

St. Edward the Confessor Episcopal Church

Parish Profile

Introduction



ST. EDWARD'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Welcome to St. Edward the Confessor Episcopal Church. We hope you enjoy browsing this profile as we tell the story of our warm, welcoming and inclusive parish. St. Edward's is a special place, a faith community of families, singles, elders and youth who grow their faith together in an atmosphere of caring, acceptance and respect for each other in the presence of God's many blessings and grace. It's a place we call home.

We are a young church of not quite 40 years. In our short history we have moved from worshipping in a union hall, built a church as described below, and have called three full-time priests and three interims to lead us. We have experienced growing pains consistent with such a bold endeavor. However, we have also continued to grow in spirit and have matured in the process. We serve our parish family and contribute to the larger community in a variety of ways.

The church sits on a heavily traveled road with residential development on one side of the street and corn fields on the other. We are one of ten churches in the Lancaster County Convocation and were placed here to serve the growing suburbs. The convenience of our location is part of our attraction. The complex itself centers around an open format sanctuary with large windows that fill the space with light throughout the day. A high, wood-beamed roof draws the eyes upward from the wide altar, inviting prayer and meditation. It's a soothing place to be. Our parish hall, complete with commercial grade kitchen, sits to one side and the Sunday School/office wing to the other. We have a large parking lot that makes this an easy location for large gatherings.

Below you will find information about our setting in beautiful Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, a brief history of our parish, a description of our ministries and a discussion of what we hope for in a new rector. Our interim period has been a time of prayer and growth. Exciting changes are taking shape. We seek a new spiritual leader to help us care for each other, care for our community, and serve Christ in this place.

The worshippers of St. Edward's Church seek a rector to move forward together as a parish family, following God's plan. To do so, we are using our all-parish survey to describe who we are, and where we believe we are headed. Our vestry and other leaders have prayerfully and diligently evaluated our parish life, and have started taking actions to spur our parish growth. We therefore seek a spiritual leader ready to move with us on this Christian path with joy, spirit and a collaborative style.



Our Wider Community

St. Edward's is in East Hempfield Township, five miles from the city of Lancaster. Our county is very dynamic, largely agricultural in the south and east, and more industrialized in the north and west. Bordering the lower stretches of the Susquehanna River, we're famous for farms. However, our economy is actually very diverse, with significant sectors in manufacturing, health care, finance and retail. This broad base buffers the economic ups and downs that other communities feel during recessions.

Lancaster City, founded as a town in 1729, is one of the oldest inland cities in the country. Back in the day, German farmers settled the countryside while English bankers and merchants built the cities. Today's immigrants settle largely in the city, boroughs (our name for small towns) and close suburbs. Dialects of German are still spoken in the countryside; Spanish is commonplace on city streets.



Lancaster County Farmland

Lancaster County has a reputation as a community of faith. Religious institutions have a much greater presence here than in other comparable cities in the region. A heavy Mennonite and Amish presence exists side by side with Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist and Roman Catholic churches. There are several large, non-traditional Bible based churches such as Lives Changed by Christ and The Worship Center. By the numbers, the Mennonites and Amish are the faith groups that have most set their stamp on the community.

Politically Lancaster has tended to be very conservative over the years, although the growth of the suburbs and the impressive revitalization of Lancaster City are introducing more liberal influences. This dynamic exists in our own parish, as will be discussed later.

Demographically, Lancaster County has a population of 550,000, with a median income of \$61,492. The white/non-Hispanic population accounts for about 82% of that, with African Americans at 5% and Latino at 10%. Lancaster County is known for our strong Amish community, currently estimated at 39,255 and growing. Our community has a strong record of supporting refugees. The minority communities are growing. While the African American population is relatively small, its history in Lancaster is rich and goes back hundreds of years. Just north of the Mason-Dixon line, our community featured prominently on the Underground Railroad. More demographic details are available at this link: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/lancastercountypennsylvania/PST040218>

At 59,213 in population, Lancaster City isn't big as cities go. Yet it thrives. While businesses flee other cities, here they are moving back downtown. We have a resident symphony orchestra, a resident professional theater, an established gallery district and a plethora of other cultural organizations, restaurants and performance venues. Lancaster City is a good arts town. There are many strong public school districts and an array of private schools at all levels. Millersville University and Franklin & Marshall College are active in the community. Elizabethtown College is a few miles to the northwest. Many of their graduates tend to stay in the area, often for entrepreneurial pursuits. A noticeable number of millennials have gone elsewhere and then come back. They find that Lancaster is where they want to be.

Here's a link to more visitor information: <https://www.discoverlanaster.com/members/discover%20lanaster%20visitors%20center.asp>

We are within easy driving distance of Baltimore and Philadelphia, and have regular train service to Philadelphia and New York City. Harrisburg International Airport, a half hour drive from the church, offers connections to wherever you might want to go.



Lancaster Central Market



First Friday gallery openings are a favorite community event.



The Susquehanna River



A Country Road

A Brief Church History: The Little Parish That Could

A group of determined families, with the cooperation of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, set out to plant an Episcopal Mission Church in East Hempfield Township in January 1981. The first service, attended by 120 people, was held in a local union hall in September of that year. The church was named in December - Church of Saint Edward the Confessor – and we were on our way. The name was selected by the parish youth. Membership stood at 136.

A five-acre tract on Harrisburg Pike was purchased in 1984. Two years later \$122,000 was raised for architectural planning and design. Construction finally began in June of 1989. The first service in the new building took place on February 25, 1990.

While moving steadily forward, our growth was not always a smooth process. Founding members had specific ideas about how they wanted the church to operate. This sometimes came in conflict with the priest's point of view. Yet the parish grew and prospered. Stepping back and looking at the enormity of the undertaking, it is wonderful to see how well everything has worked out.

Today the parish is ready for what could be called a "life cycle" shift. Young families were attracted early on. The parish has watched and nurtured a generation of youth growing among us. At one point 20-30 kids regularly attended our youth group. For many years we enjoyed a family Lenten group. There was a strong sense of community and friendship. Now those kids are grown and have moved on to their adult lives. After a period of very few new families with children, we're beginning to see those ranks growing again, which is welcomed by all. Support for youth has always been a multi-generational effort at St. Edward's.

Similar "life cycle" changes have occurred in other ministries. The excitement of a new undertaking carried us through the early growth and our first generation of parish life. Now, as we are on the threshold of selecting new leadership, that same sense of purpose and the belief that we are being led to a positive outcome keep us focused on the bright future ahead.

Much of our grounding as a mature congregation is due to the efforts of our recently retired rector. When Rev. Canon Stephen C. Casey arrived in October of 1998, he came at a challenging time for the parish. Over the course of his 20-year tenure, he led us to stability, growth and hope. He served us long and well, helping us to mature spiritually as a congregation. Here are some of the things that happened under his leadership:

- Hosted Faith Alive Weekend
- Built the Parish Hall
- Participated in Youth Mission Trips to Mississippi
- Attained Parish status
- Paid off mortgage

- Created a memorial garden
- Stabilized the parish financially
- Hosted diocesan convention service
- Sent acolytes to International Acolyte Festival at the National Cathedral

The parish is stronger and healthier as a result of Father Casey's leadership. However, we are in a new place now, one that requires a new rector to have a different set of skills. While we're beyond the start-up phase, we are not yet a fully mature parish. But perhaps we always want to be seeking and exploring, finding new ways to share our Christian faith.



Backpacks are a popular Back to School drive.



A new crop of readers.



Summer Coffee Hour



Acolytes prepare for Easter.



"Sweaty Sunday" is a multi-generational effort.

The Vestry

The vestry serves as the leadership team at St. Edward's. It supports the spiritual and material well-being of the church, overseeing finances, maintenance of the physical plant, all major programs and activities, and planning for the future. In partnership with the Rector, the vestry provides guidance to the Finance Committee, the church staff (church secretary, choir director and organist) and ministry leaders regarding policies of the church.

There are nine members elected by the parish for staggered three-year terms. Two wardens work in close collaboration with the rector: the senior, or rector's warden, is appointed by the rector, and the junior, or people's warden, elected by the other members of the vestry. Procedures for nomination, election and organization of the vestry are specified in the St. Edward's bylaws.

Since March of this year, vestry members have been serving as liaisons to each of the ministries. This has improved communications in the parish.

Ministries overseen by the vestry include:

Acolytes	Knit Wits
Adult Fellowship	Krist Kindling
Altar Guild	LEMs
Choir	Memorial Garden
Christian Education	Pastoral Care
Coffee Hour	Praise Band
Cultural Events	Readers
Finance Committee	Social Outreach
Flowers	Stewardship
Fundraising	Ushers
Historian	Welcoming



The 2019 Vestry

More information concerning ministries is available on the parish website, www.sainteds.org.

An urgent priority for the current vestry is building maintenance. Our physical plant is now 20-30 years old. There have been leaks, worn out HVAC units, water damage in the sacristy and a handful of other similar problems. All are being actively addressed with the goal of having major maintenance issues out of the way before a new priest arrives.

Financial Status

St. Edward's annual operating budget for 2019 is \$260,000. We track two separate categories of income and expenses: operating and extraordinary. The operating budget reports month-to-month expenses against the regular revenue received from pledges and general giving. Extraordinary income includes special large, one-time gifts that would skew our tracking of ordinary income if reported along with the weekly donations. Extraordinary expenses include major capital maintenance. Both categories are reported on a consolidated monthly statement. We recently applied for a low-interest loan from the diocese to pay for building repairs.

We are currently projecting a \$35,000 operating deficit for 2019. That means our regular expenses are that much higher than our regular income. However, extraordinary income in recent years provides a cushion to absorb the deficit if needed. We are not about to go broke. While the finances indicate the need for urgent growth in membership and stewardship, the parish is basically stable. We are operating in a "concerned" mode but not a "panic" mode. We believe the best way to solve this problem is for the parish to grow over time.



The Christmas Cookie sale is always a big fundraiser.

Aside from the rector, staff includes a parish secretary, choir director, organist and nursery attendant. Custodial duties and landscaping/snow removal are contracted out. Costs are closely monitored, and cost-savings taken whenever the opportunity arises. Overall, we are not big spenders. The budget is hard to trim because there is no fat on it.

The basic operating budget is covered by pledges, non-pledge giving and fundraising. The annual Christmas cookie sale is very popular, and the gift basket auction brings out a creative, fun aspect of our church personality. These keep the wheels on the wagon. Major steps forward generally come from special gifts. One couple came forward to pay off the mortgage. The balance in our Episcopal Fund account came from another single gift. Some years are stronger than others. Some years end in surplus and others in deficit. Annual giving stays relatively steady; the stronger years result from larger, one-time gifts. A trailing off of pledges as parishioners move or pass away, combined with the slow, steady rise in costs, brings us to our current deficit situation.

A four-member finance committee manages transactions and reports to the vestry. Duties of receiving, processing and recording transactions are divided among committee members. Each transaction is seen by at least three pairs of eyes.

We pay our full Fair Share to our diocese (and have since 2014) and are mortgage-free.

Our search for a New Rector

First and foremost, we are seeking a spiritual leader. While all the programs and ministries are important, they are only meaningful if pursued in the context of love, prayer, compassion, fellowship and an understanding of our call to be brothers and sisters in Christ. We seek a rector who can help us keep our eyes on the goal, lead us in Christ's path and keep our hearts open.

Shortly after Fr. Casey's departure in late 2018, a search committee was seated. Our first task was to take the measure of our congregation and try to identify issues that will affect our future as a community of faith. Toward that end we conducted a parish-wide survey, a summary of which is attached here, along with a compendium of the actual data: <https://sainteds.org/rector-search/>

Those findings then served as the point of departure for a series of parish discussions, some looking at the congregation at large, others at individual ministries. The response of the congregation has been most encouraging. Of an estimated 160 parishioners, 140 completed the survey. Dozens participated in the follow-up conversations. Their responses were thoughtful, honest and enthusiastic. We are eager and confident as we look ahead.



Happy to serve!



Awaiting a new Leader...

The Challenges and Opportunities We Offer a New Rector

The parish survey and subsequent discussions point to several areas of need. The vestry has engaged the congregation and initiated programs in several of these areas, and is generating a new sense of action. We seek a rector who can provide guidance and leadership to help these efforts achieve their greatest potential. This is, indeed, an exciting time at St. Edward's.

The following overview reflects the ways several distinct areas of concern are closely related and deeply intertwined. The common theme as relates to our new priest is partnership. We are looking for a patient leader skilled in the art of training and inspiring lay ministry. We need someone to partner with the vestry in defining strategies, and then partner with parishioners to bring those ideas to fruition.



East Window and Memorial Garden

Now for some particulars...

- First, St. Edward's is a small-to-mid-sized parish, just large enough to support a full-time priest. We are regarded as a warm, welcoming congregation, and seek to share our joy in worship and fellowship with others in the community. It's not just a matter of needing more members to shore up finances; we want more members to share the church's mission and the blessings of our community. Toward that end the vestry has enhanced our welcoming ministries. We are examining all ministries to understand how they will affect new membership. Our Social Outreach is a part of this, as are Pastoral Care, Music and Christian Education. The parish leadership recognized that we must take charge of this growth, not wait for others to do it for us. Yet while we know these things must be done and are taking initiative to do them, we need clergy leadership.

- Our parish is aging in place. Some people who were involved in the early years are still active. In many cases people have been serving in the same capacity and need a respite. We need to attract new members at a greater rate to help share the load and establish a system of rotational leadership.
- Also related to aging parishioners is the need for enhanced pastoral care. Several older members are no longer able to attend church. While lay ministers are very faithful in serving these people, the expanding scale of the task calls for an enhanced pastoral care ministry, which will require leadership from the priest.

We do not consider it the role of the priest to provide all this care on his or her own. Rather, we seek leadership in the training and organization of dedicated lay ministers, mixed with an appropriate amount of direct service by the priest. We need a priest to help us nurture our parish-wide culture built on this sense of caring for each other.

- Young families are always an important part of the parish and we must increase our appeal to them. Whether serving on the altar or participating in social outreach or the praise band, the youth of our parish are very engaged. Our nursery, which is convenient to the sanctuary, has just been refurbished. While many parents desire to raise their children within the embrace of a community of faith, they face specific chal-

lenges in order to make it work. Church life must fit within the context of the very busy lives young families lead. New programming is needed. As with pastoral care, we hope for a priest to provide leadership in building ministries led by laity, with strong participation by our youth.



Procession at Pentecost

- Lancaster County is a prominent retirement destination. A good portion of our new membership is empty nesters and retirees. They bring a great depth of experience and spiritual insight to our parish. Yet as an older cohort, they will have an increased need for pastoral care. In this light, bolstering our pastoral care ministry is not just a matter of caring for current, aging members, but as a service important in attracting new members.

As with parishes everywhere, our finances are a constant struggle. The parish survey indicates a high level of pledging and non-pledge giving, suggesting that our problem is attracting more people to become part of our community of faith who will then want to give. We believe the only way out of our finance problem is growth in the number of parishioners. We have a wonderful parish family that we want to share with as many as possible.

Another dynamic made clear from the survey and discussions – and of which we were already well aware – is the ideological diversity of our congregation. While we enjoy great warmth and congeniality, we are far from a homogenous group. Those who are more socially or politically conservative worship beside more liberal parishioners. All are valued constituents within

the congregation. We share our common faith, in all its varied manifestations, rather than allowing differences to fracture us. We value our “still waters” and want to maintain them.

Our rector must employ a healthy dose of tact and diplomacy. While our survey shows that meaningful segments of the congregation support social advocacy, others believe in more traditional means of serving mankind. A significant majority on both sides of the aisle made it clear that they do not want politics in the pulpit.

- The parish tends to separate into those attending Rite I at 8:00 a.m. and those attending Rite II at 10:15 a.m. The Wednesday noon Holy Eucharist with healing attracts 15-30. (For many of these it is the preferred service for the week, and the only healing service offered.) Our monthly contemporary service has a loyal following. Many parishioners have only scant acquaintance with those attending the other services. One initiative recently implemented by the vestry will bring the groups together by offering a series of joint services throughout the year. On specified Sundays there will be one service. In recent years we have used internally generated printed service bulletins that include the liturgy and service music. The thought was that this would make it simpler for newcomers to follow along. While many parishioners like this approach, or have no opinion one way or another, there are some who worry we are straying away from the Book of Common Prayer. They believe that there is value in having the BCP in your hand.

- Social outreach is one of the ministries, along with pastoral care, poised for the greatest reimagining and growth. The parish survey indicated a strong interest in doing more. The inclination is to start at home, working in our surrounding neighborhood, before branching out into involvement with others in the Lancaster Convocation and ultimately with the Diocese.

The Outreach Committee is exploring a wider strategy, an umbrella under which all outreach projects will find a thematic commonality: serving those in need. We want to take advantage of our geography. While many churches seek to offer services in the densest urban areas of Lancaster City, we want to take advantage of our outlying suburban location to look to the needs of the rural community. Pockets of poverty exist across the county, and rural issues are often overlooked.



Choir Rehearsal

This is important if we are to then understand how best to partner with other churches and community organizations. It will also enhance our profile in the community, helping neighbors to understand what goes on in this little church down at the corner, and perhaps inspiring them to join us. We want to be known by our works. Our hope is that our new rector will have the experience and insight to lead us through this process as we grow the ministry. Current projects include a school supplies drive, Jesse Tree, Soles for Souls, Feed My Starving Children and the food bank.

- Music is a vital part of worship for many parishioners. At the same time, some parishioners enjoy the prayerful contemplation of a quiet service. Therefore, our Rite I at 8:00 a.m. is spoken, while the Rite II at 10:15 a.m. has choir and organ. The praise band leads a contemporary service at 9:15 a.m. on the second Sunday of every month. It is desired that the rector be knowledgeable about all categories of church music.

We are blessed with a choir that includes a handful of retired professional musicians, as well as many who come simply for the joy of singing. We have two staff: a choir director and an organist. As things have evolved, these are two separate positions. Our praise band, led by volunteers, continues to grow as it serves a contemporary service the second Sunday of each month, except in the summer. Several years ago, parishioners donated funds for a new, 5'2" baby grand piano. This has enabled us to host a cultural events series that has ranged from folk music to chamber music (one of our frequent performers just won a Grammy!) and, of course, solo piano. Musicians who play in our sanctuary comment on its wonderful acoustics. Performances are free and open to the public, with a free-will offering. The objective, beyond the sheer enjoyment of music, is to attract visitors across our threshold so they can be welcomed to and become familiar with our church.



Praise Band

- Our Christian Education program is small but mighty. As parish membership has aged and kids have gone off to college and beyond, the cadre of youngsters in Sunday School has shrunk. However, we consider an active program essential to attracting more young families. Even if we only have a few children on a Sunday, it is important for them to have that experience. We look forward to growing this ministry.
- At this time, St. Edward's does not have a youth group. Youth activities outside of the church walls occur only once or twice a year. The kids enjoy these outings but we do not have anyone to organize more of them. There is also some desire on the part of the parents to join with other local Episcopal churches' youth activities. Again, leadership is needed to make this happen.

This concludes our brief profile of St. Edward's Episcopal Church. We hope the description above has given the reader a taste for our parish life. We are ready and eager to move on to the next phase of our search. The future holds many wonderful things for us to explore together.



Welcome to St. Edward's!
