



Parish Profile

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Est. 1860

Southborough, MA • stmarks-sb.org

The parishioners of St. Mark's Episcopal Church (St. Mark's) prayerfully seek to find their next rector to continue the good, faith-led work already occurring here, and to steward new initiatives and growth for the parish in the near future.

Our next rector should share our devotion to community service, liturgical worship, and our strong music program. Additionally, we hope our next rector will join us in continuing to grow membership by reaching out to new individuals and families with children in the MetroWest region outside of Boston. While we are rooted in a deep history, our members adapt to new ideas and seek God's guidance as we evolve as a place of worship in a modern, swiftly changing society.



HOW WE WORSHIP

Inspirational worship and warm hospitality are at the center of our parish. We cherish our traditions while remaining flexible and open to new ways of worshiping and serving in the name of Jesus Christ.

Sunday services include two Rite II services: an 8 a.m. spoken service and a 10 a.m. service with music ranging from traditional hymns to contemporary praise pieces. On the fourth Sunday of each month during the academic year, Messy Church takes place in the late afternoon and offers families with small children an interactive service geared towards young bodies and minds. We also stream our 10 a.m. service on social media for those who cannot attend in person and worship virtually. At designated times throughout the calendar year, we have all parish services and events so we can gather together as an entire parish.

We use the Book of Common Prayer for services. We have an exceptional music program, with a music director and a 10-person choir who fill our 10 a.m. service with hymns and Christian pieces. While we have always cherished our music, our rector search survey affirmed this as a strength and opportunity for St. Mark's, as we are deeply passionate as a parish about our faith in sound.

WHO WE ARE

St. Mark's is an exceptional place of worship with a vibrant, welcoming community. We open our doors to everyone, accepting them into our parish as they are. Our tapestry of individuals from different upbringings and identities enriches our faith foundation and strengthens our ability to look out and care for one another.

At the center of our grounds is our neo-Gothic stone church, erected in 1860 by local pharmacist and inventor of surgical anesthetics and vanilla extract Joseph Burnett. Equipped with a bell tower and organ, the magnificent space holds most of our services throughout the year.

Additionally, our two-story parish building, built in 2002, offers a large meeting hall for our parish and other community organizations to gather, a stocked kitchen, a nursery, the rector's offices, a library, and several classrooms.

The rectory provides our rector and family over 3,000 square feet of living space. The property sits at the heart of the historic Southborough town common, a stone's throw from town hall, the library, and local businesses. Southborough is home to some of the finest schools in the state and is an attractive place to live.

Steeped in a deep history, St Mark's has evolved to offer a variety of services, philanthropic missions, and community outreaches:

Parish Enrichment includes after-service coffee hours, adult faith formation opportunities, men's and women's groups, senior luncheons, and Christian education programs for all ages. Many programs and events are offered at times and in formats to fit into people's busy lives with competing priorities and responsibilities.

Pastoral Care and Healing Ministries are at the center of what we stand for at St. Mark's. Whether individuals have experienced a loss, a major life transition, a birth, or simply need support during a specific time, our clergy and community offer several means of support. One-on-one pastoral counseling, monthly lay-led prayers for healing during the Sunday services, and a weekly prayer registry where the names of individuals are included in the prayers of the people during services. Knitters in our parish craft beautiful prayer shawls, and our Sunshine Club creates homemade meals and sends letters to those in need.





Community Outreach at St. Mark's is robust and thriving. Ongoing initiatives include: Our parish grounds host a community fridge and pantry stocked with food and supplies, including fresh produce from our church gardens during warmer months; Family Promise Metrowest, which supports families in transition from homelessness; Our Father's Table soup kitchen; and the Southborough Food Pantry. The first floor of the parish hall is home to the Bargain Box, a thrift store that allows community members to donate items and others to purchase them at a reasonable cost. During Advent, we support the Southern Middlesex Opportunity Council Head Start clients and Butler Youth Facility residents by hosting a giving tree where parishioners can sponsor to purchase items for an individual or family in need. Each month, we have an open plate offering, and donations not designated to St. Mark's are given to a specified charity. Our Youth Group travels to a region in need each year during their summer service trip. Recent trips have been to Ohio, upstate New York, and Appalachia.

Stewardship at St. Mark's is more than just an annual appeal. Our stewardship goes beyond the basic operational needs of the parish and includes the upkeep of our property, including a church building over 150 years old. In recent years, St. Mark launched a capital campaign to restore our bell tower, which was in dire need of repair. This campaign extended beyond our parish and included supporters from Southborough, the diocese, and local businesses.

Youth Engagement includes a variety of things to keep young members of St. Mark's engaged as Christians. Sunday School meets on the first and third Sundays of each month, and Messy Church meets on the fourth Sunday of each month. We have adapted our church building by removing pews in the back, so younger children have more room to explore during services. A children's sermon is ordinarily offered before the regular sermon on Sunday School weeks. Children in grades three and up are welcome to become acolytes and participate in services. Our preteens and teenage members have a thriving Youth Group, participate in a mission trip each summer, and their leadership and voices are integral to our mission. Youth serve on our vestry and search committee, lead us in worship on Youth Sunday, and stream our online services. St. Mark's School's campus abuts ours, and although there is no formal affiliation between our parish and the school, we share a history. We welcome their students and staff to worship with us, particularly those who are boarding and may be far from home.

HISTORY

St. Mark's Episcopal Church has been at the spiritual heart of Southborough since the mid-19th century, when Joseph and Josine Burnett first welcomed visiting clergy to lead informal services in the local schoolhouse. By 1860, the community formally incorporated as "A Religious Parish and the Episcopal Church, Inc., Society of St. Mark's," built on the founding ideal that worship should be "free to all, with no distinction as to wealth, color, race, or station." The cornerstone was laid in 1862, and the church building—designed by architect Alexander Este—soon became a landmark of faith, beauty, and welcome in the center of town.

Throughout its history, St. Mark's has grown alongside the town itself. Generous gifts from the Burnett and Fay families enriched the sanctuary with Tiffany-stained-glass windows and the iconic bell tower. Multiple expansions to the grounds were done to support music, education, and community life. Women were granted full membership in 1893, the parish house and rectory followed in the early 20th century, and a Memorial Garden was added in 1986. St. Mark's became a full parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts in 1949. Since then, the congregation has continued to expand ministries, deepen worship, and strengthen its presence in the wider community.

Today, rooted in tradition yet forward-looking, St. Mark's remains a place where faith is nurtured, relationships are formed, and God's love is lived out in community.





THE FUTURE OF ST. MARK'S



As we look to the future, parishioners expressed clear hopes:

- Attracting and welcoming families with children and youth.
- Developing a comprehensive strategy to reach and include new members and expand our parish life.
- Deepening pastoral care and ministries of healing for those broken by life circumstances.
- Expanding opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation for all ages

OUR NEXT RECTOR

We seek a rector who will inspire us with preaching that connects faith to daily life. We expect a new rector to welcome families and help grow our ministries with children and youth. The incoming rector should nurture our pastoral care and healing ministries, encourage generosity, and steward our resources wisely.

Overall, we call our new rector to walk with us as a partner in faith, empowering lay leaders and fostering a shared vision. We encourage prospective applicants to learn more by reviewing our Office of Transitional Ministries sheet on our church website.





ST. MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Welcoming, Inspiring & Serving God's People