflight Theatre, the Long Beach Island Historical Museum, the Beach Haven Elementary School plus much more.

We provide an office behind the sanctuary for our Rector as well as office space for our Parish Administrator and other volunteers.



Our Memorial Garden is a licensed cemetery with Niches available for parishioners and interested community families. It offers a quiet place for thoughtful reflection and remembering loved ones.





Martin Hall is our Church community and neighborhood gathering place. It's a place for activities like exercise classes, craft shows, post church service coffee hours and much more. Martin Hall and its accompanying kitchen and small meeting rooms were completely renovated in 2022/3. This allows joint ventures with our nearby neighbors such as the Surflight Theatre and the Long Beach Island Historical Association. Our space is very functional for events and open to the community giving us an opportunity to introduce others to our Church.

The Baldwin Garden, a “community garden”, offers 50+ spaces for parishioners and neighbors to grow vegetables over the summer. This is wrapped-up with an outdoor “long-table” dinner for the gardeners at the end of the season.



In 2024, we rebuilt our Playground and provided a refurbished place for our younger parishioners and neighbors to play and learn. This offers a fun way for our community to relax and enjoy all that Holy Innocents' has to offer.

Holy Innocents' is on sound financial footing with an annual operating budget of \$245,000 funded by pledge commitments of \$170,000 and the balance by loose plate, an annual fundraiser and a small amount of endowment funds. We have been steadily building up an endowment for our capital improvement projects and future operating expenses, if necessary. The three largest, and most recent capital improvement projects, were made possible by successful separate capital fund raising campaigns.

As part of our discernment process, we conducted a survey of our congregation about the needs of our congregants and/or their thoughts on our future. We learned that our next Rector must have strong interpersonal skills when communicating with the congregation and our community. Preaching, spiritual leadership and singing are important attributes. Music is very important to our congregation.

