

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Parish Profile 2025-26

October 26, 2025

The primary mission of St. Peter's is to worship God in the liturgical and sacramental pattern of the Anglo-Catholic Tradition. Stemming from that, as a multi-racial and multi-cultural congregation, we seek to embody and witness to our belief in the dignity of all human beings. In the Name of God, we are called to be a caring community of sisters and brothers in Christ, reaching out to all, and serving the creation in God's Holy Name.

HISTORY



St. Peter's has the distinction of being the first Anglo-Catholic parish in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts. As early as 1869, meetings were held in the basement of the Central Street School. First organized as a mission of Christ Church Cathedral, the members began collecting money to build a church on the corner of King Street and Merrick Avenue in Springfield. On October 27, 1891, Bishop Brooks laid the cornerstone and in 1892 consecrated St. Peter's Mission Chapel.



Membership grew making it necessary to replace the small church and on November 19, 1905, the cornerstone of the present church, at 45 Buckingham Street, was laid by Bishop Vinton. During the summer of 1929, under Father Ferguson, the interior walls of the church were embellished with fourteen-foot murals in the fourteenth century Italian style art by Arthur Gordon Smith.

There are memorial gifts of statues of St. Mary and St. Joseph and also a charred statue of Jesus Christ which survived the fire that destroyed All Souls Chapel. The story the charred statue of Jesus is an important story in our identity, and you can watch this [short YouTube clip](#) to learn more.



St. Peter's has been a multiracial parish since at least 1895. As early as 1920, women shared in parish leadership. In the early 1960's while Father George Smith was Rector, St. Peter's

welcomed the predominantly black congregation of St. Simons Mission after it was closed by the Diocese. At that point, St. Peter's became a predominantly Black parish.

Today, membership is drawn primarily from the immediate Mason-Square neighborhood as well as throughout Springfield and the Pioneer Valley. St. Peter's members continue to draw upon their faith through involvement in outreach to the wider community and welcoming any and all that wish to be a part of the St. Peter's family.

Liturgy and Worship

St. Peter's has a rich history of worship in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, and members have a deep spiritual connection to worship. The current congregation draws upon the Anglo-Catholic tradition as a resource rather than an obligation. We utilize a mixed expression that continues some traditional elements (like the use of bells, occasional use of incense, and other rituals) while welcoming broad church styles of worship.

Liturgy is generally drawn from the Book of Common Prayer, Rite II, but with some additions from other resources. In recent years, it has been especially important to the congregation to include a variety of locally contextual prayers during prayers of the people. Music is drawn primarily from Hymnal 1982 and Lift Every Voice and Sing. We come together in prayer and song. St. Peter's is deeply committed to weekly Sunday Eucharist.

We also offer a Healing Mass on Fridays, and people are drawn to it for support and healing. Lent and Holy Week rituals include Stations of the Cross, foot/hand washing, and others.



Ministries

The St. Peter's congregation reaches out to its neighbors. We practice and promote charitable giving. Many of

our ministries focus on our supporting one another and the broader community, sharing food and fellowship, and worshipping together. A parishioner's individual concerns and passions often help him or her to lead projects that call forth a congregational response. A recent example is that one



woman's connection with a nearby Methodist church and its homeless shelter led the St. Peter's congregation to outpour its support for the shelter and to donate blankets and a television set.

Parish Picnic - 2025

Since reemerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, the congregation has shown steady growth with an increase in average weekly attendance in 2024 and 2025. Many of our parishioners do difficult and important work in the community such as social work, teaching, counseling, and juvenile justice work. St. Peter's serves them and all comers as a spiritual oasis.



St. Peter's at Caribbean Festival - 2024



St. Peter's is also a community that equips individuals to share their faith in the course of their daily lives. For example, one parishioner asks new acquaintances, "Who is your Higher Power?" Another uses visual communication by wearing Christian T-shirts. Still another tries to contact newcomers and give them copies of Our Daily Bread. Additionally, St. Peter's goes out to two annual festivals to take prayer requests from the broader community.

Blessing of Teachers and Students



Members getting rides to church



St. Peter's is a congregation whose members take care of one another and their spiritual well-being. We surround one another with support in times of need. We have a weekly healing service, weekly Bible study, a ride ministry, and a card ministry. We see our young people as ac-

tive participants in our worship service and ministries. They regularly serve as acolytes, ushers, and lectors, and help organize such charitable drives as our annual Mitten Tree and our Souper Bowl of Caring.

Mothers' Union Renewal of Vows

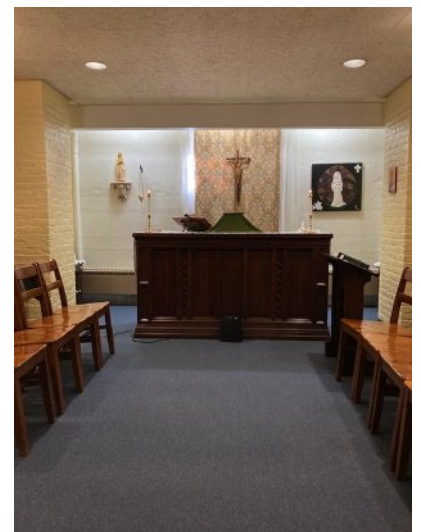


Some recent events and ministries that represent who we are and make us excited to be church together include:

- Annual Patronal Festival on Feast of St. Peter
- Family and Friends gatherings on 5th Sundays
- Mother's Union Fish Fry
- Birthday celebrations on last Sunday of each month
- Souper Bowl of Caring and Crop Walk
- Lake George Trip
- Annual Dinner Dance
- 120th-anniversary Jazz concert
- Fresh Start Group for those who are new or newly returned to St. Peter's
- Our Sunday ministries: Ushers, Acolytes, Musicians, Choir

Our Building and Our Community

We are proud of our church building, and we have a longstanding commitment to maintaining it. It is a 120-year-old building that needs a lot of upkeep, but we stay on top of that work. The sanctuary with its fourteenth-century-style murals is a beautiful place to worship. Downstairs is a highly functional (and air conditioned!) space with a large kitchen, parish hall, classroom space and offices. The downstairs is accessible with a chairlift, which is invaluable for many members of our community.





Outside is a carefully tended garden welcoming both people and pollinators to the church. We also have a Scatter Garden for the dispersion of loved ones' ashes.

St. Peter's sits within the McKnight Historic District and the Mason Square neighborhood, both of which have historically been centers of Springfield's Black population. The area has a growing Hispanic population as well.

While much of Springfield is urban and faces ongoing economic challenges, including large numbers of people living below the poverty line, it is also a vibrant city with considerable

diversity in income and ethnicity. Springfield is proud of the Springfield Symphony, the Basketball Hall of Fame, the Mass Mutual Center (home of the Thunderbirds), the Dr. Seuss Museum, several other museums and libraries, and several colleges and universities.



Our Future



St. Peter's is a growing community! We seek to be flexible and open to change. As we look to our future, we recognize we need to attract more young people and we need to beef up our stewardship campaigns. In order to attract young people, we would like to develop relationships with the nearby colleges and to increase our presence on social media. We also hope to facilitate training for individuals to empower them to witness to their faith. We are proud of our Fresh Start group which we recently established to

serve those who are new or newly returned to St. Peter's.



The Voice of Our Parish Family

Please access a brief video of our members witnessing to the joy of being part of St. Peter's

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gna636AAeQ>

Our Next Priest

St. Peter's is excited to welcome a new priest to work with us in the next phase of our ministry, even as we give thanks for those who have served us faithfully over the years. We seek a priest who

- Embodies kindness, compassion, and empathy.
- Is creative, but also patient, understanding who we are as we grow into the future.
- Has lived an embodied multicultural experience and/or has demonstrated multicultural competency.
- Has a good sense of humor and is flexible.
- Is eager to engage the community outside the congregation and the church building.
- Is open to engaging with all cultural communities. Speaking Spanish would be an asset.
- Is open to working collaboratively with Christ Church Cathedral.
- Is skilled at reaching out to youth and young adults.
- Is able to bring a passion for the Gospel and social justice into the pulpit.