

All are welcome at

Church of the Holy Spirit

Episcopal Church  Vashon Island

PARISH PROFILE 2023



HELLO AND WELCOME

Church of the Holy Spirit on beautiful Vashon Island near Seattle is an engaged Episcopal parish seeking a half-time rector. We invite you to explore Church of the Holy Spirit where our banner proclaims “All are welcome in this place.” It is our hope to enter into discernment with you and share more of our story as well as learn more of yours.

The demographic data from a pre-Covid survey portrays us as older, mostly white, highly educated, and theologically progressive. But we see ourselves as more deeply varied than the demographic data suggest. For every trait that describes parishioners at Holy Spirit, the opposite is also true. For example, we are progressive, and we are traditional. We are LGBTQ, and we are straight. We grow peas and peonies in our backyard (and chickens too) and put on a business suit and head to Seattle. We are cradle Episcopalians, and we come from a variety of other religious traditions. We read scripture to discern God’s word, and we read Marcus Borg, Richard Rohr, and Joan Chittister. We love the Episcopal liturgy, and we love folk gospel with guitars and dobro. We are walkers, hikers, bikers, and wheel-chair bound. We are readers, knitters, painters, carpenters, birders, kayakers, poets, psychologists, lawyers, and teachers.

Mostly we are people seeking to strengthen our walk with God, deepen our spiritual lives, reach out to others in love, find joy and solace in our worship services in a beautiful church in the woods, and act upon these inspirations in the wider world. We seek a rector who can embrace and appreciate our eccentricity, individuality, and independence.

We hope that this Profile will give our prospective rector an overview of our community, illuminate our vision, and facilitate discernment of whether the Spirit is calling him or her to our beloved church on a Salish Sea island.

Respectfully submitted by the Profile Committee,
Kit Bean John Bean
Hunter Davis Kay Pieringer
Paul Wilkes

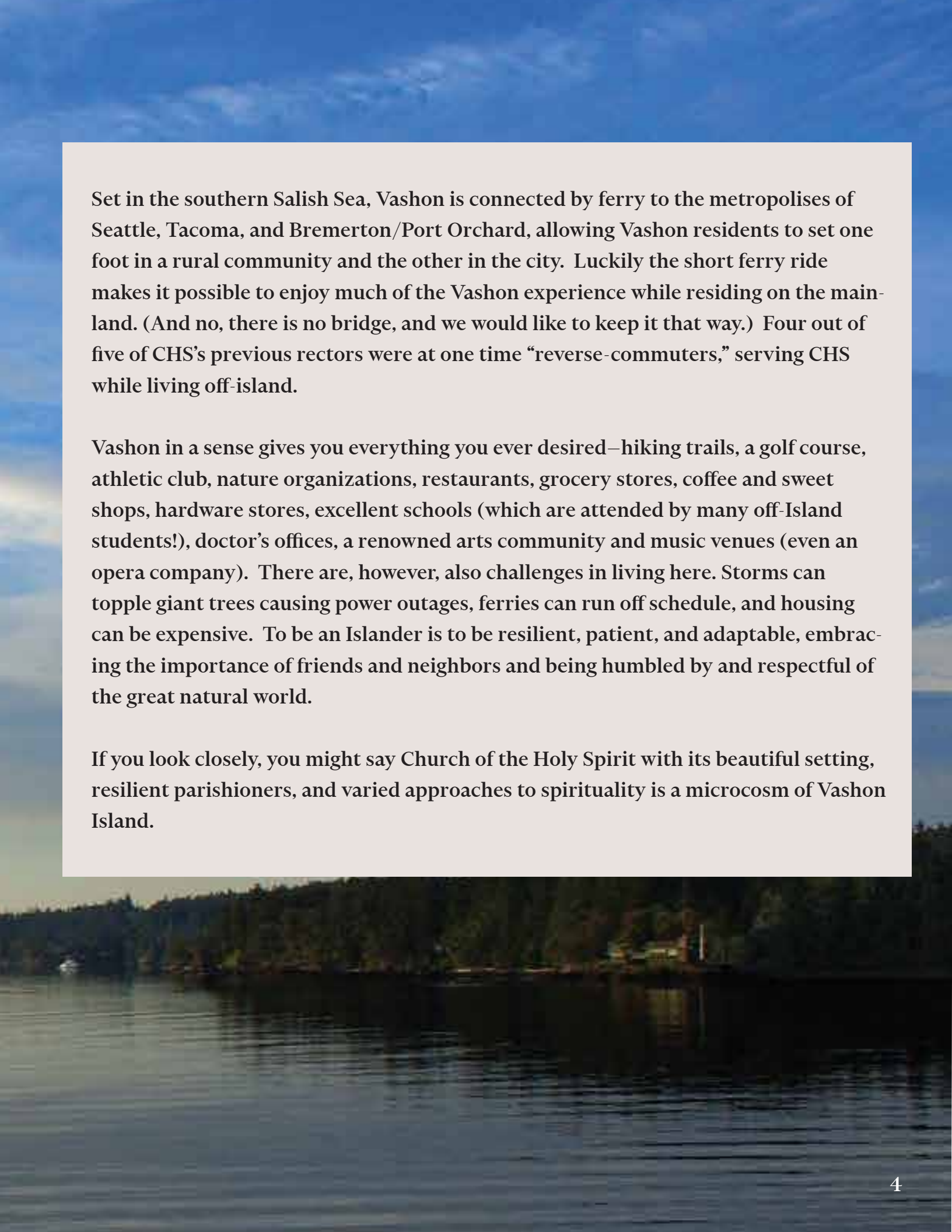
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Our Island Home

If the sight of whales, sails and mountain tops seen from the ferry hasn't already charmed you, your arrival on our Island of 12,000 residents will. With its story-book-sized cedars and firs, higgledy-piggledy orchards, farm and flower stands, ponds and beaches, you will soon realize that this place is magic! If you drive or bike the main highway, it is fourteen miles from the north tip of the island to the south tip. As the crow flies, the island is about five miles wide, but roads go as they please, ignoring the plight of the driver who must stay alert down and around curves and swerves. Handwritten signs direct you to watch out for deer, or ducklings on the road; other signs offer firewood or sunflowers or fresh eggs for sale.

Once rural farmland, and later considered the "blue-collar island" and "hippie haven," Vashon is now becoming more economically diverse with many off-island commuters as well as local merchants, contractors, internet entrepreneurs, blue collar workers, local professionals, writers, artists, and retirees. Although ethnic diversity is lower than some islanders would like it to be, the minority population is slowly increasing, and island faith groups and non-profit organizations are committed to social justice. (CHS has had outreach projects aimed at the Hispanic and Syrian communities and provides resources for Afghan refugees.) Although the island is economically diverse, too many are living on the edge. Affordable housing can be hard for average wage earners to find. Our local foodbank (which CHS regularly supports) serves 220 eligible households.





Set in the southern Salish Sea, Vashon is connected by ferry to the metropolises of Seattle, Tacoma, and Bremerton/Port Orchard, allowing Vashon residents to set one foot in a rural community and the other in the city. Luckily the short ferry ride makes it possible to enjoy much of the Vashon experience while residing on the mainland. (And no, there is no bridge, and we would like to keep it that way.) Four out of five of CHS's previous rectors were at one time "reverse-commuters," serving CHS while living off-island.

Vashon in a sense gives you everything you ever desired—hiking trails, a golf course, athletic club, nature organizations, restaurants, grocery stores, coffee and sweet shops, hardware stores, excellent schools (which are attended by many off-Island students!), doctor's offices, a renowned arts community and music venues (even an opera company). There are, however, also challenges in living here. Storms can topple giant trees causing power outages, ferries can run off schedule, and housing can be expensive. To be an Islander is to be resilient, patient, and adaptable, embracing the importance of friends and neighbors and being humbled by and respectful of the great natural world.

If you look closely, you might say Church of the Holy Spirit with its beautiful setting, resilient parishioners, and varied approaches to spirituality is a microcosm of Vashon Island.

Our Values & Mission

We are an inclusive, affirming, and welcoming group of Christian spiritual seekers and believers who are drawn together by our shared commitment to:



The Way Of Love

Through the gospel's teachings, we proclaim God's love for the world and try to follow the transformative way of Jesus.



Worship: Liturgy & Music

Our worship takes place in a sanctuary of unusual and inspiring beauty. Rooted in Episcopal liturgy and supported by a lively music program, we strive to create services that promote spiritual awareness, prayer, devotion, and gratitude.



Outreach

Through our outreach program, we try to live out Christ's mandate to love our neighbors as ourselves.



Community

We strive to foster fellowship, provide opportunities for deep and abiding friendships, and create many ways for parishioners to feel a sense of belonging and love.



Tradition

We value the long faith traditions of the Anglican Communion as well as the legacy of our own generous faith community founded in 1912.

Our Mission Statement

Our mission is to worship God and grow as a loving community of Christians by following Jesus Christ. Our commitment is to reach out, welcome, support, and care for all as an extended family, so that the quality of our life together on Vashon Island will reflect God's care and love for the world.

The Way of Love

Whether we are conservative, progressive, or seekers, we all feel welcomed and ready to hear “what the spirit is saying to God’s people.” We find the Episcopal Church and Church of the Holy Spirit to be sources of comfort and refuge wherever we are in our spiritual journey. CHS is proud to be a spiritual haven for a wide variety of Islanders trying to follow the way of Jesus.

How We Foster Christian Formation and Education

Sermons: We value sermons that are rooted in Biblical readings, are grounded in theological study, and provide thoughtful, spiritually meaningful messages connecting scripture to important questions in our lives. Each Sunday’s sermon is posted on our website.



CHS is proud to be a spiritual haven for a wide variety of Islanders trying to follow the way of Jesus.

The Gathering: The Gathering (formerly known as Religious Exploration or RE) is a weekly on-line discussion forum where participants are free to express their beliefs and doubts, listen to and deepen each other's stories, and develop a meaningful spiritual life. Leaders choose topics from poetry, meditations, passages from scripture, essays by contemporary theologians, or scientific articles that raise spiritual questions. Using Zoom, the group includes those who cannot participate in-person, out-of-towners, even friends from Australia! When regulars are on vacation, they often join The Gathering from a local internet hotspot.

Diocesan Education -- Sacred Ground and Education for Ministry (EFM): In 2021, members completed the Episcopalian Sacred Ground program. In addition, thirteen parishioners have enrolled in the rigorous Education for Ministry program.

On Hold: Women's Bible Study & An Active Sunday School (We need children!)



Our Hopes for the Future

Parishioners look forward to ideas and programs that increase our knowledge, deepen our spiritual life, and increase our ability to do God's work. If there is interest, programs lost during the pandemic can always be renewed. Most importantly, we long for the presence of young families and the re-opening of Sunday School. We are overjoyed that several new families have recently found a spiritual home at CHS.



Worship

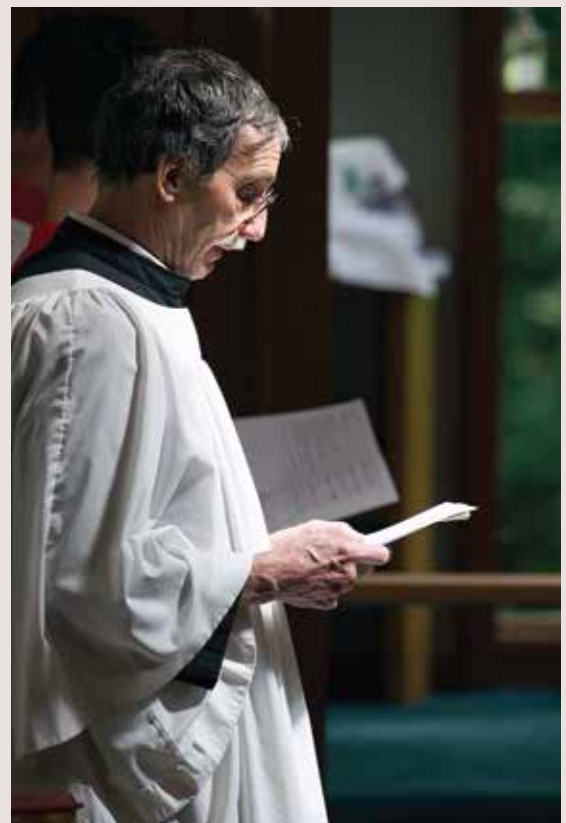
Our worship takes place in a sanctuary of unusual and inspiring beauty. The huge windows behind the altar reveal the beauty of God's creation in towering firs and spruce surrounding our labyrinth and memorial garden. We are enriched by the liturgies of the Episcopal Church and strive to create services that promote peace, spiritual awareness, prayer, devotion, and gratitude. We feel God's presence in the bread and wine, the liturgy, the music, and the passing of the peace to our friends and neighbors ~~ while observing current Covid protocols.

Liturgy

CHS offers two very important and very different worship services on Sunday mornings. In both Sunday services parishioners participate as ushers, lectors, and lay eucharistic ministers.

The early service at 8:00 follows the Rite 1 liturgy in The Book of Common Prayer. This service appeals to both conservative/traditional-leaning parishioners and to more progressive-leaning members who have a special fondness for the Rite 1 language and tradition. This is our more traditional service. It is important for keeping us grounded in the religious tradition that is at our source. And the Rite 1 service is of vital importance to the small but devoted group of parishioners who attend regularly and rely on it for their spiritual well-being.

The later service at 10:00 primarily follows the Rite 2 liturgy with a few variations such as the substitution of the Ionian Creed for the Nicene Creed. This more modern service appeals to a wide range of Islanders with a diversity of religious backgrounds, beliefs, experiences, and practices. The 10:00 am service is a hybrid of both in-person worship and live streaming on Facebook Live.





Music

We are delighted that finally the members of our small but dedicated choir have returned from their lengthy Covid hiatus and are again enhancing our worship while still following Covid protocols of masking and social distance. As Cat Stevens reminds us “Music is part of God’s universe.”

We are blessed with a Music Director, a classically trained soprano, who leads us in “making a joyful noise.” During the Covid lockdown, she provided vocal solos during the live-streamed services. Our small Vashon community is home to many talented musicians, some of whom share their gifts with us on occasion by accompanying our voices with organ, piano, harp, viola da gamba, horns, and even a dobro.

Our sanctuary houses a Felgemaker organ, a beautiful historic instrument that has recently been restored as well as a grand piano. And we have bells! Our hymns come from a trio of sources: The Hymnal 1982, Wonder Love and Praise (a supplement to The Hymnal 1982), and Lift Every Voice and Sing, An African American Hymnal.

Silent Meditation

A recent addition to our worship is the inception of monthly evening Contemplative Prayer. Through the leadership of one of our parishioners, a contemplative prayer group has begun to meet once a month for an hour of centering prayer and meditation.

Our Hopes for the Future

The experience of liturgical worship integrated with music is fundamental to our congregation, but it can be challenging to provide. One of our hopes is to make music available for 8:00 parishioners. Our 8:00 Rite 1 service, which is quiet and contemplative, would be enhanced by the addition of some instrumental music. At the 10:00 service we are blessed to have several committed liturgical accompanists.

Another hope is that our rector can help us to integrate more successfully worshippers from the 8:00 and 10:00 services to provide more opportunities for social engagement and demonstrate that the whole parish values the traditional Rite 1 service.



Outreach

CHS has recently reinvigorated its longstanding commitment to outreach. Our efforts have nourished both body and soul, providing meals and spiritual enrichment. In 2019 a new outreach committee was formed to help monitor existing programs and initiate new ones. Recently CHS was blessed to receive a very generous gift from a visitor from off-island specifically to benefit mission and outreach.

Our current programs are funded by the Mission Fund as well as by individual parishioners. Programs include:

Labyrinth: Nestled in the trees our labyrinth attracts many visitors who find peace and solace there. The labyrinth has been the site for solstice celebrations, quiet New Year' gatherings, weddings, and memorial services.

Bennett Hall as a Home: During the pandemic, Bennett Hall became available for housing. The Vestry approved a proposal to convert Bennett Hall into a home for a teenager who was unhoused. Time, money, and furniture were donated to create a new living space. When our tenant found other housing, Bennett Hall became home to a single mother with three young children. Although we value their presence, we are currently looking for an affordable rental for the family.



Providing Rental Support: In 2021, CHS provided rental support during the Covid lockdown by donating \$5,000 from its mission fund to the Interfaith Council to Prevent Homelessness.

Little Free Spanish Library: We created a collection of bilingual books and pairs of books in Spanish and English designed to promote language learning and literacy in both Spanish and English.

Swim Lessons for Children: On our water-surrounded Island, swimming is an essential skill for every child. We underwrite the cost for any family who cannot afford the lessons.

Supporting Refugees through Vashon Afghan Resettlement Team:

Contributions gathered for 13 household kits (valued at \$1,000 each) for refugee families to furnish a new home.

ESL Tutoring: Three parishioners began online English language tutoring for refugees

Prison Sentencing Reform: Inspired by the Episcopal Sacred Ground seminar, several parishioners recognized the importance of restorative justice and became interested in prison sentencing reform, particularly ways to end mass incarceration in Washington state. The outreach committee worked with the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers to sponsor a webinar on racial inequities in sentences. Over 30 participants attended the webinar. As a result, parishioners and others are becoming active in contacting lawmakers regarding bills on prison sentencing in Washington.

Partnering with Vashon Food Bank: Money once used for our Wednesday Night Dinner has been shifted to the Vashon Food Bank. For Thanksgiving of 2022, we donated a station wagon load of Mandarin oranges and butter for 300 people. We continue to support the Food Bank as need arises. Parishioner participation in rebate programs of island grocery stores helps fund CHS efforts to eradicate food insecurity.

Spiritual Outreach (on hiatus): In addition to assisting those in need with their physical necessities, CHS outreach has a history of feeding our community's spiritual needs. Unfortunately, some of these endeavors had to be stopped during the pandemic. Our spiritual outreach currently on hiatus includes such programs as:

- Evening vesper services
- Celtic spirituality workshops or events
- Gate of Heaven workshops, which were a legacy gift from a former parishioner for exploring the connection between the spirit and experiential practice.



Partnering with Vashon Food Bank

On Hold and Former Programs

Wednesday Night Dinner and Brown Bag Suppers: Although the pandemic ended these face-to-face meals, CHS is still committed to feeding hungry people. The committee is working with the Interfaith Council to Prevent Homelessness to find alternatives to the pre-covid sit-down dinners.

Sponsored Lectures and Events: Prior to Covid, the Outreach Committee promoted and sponsored lectures or dinner events related to social or environmental justice.

- Iftar dinner to promote friendship with Muslim community and aid a local Syrian family
- Lecture by expert parishioner on sustainable architecture
- Lecture by expert parishioner on immigration law

Other projects halted by Covid

English Language Learning for Spanish Speakers

Skateboard Project for vulnerable Vashon youth

We look forward to renewing some or all of these programs when it is safe to do so.



Little Free Spanish Library



Little Free Spanish Library

A photograph of a stained glass window set in a wooden frame. The window features a central white dove with its wings spread, set against a yellow background. Below the dove, several stylized human faces are visible, rendered in shades of grey and blue. The word "Community" is overlaid in a large, white, serif font across the top half of the image.

Community

Love of community has long been evident at CHS. Of course, in March 2020 Covid restrictions interrupted our traditional means of gathering. No more hugs when we offered God's peace. Gone was coffee hour and socializing after church, as well as choir practice and meetings for Religious Exploration. Yet, the pandemic made us more aware of the importance of our close-knit community. We lost connection with some who had trouble navigating on-line services. However, the sight of each other's faces on Zoom or in town never failed to lift our spirits. Gaps caused by isolation were filled by Zoom meetings, by gathering outdoors, by burning Christmas greens to celebrate Epiphany 2021, and by transforming a parishioner's home to accommodate her wheelchair after she had surgery. In spring 2022, our first outdoor potluck picnic since lockdown was a joyous event! We still wear masks during services and maintain social distance. We now feel ready to begin the next stage in our life as a parish and pray that the risks of Covid recede so we can continue to greet new people and welcome our old friends in person. Everyone will always be welcome here.

Our Teams, Groups, and Committees

Community grows from working together as well as from socializing. We have learned that online meetings are often as productive as face-to-face meetings. Our standing committees that meet regularly each month include the Vestry, Parish Life and Stewardship Committee, Outreach Committee, and Worship Committee.

Our Active Groups Are:

Pastoral Care: Pastoral care ministers bring the love of our congregation (as well as the Eucharist for those who request it) to parishioners unable to attend the Sunday morning services.

Prayer Chain: The prayer ministry offers prayers of support for anyone experiencing difficulties or facing medical crises, bereavement, or other concerns.

Men's Group: The Men's Group meets monthly on zoom to share fellowship, discuss a variety of topics, and generally enjoy each other's company.

Coffee Hour: Prior to the pandemic, coffee hour in Bennett Hall after the 10:15 service was a significant part of our fellowship and community building. As we emerged from the Covid lockdown, we began holding coffee hour under the outdoor portico where friends could remove masks, sip hot coffee, and converse face-to-face. At the present time, we are beginning cautiously to move back to Bennett Hall for coffee hour.

Altar Guild: Members of Holy Spirit's Altar Guild care for the sanctuary, altar linens, vessels, and sacristy space. An important part of their pandemic ministry was maintaining the votive candles in the Mary Chapel.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: A quiet, comforting ministry of the Church is the creation of prayer shawls that are blessed by a priest during a worship service and then given to parishioners experiencing bereavement, illness, or other life-changing adversity.

Guild of St. Isidore: The Guild of St. Isidore is a group of volunteers who learned the new digital audio and video skills to live-stream our services. This new parish team is a close-knit community which they named after the patron saint of technology. As one member explained, "We still have parishioners and friends at home who watch the service live or watch it later on Facebook. For me, being a member of the St. Isidore Guild is as close to being a eucharistic minister as I can be."



*Outdoor Coffee Hour
under the portico*



Guild of St. Isidore's Sunday Live Stream

Choir: The choir has created a warm spiritual home for its members while bringing pleasure to the parish. The pandemic, of course, shut down the choir. One of our great joys is that the choir is now beginning to return. For safety they still maintain social distance and wear masks.



First return of the choir from pandemic lockdown

Our Hopes for the Future

The concepts of Christian welcome and inclusion are deeply rooted in the scriptures and in our hearts as caring human beings. We are thankful that Zoom provided opportunities to keep us together during the lockdown, but we look forward to returning as soon as possible to more face-to-face opportunities for fellowship. Finally, we hope to bring younger individuals and families into our fellowship. It is a great joy to welcome several new families, including four children to our parish.





Tradition & History

Church of the Holy Spirit values the long faith traditions of the Anglican Communion, such as the tradition of the three-legged stool, as well as the legacy handed down by those Islanders who founded our church in 1912. The two volumes of our history tell of a resilient, evolving church. Our early history is actually action-packed. Services were held in a dance hall and the rector had to step over the bodies of passed out merrymakers! Church services were often held in rooms without heat, and at one time a fire destroyed a church meeting hall built with members' own labor. There are also tales of great generosity: Land for our current church was donated by Mrs. Cora Bennett, and a bequest from a will paid off most of the mortgage.

Throughout its contemporary history, Church of the Holy Spirit has been ably served by a succession of vicars or rectors as well as by excellent interim priests. From 2010 to the present Ann Saunderson has served as our Priest Associate.

The message that resounds from our colorful history is that Church of the Holy Spirit has continued to thrive by adapting to change prayerfully, honoring the past, embracing the present and acknowledging the mystery of the future.

Priests who have served Church of the Holy Spirit

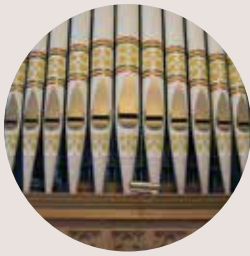
1964-1981	Rev. Peter Dally, Vicar
1981-1983	Rev. Bill Riker, Interim
1983-1988	Rev. Steve Gehrig, Vicar, then Rector <small>(During Fr. Steves time CHS grew from Mission to Parish)</small>
1988-1989	Rev. Paul Rietmann and Rev Joe Mikel, Interims
1989-1991	Rev. Sherman Hesselgrave, Rector
1991-1994	Rev. Morrie Hauge, Priest-in-Charge
1994-2008	Rev. John Thompson, Rector
2008-2009	Rev. Kate Wesch, Priest-in-Charge
2009-2010	Rev. Kimbrough Besheer, Interim
2010-2015	Rev. Carla Valentine Pryne, Rector
2015-2017	Rev. Joseph Hickey Tiernan, Priest-in-Charge
2017-2022	Rev. Dr. Sarah Colvin, Rector
2022-Present	Rev. Evan Clendenin, Interim

A SELECTION OF RECENT

Historical Highlights

1961

Construction of present building



1982

Installation of our historic Felgemaker organ, originally built in 1896

1985

CHS grows from Mission to Parish

1987

Fundraising drive to expand Bennett Hall (work prevented by zoning regulations)

2001

Bob and Betty Hawkins lead construction of labyrinth



2012

Festive dinner to celebrate 100th anniversary of CHS

2013

Rev. Carla Pryne officiates the marriage ceremony of a same-sex couple—the first on Vashon

2014

Reconstruction of the Bell Tower



2017

Financial decision to seek only a half-time rector



Full Time Congregation, Half Time Priest

Our recent journey:

A key moment in our church history is the vestry's decision in 2016 that we could no longer afford a full-time priest. Beginning in the early 2000s, CHS membership numbers started slowly declining due to aging and the tendency of young families to remain unchurched. Also some members left to seek more conservative or less liturgical churches. At other times members left because of personal conflicts. By 2016, when we began the call for a new rector, we had to accept the new reality that we were a parish too small for a full-time rector. Our Priest-in-Charge, Fr. Joseph Hickey-Tiernan, encouraged us to accept this new reality as a cup half full rather than half empty. With his urging, we began thinking of ourselves as a "full-time congregation" served by half-time rector. By "full-time," we signaled the intention of parishioners to take on the roles and functions that would overburden a half-time priest.

In accepting our 2017 call, the Rev. Dr. Sarah Colvin became our first half-time rector. Our new priest was greeted by an enthusiastic welcoming committee that helped her unpack her myriad boxes of books and walk her two dogs. In October 2017, thirteen parishioners joined Sarah for a diocesan leadership conference. To improve administrative processes, the parish ratified revisions to our bylaws that established clearer

By "full-time [congregation]," we signaled the intention of parishioners to take on the roles and functions that would overburden a half-time priest.

policies for our investment accounts, clarified oversight procedures for our Memorial Garden, and reduced the vestry from nine to seven members to reflect the smaller size of our parish. These are the first of many examples of our energy and engagement to support our half-time rector.

In Sarah's first year, she and the vestry worked collaboratively to create a Mutual Ministry Plan focused on three goals: expanding our outreach, developing an improved website, and nurturing spiritual formation through changes in liturgy/worship.

All these goals were accomplished:

1 We formed an Outreach Committee, which then convened an all-parish meeting where parishioners contributed dozens of ideas for the outreach projects undertaken in the last three years.

2 A volunteer website team perused the websites of other churches for ideas. In 2019, we hired a web designer to develop our current website, which is both beautiful and functional. The committee then invited selected parishioners to write text for each of the web sections and subsections.

*3 Through an anonymous gift from a parishioner, we purchased for our pews the two new Episcopalian hymnals *Wonder, Love, and Praise* and *Lift Every Voice and Sing* to supplement our 1982 hymnal.*

Once the pandemic began, our spiritual energy was directed inward for maintaining our community life together as best we could while sustaining each other with prayers and mutual help. In April 2022, we were saddened when Priest Sarah resigned for personal and family reasons. After Sarah's departure, we were fortunate to have a series of excellent supply priests. In November 2022, we signed a Letter of Agreement with Fr. Evan Clendenin as our interim priest for six months. Fr. Evan has been very well received by our parish. We enjoy sharing Sunday suppers with him to help him become acquainted with island life. We are now ready for the next stage of our CHS journey—to find a priest who will walk with us long-term as a half-time rector with a full-time congregation.



A New Rector

Our vision:

Based on responses from our all-parish survey, we envision a priest who is spiritually open-minded, grounded in Episcopal liturgy, well-versed in liberal theology, yet sufficiently flexible to connect with conservative points of view. We will appreciate a priest who works collaboratively, is empathic and pastoral, and is able to address conflicts. A good administrator and someone who can attract new people will be a benefit to our parish.

Of course, good sermons are a high priority. Engaging sermons interpret scripture in ways that are relevant to modern day life. We are grateful for sermons that leave room for reflection.

In describing why they value a sermon, parishioners say:

“I want to be engaged intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally.”

“Anything that makes me think afterward or changes my life.”

Of course, we understand that no one person can possess all the traits we might desire in a priest.

One parishioner wisely counseled us to celebrate whatever gifts a new rector might bring:

“These [traits] are all important, but I’d not presume to put expectations on [a new rector] beyond being God’s person and, from that center, bring their own particular gifts.”



Voices from our
Parish Survey

Why we worship at Church of the Holy Spirit

As revealed in our all-parish survey, parishioners come to Church of the Holy Spirit for many reasons.

Liturgy

Some respondents specifically mentioned the importance of liturgy.

“I was drawn to the church by the beautiful, traditional, historic liturgy. The lasting continuity and traditions are so relevant to me. They guide me to God, and give me a firm foundation to practice my faith.”

Appeal of Music

Many others mentioned the appeal of our music.

“Love the music!”

Community

Equally strong was the emphasis on community expressed through words like these:

*“Ushers made me feel welcome” “Tom’s coffee hour on the portico with delicious muffins.
“Mutually supportive members” [a reference to our outside coffee as we emerged from Covid]”
“Open to gay and trans people” “Friendly”*

Openness to Change and Inclusion

Although we love the liturgy and value the sense of tradition that the liturgy embodies, we also value being open to change, to meet what is the cutting edge of the modern church, to experience and learn from other traditions. Many voices embraced progressive Christianity, valuing the scriptures but with readings that let the ancient words speak to a modern world view and address our contemporary issues. Still, we see ourselves as inclusive across a spectrum of faith. For example, one respondent said:

We respect “[traditional] Episcopalian/Christian members and the Explorer/Seeker members. We see each spiritual journey following its own path.”

Outreach

Alongside our concern for spiritual development, parishioners value outreach to the larger community, supporting the material needs of our vulnerable neighbors. Survey responses included statements such as these:

“Supportive of people in need”

“We actually help people”

“We know material needs are as important as spiritual needs”

Responses to Covid

Our survey also asked questions about experiences during the Covid shutdown. Most gave kudos to the team that put Sunday services online. With few exceptions, congregants praised the continuity of church services. The most common response to “What more could have been done during Covid?” was “I can’t think of anything” or “Nothing more.” Responses praised the Zoom coffee hour, which followed our online service, and the Wednesday night discussion group (the Gathering) for providing community. Yet computers and Zoom connections were not welcoming to everyone. A significant minority felt alone and disconnected. Now as we begin our movement back into “normal” life, many respondents to our survey have noted that we gained confidence in facing the future.

Suggestions for the future

A frequent theme in the responses was the loss of young families with children. Parishioners offered few specific suggestions on attracting young families but strongly desired to have young families among us.

Suggestions for the future that gathered wide attention were to create the following:

1 More visibility for CHS in the larger island community

2 Small group gatherings to foster closer relationships within the church community, especially small dinner gatherings at the homes of various parishioners, which would include singles as well as couples

3 A quiet, midweek service, possibly like the Vespers service from a previous decade or Taize, or contemplative prayer. (Monthly contemplative prayer has already begun.)

Finally, many voices reminded us to be open to change. One comment in particular affirmed that our ability to make it through Covid indicates our ability, with God's help, to make it through whatever the future holds.

“We are a rural, small, aging, but still vibrant congregation and have much for which to be grateful. Because of the work done by all of us, we have weathered the pandemic and remain as committed to the church and to each other as we always have. However, . . . these characteristics require that we look at fresh approaches for how we go forward. I love this place.”

The image shows the interior of a modern church. The ceiling is made of light-colored wood with dark wooden beams. Large windows on the left and right sides offer a view of a forest. A green carpeted aisle runs through the center, flanked by wooden pews. In the background, there is a white altar with a wooden cross on the wall behind it. A dark, patterned tapestry hangs on the right wall.

Resources

Building, Finances & Staffing



Building & Grounds

Surrounded by trees, Church of the Holy Spirit's building offers the peace and beauty of the natural world, both in the sanctuary and throughout the grounds. Designed in 1961, the church won an American Institute of Architects design award. Our beautiful building with its iconic bell tower is the first church one sees driving toward Vashon town from the north-end ferry. The large bell in the newly restored bell tower rings every Sunday and on special occasions. Sitting in the pews in the sanctuary, one feels the peace of the towering firs and pines. Outside, the labyrinth offers a spiritual experience to all visitors. Encircling the labyrinth is our Memorial Garden at the edge of the woods. A meditation trail leads to the outskirts of Vashon's historic (prehistoric) bog.

One enters CHS below a stained-glass window created by K. B. Jones depicting Pentecost, the feast day of Church of the Holy Spirit. The sanctuary has seating for 120. Behind the altar an enormous memorial window provides a view of God's natural world and enhances the simplicity of the sanctuary. At the rear of the church, stands the hand-crafted and newly restored Felgemaker pipe organ and the newly acquired grand piano next to the choir's corner. Between the two burn the candles of the Mary altar. The lower floor, including the social hall, kitchen, and "class" rooms, opens onto Bennett terrace encircled by trees and rhododendrons. Bennett Hall has morphed from a social and meeting hall into needed temporary housing. It remains a living area for our tenant family even as we return for coffee hour. We are happy to share our beautiful space with someone who truly needs it.

Finances, Staff, and Investment Accounts

Data on membership and pledging units show declines from 2018 to 2022 due primarily to aging and to the increased secularization of younger generations. What is noteworthy, however, is that we have not shown a similar decline in pledge income. In 2022, 46 pledgers provided more pledged dollars than did 61 pledgers in 2018 (\$174,361 versus \$163,763). Although we are fewer in number, we are pledging more dollars. Our staffing numbers have remained stable with slight reductions due to Covid.

Membership & Budget Data

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Average
Annual Operating Expenses	\$212,415	\$205,215	\$189,276	\$184,359	\$163,229	\$190,911
Annual Operating Income	\$210,076	\$197,326	\$193,526	\$204,681	\$200,673	\$201,256
Budgeted Pledges	\$161,856	\$176,334	\$166,440	\$160,991	\$185,510	\$170,226
Number of Pledges	61	67	57	51	46	56.40
Actual Pledge Income	\$163,763	\$170,785	\$139,199	\$164,303	\$174,361	\$162,482
Average Sunday Attendance	59	48	42	24	32	41
Membership	115	88	84	87	83	91.4
Assessment Percentage	15.8%	13.7%	12.5%	13.2%	14.3%	
Calculated Diocese Assessment	\$33,199	\$26,945	\$24,176	\$26,997	\$28,703	\$28,004
% of Assessment Paid	100	100	100	100	100	

Staffing

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Average
Rector (hrs/week)	20	20	20	20	20	20
Parish Secretary (hrs/week)	16	16	16	16	16	16
Bookkeeper (hrs/week)	1.5	1.5	1	1	1	1.2
Sexton	4	4	4	4	4	4
Child care (hrs/week)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Music Director (hrs/week)	10	10	10	4	6	8
Musician	6	6	4	*	*	5.3

* No permanent musician hired; used supply musicians instead.

1. Maintenance Fund (§9.3 of by-laws)	\$15,043.59	\$50,000 initially withdrawn from the Diocesan Investment Fund (DIF) in December 2019 for maintenance projects. A \$5,000 gift from an anonymous donor was added to this fund in August 2022. These funds are held in cash in CHS's US Bank Savings account. To date, we have spent \$39,956.41 for maintenance projects since February 2020.
2. Mission Fund (§9.4 of by-laws)	\$90,180.67	Initial \$100,000 gift from anonymous donor invested with Edward Jones in an income and growth fund whose income would be used to support CHS outreach activities.
3. Endowment Fund (§9.6 of by-laws)		
<i>A. Diocesan Investment Fund</i>	\$65,437.46	Value as of 12/31/22; funds to remain in DIF
<i>B. Edward Jones Endowment Fund</i>	\$86,364.89	\$95,000 initially received from anonymous donor in May 2020 Invested with Edward Jones in a growth fund; the income is to be used as needed to support parish sustainability and growth.
	Subtotal	\$257,026.61
4. Operating Fund (§9.2 of by-laws)	\$134,555.13	Held in US Bank and PSCCU Operating Accounts
5. Memorial Garden Fund (§9.5 of by-laws)	\$2,185.13	Held in Memorial Garden Account at PSCCU
	Total	\$393,766.87
<i>Additional non-operating accounts not included in by-laws</i>		
6. Rector's Discretionary Account	\$8,239.89	Held in Rector's Discretionary Account at PSCCU
7. Wednesday Night Dinner Account	\$5,381.67	Held in WND account at PSCCU. Supported primarily with grocery receipts submitted by parishioners and occasional contributions earmarked for outreach.
	Grand Total	\$407,388.43

Clergy Compensation

Clergy compensation is based on the 2023 diocesan pay scale for a Grade E parish, which factors in the experience of the priest and the amount of time worked. For example in a grade E parish in 2023, a half-time priest with 10 to 15 years of service would receive an annual salary of \$46,404.^v The salary for priests with less than 10 years' experience or more than 15 years' experience would be adjusted according to diocesan clergy salary policies.

Pension, which Church of the Holy spirit pays, is 18% of salary. Health care insurance is 100% employee and 75% family for a half time priest. The specific amount CHS would pay for health care insurance is negotiable. Priests working less than half time are not eligible for health care benefits.



Diocese of Olympia

Western Washington

ecww.org



Since 1853 Episcopalians have had a presence in the Pacific Northwest. Today the Diocese of Olympia ecww.org covers the geographic area from the Canadian border to the Oregonian border to the Cascades on the east to the Pacific Ocean on the west. Over 100 worshipping communities and 26,000 individuals are served by the Diocese whose headquarters are in Seattle close to St Mark's Cathedral.



Thank you!

We are so grateful to all the priests who have taken time to explore our unique community. We look forward to entering into discernment with you.

God's peace.

-Church of the Holy Spirit, Vashon Island

Appendix

Methodology for our All-Parish Survey

The vestry appointed the Profile Committee in August 2022. Rather than rely on the Holy Cow Survey (which had been used for the 2017 Profile), the committee created its own all-parish questionnaire using a mixture of fixed choice and open-response questions. The complete set of questions is shown in Exhibit 1.

We emailed the questionnaires to our parish listserv and received 33 responses, which we considered a strong response rate. Of these, 22 respondents reported attending services regularly, 6 frequently, 2 occasionally, and 3 seldom or never. To analyze the results each member of the Profile Committee read all the questionnaires independently, took individual notes, and tabulated items checked by respondents on fixed choice questions. To promote consistency and ease of sharing, we created a tabulation rubric. Committee members then created their own tabulated notes, often noting memorable quotations from the parish. An example of one set of individual notes is shown in Exhibit 2. We then met as a team to share our insights from our reading of the responses.

Exhibit 1: All Parish Profile Questionnaire

1. What do you treasure about Church of the Holy Spirit?

Circle as many as you wish and add your own thoughts as well.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. support for your spiritual life | h. the sermons |
| b. friendship and community | i. buildings & grounds |
| c. biblical education | j. coffee hour |
| d. the Church's Outreach programs | k. Wednesday night Gathering |
| e. the Sunday services | l. other _____ |
| f. the music | |
| g. the liturgy | |

2a. Name at least three things the Church does well.

2b. Name at least three things you wish Church of the Holy Spirit did better.

2c. What do you think is missing in your experience at Church of the Holy Spirit?

Appendix

3a. How often do you attend Sunday services?

3b. If you attend fairly regularly, what keeps you coming?

3c. If you attend only rarely, what keeps you from coming? Circle any that apply.

- a. conflict with other activities
- b. work
- c. just pure plain tired!
- d. don't find church particularly meaningful
- e. don't feel welcome or connected
- f. other reasons (explain) _____

4a To what extent has CHS been a comfort to you during the isolation periods of Covid? Any examples?

4b. What could CHS have done to make your experience during COVID better?

5a. Name three important qualities you hope for in our new priest?

5b. What skills or traits in a priest are important to you?

Circle as many as you want. (and add your own thoughts)

- a. pastoral care
- b. good administrator
- c. personable
- d. flexible
- e. able to deliver meaningful sermons
- f. sense of humor
- g. aid in development of spiritual life
- h. social justice advocacy
- i. ability to adjust to "island life"
- j. other (please explain) _____

6. For you personally, what constitutes an effective or meaningful sermon?

Appendix

(You might consider such factors as subject matter, theological approach, ways of reading scripture, showing relevance of scripture to modern life, use of examples or stories, manner of delivery, and so forth.)

7. What are your thoughts about sharing a minister with the Lutherans?
8. What final thoughts or ideas do you have regarding a new priest or ways of strengthening CHS in general?

Exhibit 2: One Member's Analysis Notes (Sample)

What do you treasure about CHS? [Tally the items circled. Keep track of any "other" comments]

- Support for your spiritual life 18
- Friendship and community 21
- Biblical education 3
- The Church's Outreach programs 14
- The Sunday services 18
- The music 21
- The liturgy 22
- The sermons 15
- Buildings and grounds 12
- Coffee hour 12
- Wednesday night Gathering 10
- Other _____

Meditative experience

The People

Men's Group

Grounding in tradition