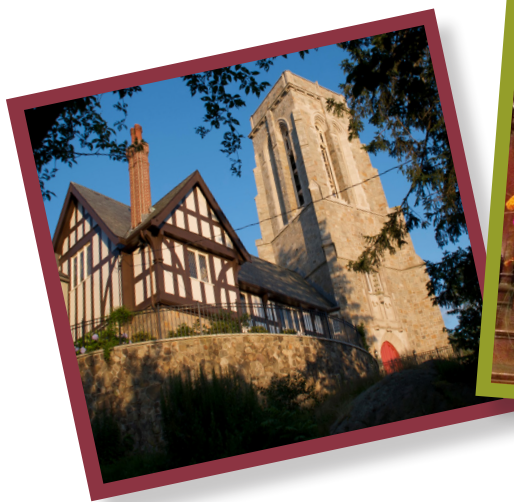


# Parish Profile

# St. Stephen's

# Episcopal Church

## Cohasset, Massachusetts



**St. Stephen's  
Episcopal Church**  
is an inclusive, Christ-centered  
community, committed to living at  
the intersection of our faith and our lives.

To those who seek to know more about our wishes for our new rector,

**Thank you! We are grateful for your interest in learning about us—our DNA and what makes us tick—as well as our needs, hopes and aspirations.**

**We are excited about welcoming our next rector to embrace us, listen to us, and guide us to be all that God wants us to be. Let us tell you about some of the gifts we would like you to bring to help us reach our full potential.**

## Collaborative Leadership

We are a parish of diverse ages, experiences, thought processes, opinions, and political views. This is both a blessing and—at times—a challenge for us. We seek someone who will understand and embrace our diversity and our worship traditions, yet bring his or her unique experience to the altar and pulpit and offer us opportunities to stretch individually and together. We want to be partners with you in our spiritual journey.

We seek someone who will both listen and advise, question and challenge, appreciate and encourage. We want someone who will recognize the wealth of talent and commitment inherent in our parish family, and reach out to us for input as part of decision-making. We eagerly await your ideas and look forward to your commitment to developing and implementing ways to make our parish stronger. We are ready and willing to offer our talent, experience and commitment to help sustain and grow St. Stephen's to its full potential.

## Pastoral Care

We invite you to learn about us as a parish family and as individuals. We are looking for someone to whom we can reach out when we are struggling, questioning, in pain or need an empathetic ear. At the same time, we invite you to motivate us to continue to be caretakers—of ourselves, our fellow parishioners, our community, our Earth, and our spiritual lives. We will look to you to guide us and share in the joyful times of baptism, confirmation and marriage, as well as support us through the difficult times of grieving, dealing with and moving on from loss. We pledge our support to you and will recognize your need for respite as well.



## Organizational Capabilities

We look for experience in running a parish and an understanding of the various responsibilities inherent in church administration. We look for strong organizational skills. We look for someone who will participate as well as guide. At the same time, we look for a rector who can delegate and tap the talent of members whose experiences and skills can contribute to the parish's health and future. We look for a commitment to helping us strengthen our financial health.



## Motivational and Inspirational Guidance

We seek a pastor to help us understand the complexities of faith and God's wishes for us; someone who nurtures and deepens our connection to God and encourages us to listen for and hear God's call in our lives. We look for a priest who can educate us—through preaching, teaching and example; someone who can challenge us intellectually and help us look at and consider our daily activities and the world around us through the lens of the Gospel. We look for someone who can inspire us, through engaging us in conversation, while also helping us appreciate silence and prayerful reflection. We especially look for help in continuing to inspire and develop our youth as engaged Christians in the world. And, we seek someone who can help us see and respond to the tremendous opportunities God has given us to serve.



Finally, we value a sense of humor!

May the peace of the Lord be with you and all of us here at St. Stephen's

**St. Stephen's Search Committee, December 2017**



**This is who we are...**

## **Hopes and Dreams of Members**

“Hope” is a persistent thread in our quest to discover our priorities as a parish community. Our search for a new Rector has given us cause to discern and express our needs and desires. The tapestry we weave with regards to our hopes and dreams is multifaceted, but the following themes are clear.

Parishioners see the community of St. Stephen’s as our most important strength: we are a welcoming, compassionate and accepting parish that feels true affection for each other. We hope to strengthen our community even further by having more fellowship activities with greater participation. We hope that our new rector will be able to reinvigorate the social life of the parish. We picture a thriving and secure spiritual home with leadership that fosters independence and involvement so that our church is more and more a focus of our lives. Strong pastoral care led by our new rector is part of this picture. We also wish to extend our community outside of the walls of St. Stephen’s—into our local community and the wider world, be it in fellowship or outreach.

This hope for a stronger community extends to our youth. Although our Godly Play® program is strong, it must continue to be cherished and fully supported by our new rector. With strong clergy and lay support, we want to increase the engagement of our older youth. Our youth are the future of the church, and we dream of vibrant youth groups with participants gaining a fuller understanding of the Word of God and enacting this Word in the world around them. We dream that God will call more families with young children and young adults to our community, and we desire to be identified as both traditional and always looking to the future for their sake.

Music is a resounding priority of our people—from Sunday service, to special music at Christmas and Holy Week, to our beloved carillon and concerts hosted by St. Stephen’s. Music is a beautiful way that we pray. Our dreams are for music to continue to be a major part of our worship and life. We look for a rector who will honor and encourage our love of music.



*“We are a mutually supporting community, growing in faith together.”*





The parish hopes and wishes to grow! We dream of more families, of all ages, joining our community. We desire to enhance our financial sustainability through new membership and the continued generosity of our parishioners. Our desire to grow in numbers is born from our desire to increase our outreach as well as to enrich our community of souls.

## Current Goals

Calling a new Rector has provided us the opportunity to define our challenges. With the congregation's full support, the Vestry has committed to three major short-term goals.

The first and most important goal is our search to find a new Rector: someone who will take joy in who we are, inspire us to overcome challenges, and, with spiritual guidance and wisdom, lead us into the future.

Our second goal is to strengthen and build our membership. We all love to experience our sanctuary filled with families joined together in worship. In addition to enriching our communal spiritual relationship, rebuilding our membership would also strengthen our financial health and enable the parish to do more of what we are called to do. Our appetite for "doing" is always greater than our budget! Several programs are in the planning stages to attract newcomers and reinvigorate our current membership.

Our third goal is to refurbish the sanctuary and the parish house. Some of our projects are part of our general maintenance plan, but others have been added to freshen the face of our church and prepare for our new rector. The Vestry and Property Committee, along with parish volunteers, have accomplished some major improvements over the last few months, and we look forward to completing a number of other property objectives throughout the coming year. Maintaining and updating our beautiful historical buildings remains one of our privileges—and challenges.



*“...a feet  
in the  
sand  
moment.”*

## Community

The town of Cohasset is located on the shore of Massachusetts Bay about twenty miles southeast of Boston. Its population for the year 2017, as provided by its Board of Registrars, is 8,018. Twenty-five percent of the population is 60 years of age or older and 19% is under 18. The average family income is above the national average.

Cohasset Village, located on and just inland from Cohasset Harbor—the location of the town’s lobstering fleet, recreational craft and boating clubs—contains a small commercial area and a beautiful elongated Common. The church buildings overlook both from the tall rock outcropping on which they are built. The Common is the site of a farmer’s market every Thursday from June to October. The Town’s more important commerce is strung out along Route 3A, which runs the north-south length of the town a half mile or so west of the Village. Cohasset is connected to Boston, to which a significant fraction of its working population commutes, by highway, commuter rail and, in neighboring Hingham, commuter boat.

The town is served by five churches: the Episcopal, Congregational and Unitarian-Universalist churches clustered on and around the Common; the Roman Catholic Church on South Main Street; and the South Shore Hellenic Orthodox Church in the “West Corner,” where Cohasset joins Hingham and Hull. There is also a Vedanta Center off of Norman Todd Road. None of the other main-line Protestant denominations have churches in Cohasset.

Most of the town’s school-age children attend its small but highly ranked public schools. There are two well attended, affordable non-profit pre-schools on the Common.

*“People  
meet you  
where  
you are...”*



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cohasset,\\_Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cohasset,_Massachusetts)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hingham,\\_Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hingham,_Massachusetts)

A public library with interesting free day and evening programs affords its cardholders access to the collections of most of the other public libraries on the South Shore. The Cohasset Historical Society houses pertinent local collections, presents programs on historical subjects, and maintains two nearby eighteenth-century buildings as small museums.

There are a number of children's sports programs, including soccer and Little League baseball, as well as other recreational opportunities promoted by the Town's Recreation Department. Children as young as eight have the chance to learn to sail at the Cohasset Sailing Club. Public and private sailing and rowing clubs exist for adults as well. For the athletically inclined of all ages there is, pre-eminently, Sandy Beach and the public swimming pool, a golf club, two indoor tennis clubs and several physical fitness workout facilities. For joggers, bikers and dog walkers there are numerous scenic roads and paths, including the extensive trails in Whitney Woods, Wheelwright Park and the White Woods of Holly Hill, an educational organic farm.

From a social service point of view, one of the Town's most important agencies is perhaps the Senior Center, located in the recently constructed Willcutt Commons building off of Sohier Street. A food pantry located in the basement of the catholic rectory is widely supported by the whole community. Safe Harbor Cohasset, a recently established organization with a mission to encourage healthy, educated and responsible choices about drug and alcohol use, is very active in the community.

St. Stephen's also serves the town of Hull, which contains no Episcopal church but is the home of many of St. Stephen's most active members. Hull is also the site of Wellspring, our area's most significant social service agency, offering a food pantry, thrift shop and extensive remedial educational and training services.





## Church History

Summer residents founded St. Stephen's parish in 1896. Although summer parishes were once common throughout New England, St. Stephen's never fell into such a category. The parish included enough year round residents—local merchants, farmers and fishermen—to keep the services going year-round. The church building, designed by Cram and Goodhue, was completed and dedicated in 1901.

After a succession of short-term pastors in the first eight years, some of whom went on to illustrious careers, the parish enjoyed two rectors with extended tenure. The Rev. Howard Key Bartow served 17 years (1904-1921), and was followed by the Rev. Charles Chase Wilson, who served thirty years (1921-1951). These two rectors were largely responsible for establishing St. Stephen's within the Cohasset community. The Rev. Bartow arranged for the completion of the church tower in 1907 and expanded the outreach of the church to the greater community by establishing Bonnie Bairns, a summer camp for sick babies and children from Boston. This program continued until 1946, when the services were integrated with others in the Boston area. The Rev. Charles Chase Wilson continued the outreach to the greater community, bringing together summer and year-round residents through his inclusive approach to ministry. During his tenure he oversaw the installation of a carillon given by Mrs. Hugh Bancroft as a memorial to her mother Mrs. Clarence E. Barron, wife of the financial publisher. She added more bells gradually for a total of fifty-one, finally completing the project in 1928. Later in the 1960 renovation of the church, Jane Cook and Jessie Cox gave a magnificent organ in memory of their mother Mrs. Hugh Bancroft, as well as a trust to maintain these wonderful musical gifts. This family's effort helped to build our strong music program. The church has benefitted greatly from its partnership with the laity.

During the 66 years since the tenure of Rev. Wilson, there have been five rectors: the Rev. Bradford Tite (1951-1959), the Rev. F. Lee Richards (1960-1970), the Rev. Richard D. Muir (1970-1984), the Rev. E. Clifford Cutler (1985-2008), and the Rev. Margot Critchfield



*“ I feel most  
alive when  
I hear a  
good sermon...  
a sermon that  
directs me  
to reflect. ”*



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scituate,\\_Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scituate,_Massachusetts)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hull,\\_Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hull,_Massachusetts)

(2008-2017). The average tenure of our past five rectors has been 13 years. The Rev. Tite guided the construction of the new Charles Chase Wilson Parish House, the Rev. Richards oversaw the renovation of the church, the Rev. Cutler initiated an addition for better handicapped accessibility as well a memorial garden, and the Rev. Critchfield reinstated the beloved summer beach service. Over this time our ministry has grown more innovative and our parish more inclusive.

## Church Facilities

St. Stephen's neo-Gothic building and carillon bell tower are a dominant and central feature of historic Cohasset village. The original building was completed in 1901. Renovations to to the Old Parish House were completed in 1933 and the New Parish House was added in 1955.

The carillon was renovated in 1989 and brought to "concert pitch" with 57 bells, making it the largest carillon by bell count in New England. Our carillon is one of the few in the world with a range sufficient to permit the performance of every piece of music composed for the carillon. St. Stephen's has the oldest continuing annual carillon recital series in the country.

The interior of the church is richly appointed with carved oak paneling, pews and millwork. There are ten stained glass windows given in memoriam, the last as recently as 2001. Seating capacity is 208, more with supplemental chairs. The Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ was installed in 1964 during a prior renovation of the church. Adjacent to the sanctuary, the Old Parish House has several offices, a youth classroom, the Bride's Room and the choir room.

In the New Parish House completed in 1957, there are seven classrooms for educational and meeting purposes and four offices for clergy and staff. Walton Rogers Hall facilitates large social gatherings and other functions. It



is equipped with a stage and a commercial kitchen. An elevator and memorial garden were completed in 2006 by the architectural firm of Strekalovsky and Hoit. Great care was taken to obtain seam-faced granite from the same Weymouth quarry from which the granite for the church came. The memorial garden is beautifully landscaped and a lovely place to pray, rest and meditate.

The Rectory is a four-bedroom home situated on a quarter-acre lot located approximately 100 yards from the church and adjacent to town conservation land. Originally a carriage house, the home was constructed over 100 years ago. Maintaining the Rectory is part of the annual parish budget. It has many fine period architectural details, including a curved staircase, fireplaces, a curved wall in the dining room, and built-in shelves in the living room and pantry.

*“It is a place where I can come and just be me – it gives me peace, comfort and encouragement on my journey.”*





## Church Programs

### Fellowship

Fellowship is an important ministry at St. Stephen's. Whether it is donuts after the summer beach services or the regular coffee hour after the ten o'clock church service on Sunday, these are important opportunities to welcome new people and to catch up with old friends. Fellowship activities occur throughout the church program year, starting in September with the Ice Cream Sundae Sunday celebration and ending in August with the Carillon Concerts.

Significant Fellowship Activities include:

- Ice Cream Sundae Sunday
- Monthly Soup and Sandwich
- Dine with Nine
- Annual Church Picnic
- Various Bible Study Groups
- Family Movie Nights
- Contemporary Fiction Book Group
- Children's Halloween Party
- Advent Wreath Making
- Christmas Village Fair
- Annual Meeting and Brunch
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and Talent Show
- VBS Work Parties
- Chocolate Sunday: First Sunday after Easter
- Godly Play® Picnic
- Carillon Concerts



## Outreach

Our outreach ministries strive to reach across boundaries of race, class, lifestyle, language and location. St. Stephen's outreach programs are involved with hunger, homelessness, poverty, prisons, education, AIDS and disaster relief. There are 17 outreach ministries that we support financially and in other ways, although we are always called to do more and involve more parish members. These comprise some close to home like the Cohasset Food Pantry, Cohasset Elders, Cooking for Father Bill's (a homeless shelter in Quincy), Bay Cove Human Services, Interfaith Social Services, B-Safe Summer Camp in Boston and others further afield like Nu-Day Syria, St. Boniface/Haiti, White Earth Reservation in Minnesota, Episcopal Relief and Partakers, a Prison Ministry.

In addition, we also serve spiritually within our own church community by providing Lay Eucharistic Ministers who take communion to the housebound, and an Intercessory Prayer group, who pray daily on behalf of those who have asked for prayers for themselves and others. A Christian Meditation group meets on a weekly basis.

## Traditional and Seasonal Events

Special services are held throughout the church year to honor various Christian traditions, often tied to the Christian calendar and valued by our parishioners. Although not an exhaustive listing, these include:

- Blessing of the Animals on St. Francis Feast Day
- Halloween, All Souls and All Saints Services
- Cohasset Thanksgiving Ecumenical Service
- Christmas Program starting with an Advent Carol Service and ending at the Epiphany Pageant
- Lenten Services including Holy Week Morning Prayer
- Palm Sunday
- Maundy Thursday Supper and Service
- Good Friday All Night Vigil
- Two Easter Sunday Choral Services
- Pentecost with readings done in different languages



## Music

Music plays a vital role in helping our parish find ever more ways to grow spiritually, and to serve God. We are thankful to have a talented and devoted Director of Music Ministries, whose important role in the church includes leading the choir, playing both the organ and carillon, and organizing our concert and carillon music series.

St. Stephen's choir is an all-volunteer, non-auditioned choir; anyone who shows up is welcome. The choir sings during the ten o'clock Sunday morning service, primarily using hymns from the 1982 Hymnal, as well as a variety of anthems. Special selections are performed for Advent Lessons & Carols, Palm Sunday and Easter.

The St. Stephen's concert series has been presenting concerts for the community at large for well over 25 years to serve as an outreach for the wider community to experience our church. Distinguished performers range from brass and string groups to choirs and organ recitals.

St. Stephen's carillon is a unique resource for the community, and the church sponsors a carillon concert series with carillonneurs from around the world on Sunday evenings in the summer. The audience can enjoy the carillon and a picnic on the Town Common or in the courtyard of the church.

*“Singing opens up the Bible to me in a way that simply reading it could not.”*





## Christian Education

All generations of our parish agree that a key mission of our church is to educate our youth, the future of our world, in the teachings and ways of Jesus Christ, Teacher and Shepherd. We are blessed to have the energies and talent of a Director of Children and Youth Ministries to organize and run our diverse and active Christian education programs.

### Godly Play®

Godly Play® is a pathway of spiritual direction and discovery for children, modeled on the Montessori method and Christian worship. St. Stephen's has been offering this globally recognized program for children ages 3 years through 5th grade for nearly 20 years. Godly Play® has been very successful in engaging our children and teaching them the language of our faith; it also provides a spiritual outlet for our trained storytellers and classroom greeters. St. Stephen's Godly Play® classrooms are well resourced, both with materials and with highly trained, seasoned storytellers and is one of our most successful outreach endeavors, providing young families with exposure to our church community.



## Youth Groups

The church has separate youth groups for middle school and high school students. The middle school youth group meets on a regular basis with a curriculum that varies based on the needs and interests of the participants. They often join the high school group for fellowship and community service activities. Our aim, and challenge, is to keep the youth engaged with the church throughout their middle and high school years.



## Vacation Bible School

St. Stephen's is the only church in Cohasset providing a summer VBS program, serving children from Cohasset and neighboring towns. Starting in the spring, work parties prepare decorations, collect supplies and fundraise. VBS volunteers include many of our youth, who act as classroom assistants, crew leaders—even artists and actors! Each summer, the parish hall and surrounding classrooms are transformed into places of wonder, where children can be seen and heard singing and dancing throughout the day as they listen to Bible stories and learn about God's many gifts. This popular program is another important and successful way that the Church engages with young families in the community.



## Confirmation and First Intentional Communion

Confirmation classes are offered every year and are open to teens and adults. These classes focus on the reaffirmation of the participant's Baptismal vows in the context of Episcopal doctrine, and on the application of their faith to how they live their daily lives. Confirmation classes culminate in a powerful service led by the Bishop, usually at the Cathedral in Boston, and includes all the other confirmation candidates of the South Shore Deanery.



St. Stephen's has also begun offering a first intentional communion program for younger students to teach them about the significance of the Eucharist. This program meets for a few weeks in the spring, culminating with recognition of the students at a Sunday service.

## Adults

Christian Education has occurred in a variety of formats over the years; the more recent, successful programs have been led by the laity in a home environment. Clerical participation is welcomed! Six week “Soup and Study” Bible Studies held at Parishioners’ homes have allowed participants to focus on certain sections of the Bible and how we live out scripture in our church and our individual lives.

A Spirituality and Contemporary Fiction Book Group meets once a month, also at a parishioner’s home. Discussions do not follow a standard format, but are based on personal interests or questions of the assembled group to open doors of insight that may resonate with those present.

In addition, the church has hosted special speakers and lectures, which are publicized and open to the wider community.



*“I can disagree,  
yet still love and  
respect others with  
a different world  
view and opinion.”*





## Financial Summary

St. Stephen's Cohasset is in good financial condition and is meeting all of its current commitments. We are blessed to have a very talented group of parishioners who understand finance and are willing to help lead the parish. These individuals fill the roles of Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, three members of the Trustees of the Endowments and a Finance Committee. The Treasurers oversee the creation and management of the yearly budget. The Trustees manage our two endowments, one unrestricted and one restricted. The Finance Committee has been working with the Rector, Vestry, Treasurers and Trustees to maintain a well thought out and cohesive plan.

In general, the church works very hard to produce a balanced budget year over year. Our pledges and plate cover approximately 75% of the budget, a sustainable draw from our two endowments another 17%, and other sources that vary from year to year contribute the remainder. We have budgeted 57% of our funds to personnel costs, 15% to mission (a combination of our Diocesan Assessment and our Parish Outreach), 12% to property operations, 7% to capital improvements and 9% to "other."

Although the foundation of our finances is sound, we are also blessed with a strong desire to do more, whether it be increased outreach or further care of our parish. This desire to do more has continually helped us to stretch and prioritize every dollar. We believe this is a healthy tension! At the same time, our worship community has been willing to step up when the appropriate need/opportunity presented itself (for example, a capital campaign to help address accessibility and another drive to reduce a mortgage).

As we look to our future, we acknowledge that we will always be stretched to do all that we want to do! At the same time, we give thanks for being able to make decisions from a stable position.



## Diocese

St. Stephen's Parish is one of the 180 congregations in the Diocese of Massachusetts, which covers the nine counties of the Commonwealth east of Worcester County. Those counties include the most populous part of the State as well as Cape Cod and the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. The rest of the Commonwealth lies within the Diocese of Western Massachusetts.

Our Diocesan Bishop, since 2014, has been the Rt. Rev. Alan M. Gates. He is assisted by the Rt. Rev. Gayle Harris, who has served as Suffragan Bishop since 2003.

The diocese is divided geographically into 12 deaneries. St. Stephen's is one of 16 congregations within the South Shore Deanery. Each congregation sends one clerical and two lay persons to meetings of the deanery and each deanery elects two members to the Diocesan Council. Apart from this elective function the deaneries serve as valuable sources of information and mutual support for the member congregations.

The diocese is largely supported by assessments on its constituent congregations based upon the size of their budgets. Each parish is entitled to send two lay delegates along with its rector and other clergy to the annual Diocesan Convention, whose unicameral assembly of clerical and lay delegates is the highest legislative authority within the Diocese.

*“We see all sides,  
we bridge gaps  
and welcome  
difference while  
being steadfast  
Christians with  
the Eucharist.”*



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## Applications must be submitted before end of day *Friday, February 23, 2018*

Interested candidates are invited to submit application materials to [sseccohasset@gmail.com](mailto:sseccohasset@gmail.com). Please label your submission as follows:

Last name.first initial.middle initial.SSECCohasset.

- Ministry portfolio
- Introductory letter
- Resume
- Three sermons, preferably in video or audio format

We look forward to learning more about you.

“*God’s timing is  
forever accurate.  
Believe it.  
Trust it.  
Allow it.*”