



EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CONNECTICUT

PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S MISSION

Please provide the following information so that Jaylynn Foreman, the administrator for Transitions, can complete a portfolio for the parish on the Office of Transition Ministry (OTM) website. This website is maintained by the Episcopal Church for clergy who are seeking new positions..

BASIC INFORMATION

Church Address: 25 South Street
Church Phone Number: 860 567 9465
Church Email: office@stmichaels-litchfield.org
Job Type: Priest in Charge
Hours: Full Time

Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA): 59
How many worship services do you have on a normal weekend?
Two Eucharists on Sunday mornings
How many worship services take place on normal weekdays?
Evening Prayer one weekday a week
How many worship services take place on a monthly basis? 12

Do you have a rectory? Yes
How many bedrooms does it have? 5

For each of the last three people who have served as Rector or PIC (NOT including Interims) starting with the most recent, provide the following information. Duplicate this section as needed.

Name: Ian Montgomery
Position Title: Priest in Charge
Date begun: October 2022
Date ended: June 2024

Name: Bevan Stanley
Position Title: Rector
Date begun: September 2012
Date ended: March 2022

Name: Jennings Matheson
Position Title: Rector
Date begun: September 1997
Date ended: February 2012



Is there a Church School? No

How many teachers teach in the Church School? 0

How many students participate in the Church School? 0

How many teachers/leaders work with teens or young adults? 0

How many teens or young adults participate in Church School or Youth Group? 0

How many people teach/lead Adult Formation classes or programs? Bible Study group is currently seeking a leader

How many adults participate in Adult Formation? 6-10

Is there a Parish Day School (including Nursery Schools)? No

Number of Day School Students: 0

Number of Day School Teachers: 0

Number of Total Staff for Day School: 0

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

When we were between priests, we had to plan a funeral for a member's husband who had not been actively involved in the church. Between the altar guild, the office staff, and the wardens, it all came together. Not only did it support the widow and her family, but the service was also a meaningful celebration of a life that touched many members of the community outside of St Michael's.

The suspension and investigation of our former priest has forced us to reflect on who we are, both individually and collectively. Having been without a resident priest for over a year and a half, we have pulled together to keep our church going.

A few months after the Bishop suspended our Priest in Charge, we had a parish picnic on the front lawn of the church, featuring pizza baked in a wood-fired oven made from a trash can! It was a reassuring moment of togetherness where we worked together to celebrate and enjoy each other.

We recently had an outdoor Eucharist at the Senior Warden's home on Bantam Lake, with a picnic, games and water sports. Our parishioners cooked and provided much of the food. It was well attended and fun for all as well as bringing attention to God's presence in the outdoors. There was a sense of our all being in this together and committed to keep it going.



2. Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services provided by your community.

We have a Rite I spoken service at 8 a.m. and Rite II with music at 10 a.m. When we have no priest, we have Morning Prayer and use a lay worship leader and preacher for both services. Our lay worship leaders lead evening prayer during the week.

The Eucharist is beautifully and respectfully celebrated with all participants well trained and prepared for their tasks. The Altar Guild responds to changes in the liturgical seasons. In the past, we switched from Rite II to Rite I at the 10 a.m. service during Lent and Advent. We do not use incense, due to allergies in two parishioners; nor do we use sanctus bells.

We have a Children's Chapel adjacent to the sanctuary which families with children can use while watching the service.

St. Michael's has a very beautiful Neogothic church building designed by Ehrich Rossiter with altar paintings by H. Siddons Mowbray, extensive stained glass including windows from the Tiffany studio and Gabriel Loire of Chartres, France, and elaborate wood carving. The donor who spearheaded the construction of the church left an endowment for its maintenance.

St. Michael's attaches great importance to liturgical music, with a succession of gifted music directors, a dedicated choir, and an outstanding pipe organ.

On the Sunday closest to January 6, we celebrate with our Epiphany Pageant Colossal Puppets, designed and created by our parishioners. We have a Colossal Dragon that we use for the Feast of Saint Michael.

We have the Triduum during Holy Week every year.

During COVID, we never missed a Sunday: we streamed our services on Facebook and Zoom and held some services and choir rehearsals outdoors. Recently we have not had the technical support to continue with streaming our services.

3. How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

When a parishioner has a relationship with another group and common ground is discovered, we collaborate. Litchfield Pride put their "rainbow chairs" in front of the church for gay pride month, and they have stayed there for many more months. We were able to adopt an active food bank previously housed within a now closed local Methodist church. We are currently a collection site for Greenwood's Counseling Referrals' coat drive. Our Food Pantry has active members who are non-parishioners.

Within the parish, the priest or a current member recruits volunteers individually for ministries such as altar guild, choir, ushers, and greeters. We train new volunteers one-on-one when they join. The Vestry had a "Ministry Fair" this fall and many new parishioners signed up and were recruited. Lists of names from the fair were sent to the committee chairs who made contact and had them added to their rotas.



4. As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

We have a coffee hour after the 10 a.m. service every Sunday. Many of us stay for an hour to talk and exchange news. The hosting rota is full and there is now a waiting list to host coffee hour.

There is a small group that meets on Tuesday mornings to do tasks around the Church such as maintenance on the boilers, arranging the hymnals and prayer books in the pews, dusting, helping in the office, or getting the Colossal Puppets ready for their next appearance. We work in teams, share fellowship, and celebrate each others' birthdays.

Two volunteer drivers as well as our Organist bring homebound parishioners to church.

We have a very engaged property committee that attends to the care of the buildings. Large tasks are contracted out to professionals. Numerous smaller tasks are addressed by a small team of dedicated and experienced parishioners.

The parish, with guidance from a parishioner, had a series of dinners at various parishioners' homes this fall. Attendance varied from 8 to over 16. There was no set program, scripts, or anything else official, just parishioners in fellowship without agendas.

The Pastoral Care Committee is composed of three volunteers (one of whom is presently the Junior Warden, a Eucharistic Minister, and an Usher) who reach out to those in our Parish family who are unable to attend services in person due to mobility or health issues.

A small group gathered and prayed together during a fellow parishioner's major, high-risk surgery. It was successful. Thanks be to God!

We have launched a woman's group that meets monthly for lunch. The purpose of the group is fellowship.

We are currently seeking leadership for a weekly bible study.

5. Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical community.

Do you participate in the Region or in wider ECCT events or bodies?

One of our members is on the board of the ECCT's Northwest Region Leadership Team. Because of Camp Washington's proximity to Litchfield, many of us attend their community dinners. A few of us have also attended workshops, Spring Gathering, and Confirmation at Camp Washington.



How are you involved in the local community?

Our building is sought after for its outstanding acoustics. Paul Winter has recorded the CD "Pete" in our sanctuary. The local voice teacher has a recital for her students here every spring. The Waterbury Chorale, the Waterbury Symphony, The Yale Russian Chorus, and other local groups have had concerts here.

How are you participating in God's mission outside your doors?

We currently host two active food banks. We are partnering with the Litchfield Community Center to host a concert by Paul Winter in January 2026 with proceeds to be split between the Food Pantry and the Litchfield Community Center.

6. How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

The doors of the church are open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. daily. A tour guide is occasionally present on weekends.

Saint Michael's founded and is still involved in the local Food Pantry as well as maintaining Always Open Shelves of non-perishables in our Community House.

The Community House, which has public bathrooms, is open 24 hours a day with outdoor lighting.

At Christmas, we collect gifts for families in need in the community. Tags with notes of what is needed are hung on a tree in the back of the church. Parishioners take the tags to help them choose what gifts to bring.

At Hallowe'en, we open our doors and give candy to Trick or Treaters. We wear costumes and our organist plays spooky music on the organ. This year, we had almost 500 visitors, both young and not so young.

Members of the Lay Pastoral Care Team attend all weddings and funerals that take place at Saint Michael's, making sure the family is supported - providing everything from helping them find the restrooms to listening to their needs.

We are participating in the Deacons for Diapers campaign, and collecting winter clothing for Greenwood's coat drive.

Seven 12-Step groups use the Community House or the Parish House library weekly.

Previously we coordinated with St. Paul's Episcopal Church, St. Anthony's Roman Catholic Church, the Litchfield Methodist Church and First Congregational Church to take turns hosting Lenten soup suppers. However, this has not been restarted since COVID.

We rent space in our Parish House to a local preschool, School on the Green, and to Greenwood's Counseling Referrals, which offers access to affordable, quality mental healthcare.



7. Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?

The Always Open Shelf - non perishable food available 24/7.
Rosamond Quay rquay@me.com

The Food Pantry at St Michael's - food donated to residents of local subsidized housing
Deborah Foord deborahfoord@gmail.com

Lunch with Meredith - Women's fellowship -
Meredith Penfield mrdthp@sbcglobal.net

Evensong on Wednesdays- Rite II with chanted psalms and canticles
Barbara Putnam barbaradputnam@gmail.com

Lay Preachers - new ministry this fall
Barbara Putnam barbaradputnam@gmail.com
Ann Hodgman ahhodgman@gmail.com

8. How are you preparing yourself for the Church of the future?

We have recently updated our website, and keep our Facebook page current. We send out a weekly eblast to both members and interested visitors. We are working on having our 10 a.m. Sunday service streamed on line.

Many newcomers to our parish are people relocating from NYC, retirees, and weekenders. This provides us with potential growth. We have recently experienced a significant decline in numbers, a decline that is also felt at the national and Diocesan levels.

We understandably put our other concerns on the back burner while we sought assistance from the Diocese when they suspended our last Priest in Charge, which caused considerable distress within our parish community. In the interim, our various supply priests have been extremely helpful, but we have collectively discerned that our future parish will best be served with a full-time priest.

We will introduce our new priest to leaders of our town so that residents here can become more aware of our presence in the community.

We are acutely aware of how few families with young children darken our doors, and that many of our new members are older, recent retirees or transplants from city life. In the past we had held an Ask Me Anything forum for teens and pre-teens where there was a confidential freedom to explore their concerns. Reviving this program might help connect us with families with children.

We pray for our parish and for our leaders.



9. What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

Do you have an annual stewardship campaign?

Yes, We engage in an annual stewardship campaign every year. There are occasional bequests and anonymous contributions that are earmarked for specific purposes.

How does it work?

A small group plans the stewardship campaign every year. It is relatively formal and engages a number of parishioners in various capacities. It has used several formats over the years. We have done secondary drives in years when we initially failed to reach our goal.

Does the vestry have a stewardship statement?

No

Do members of the parish speak to the parish about giving?

Yes. A number of parishioners address the congregation on two or three Sundays during Stewardship season at the Eucharist.

Have you developed other sources of income besides congregational giving?

Yes; we have an endowment, tenants who rent office and classroom space in our building and five residential rental properties. We rent our facilities for parties, receptions, weddings and outside music performances. We get occasional grants for capital improvements from a local foundation.

Do you have a planned giving program?

Yes, the Legacy Society was founded quite a few years ago but has been dormant for the last few years. We do have planned giving documents available.

10. What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

Our parish has the "usual" conflicts (matters of preference, really) but our recent priest suspension has resulted in a deeper than usual divide, including disagreeing about who or what to blame for this disruption. As a parish we are working on this by moving past blame instead of placing it. The collective desire to find a new priest is evidence that we are moving along this path.

The conflict between those who liked our former priest-in-charge and those who thought he should not stay divided us. We hired a consultant to help mend the damage, but many of those who were unhappy about how the priest-in-charge was treated had already left.

We are moving on. We all are more aware that we must support whoever fills the position of priest. We are all more aware of the importance of being kind to one another.



11. What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

Parish-wide, the Bishop's suspension of our last priest was a major change. Regardless of each of our positions on the matter, we all agreed that the disciplinary process could have been more transparent. This has left the parish in somewhat uncharted waters. Early on, many had doubts about what would be left on the other side of the process. Although we are still not completely through the process (which includes this search and its related questionnaires), recent parish activity suggests we are on the right path.

The local gay alliance offered us a gift of two rainbow-painted chairs. We accepted them and we put them in front of the church near the main entrance. We registered with a website to help the gay community find us, an open church. There was some conflict about it between the lay leadership and our former priest, but he yielded when he saw that all the members of the Vestry supported it. So that went well overall.

One of our leaders wrote, "This is my first experience of leadership in the parish. I have had unbelievable support and undeserved respect."

12. Please provide four words or phrases describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

We apologize for failing to give only four words; we've sorted them into four categories instead:

- **Compassionate**
 - Sensitive to the various economic levels in our community and parish.
 - Caring
 - Patient
- **Flexible**
 - Willing and able to work with the Roman Catholic priest and protestant Congregational pastors in our community.
 - Imaginative
 - Creative
 - Competent/skilled
 - Has a sense of humor
- **Trusting**
 - A good listener
 - Tolerant
 - Humble
- **A strong spiritual leader**
 - Understands and supports the intimate connection between liturgy and appropriate music
 - Understands and lives the importance of unconditional love
 - Has an eye on the future that we can't see yet (Hebrews 11:1)



Please provide links to other places your parish is present on social media

www.stmichaels-litchfield.org

Facebook: St. Michael's Parish

Are there languages other than English significantly represented in your parish? No

Current Senior Warden Name: Ken Merz

Current Senior Warden phone number and email: 860-307-0444 kenmerzstm@gmail.com

Previous Senior Warden: Michael LaHart

Previous Senior Warden phone number and email: (646) 229-1956 michael1789@gmail.com

Parish Leader Name: Peg Sullivan

Parish Leader Ministry: Altar Guild, Dragons, LEM

Parish Leader phone number and email: (860) 806-7432 gstc@optonline.net

Local Community Leader Name:

Deborah Foord

Jim Simoncelli:

Local Community Leader Relationship with the parish:

Deborah is a volunteer with the Food Pantry.

The food goes to tenants at the Housing Authority. Jim is the executive director there.

Local Community Leader phone number and email:

deborahfoord@gmail.com 917 847 2352

litchfeldhousingauthority@gmail.com 860 459 4417

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Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a priest in charge for this parish, that we may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen