

Episcopal Parish Seeking Priest in Charge

Dear Clergy Members: Saint James Episcopal Church in Preston, Connecticut is looking for a Priest in Charge to direct our vibrant and historic parish. Located in the village of Poquetanuck, the church has existed since 1734 and draws members from several different towns in the area including Norwich, Ledyard and North Stonington. While the church has grown and contracted over time, it has always been a place of light, warmth and worship.

Liturgical Style and Practice: St James liturgical style and practice can be best described as intimate and welcoming. It is a place where we come together as a spiritually motivated congregation driven by what God is doing in the world. We attempt to demonstrate how to live the good news of the gospel by service to our fellow parishioners both on Sunday mornings and online. Numerous parishioners participate as lay readers and responsive readers. We also love our music and on any given Sunday we can have an organist, guitarist and concertina playing hymns which we sing to the best of our abilities!

Role in the Community: Our small and deeply caring parish maintains a high level of community involvement that includes providing online religious services every Sunday on Facebook. We also hold a Thursday night Zoom Scripture and Compline. The parish also organizes a golf tournament and highly successful road race (The 32st Liz Harris Cannonball Run) and uses the money raised to fund "Kids to Camp" Scholarships. It also sponsors a Boy Scout troop, card making class and monthly community lunch (the Owl lunch). Donations contributed at the OWL lunch purchases diapers for a local mother's support organization called Madonna Place. Members of the church also participate in the Ledyard Gales Ferry Crop Walk, and Preston food pantry to aid food insecurity. Last but not least, the church has been holding fish fry dinners for 58 consecutive years for the 6 weeks during Lent. During this Lent, roughly a thousand dinners were served to people who came by the parish to share fellowship with the several dozen of the members of the parish who cooked, baked and prepared meals. As one of our members said at the last annual meeting, "we are small but mighty."

Parish Status - The parish has 80 active members and emerged from the Covid-19 crisis with renewed enthusiasm but without the benefit of a minister. During the last two years, St. James is directed by two wardens and a vestry of 11 individuals. The parish has contracted during the last couple of years with a number of supply priests to cover its services; services which are not covered are turned into morning prayer run by lay people.

Additional information: The current structure of the church (completed just in time for Easter, 1898) is done in a building style best described as Carpenter Gothic. The building also features an enormous ten foot rose window, and a separate set of stained glass windows commemorating former Bishop Samuel Seabury, as well as a tower whose pealing bells can be heard across Poquetanuck Cove. Sitting on a wedge of land between Rt 117 and 2A, it is sometimes known as the “church in the middle of the road.” Certainly, it is one of the better known landmarks in South Eastern Connecticut. Our parish also has a community hall and large kitchen that includes a large common room, separate sunroom and a large downstairs with room for at least four classrooms. We do not own a rectory but we would supply a housing allowance in accordance with the Diocese of Connecticut guidelines.

What We are Looking For: The parish is looking to employ a priest for a half time position that **could lead to a full time position**. Applicants should be interested in building a community of worshipers and helping the parish renew itself for the next generation. Interested applicants should contact Co-Wardens Mary Bawza marybawza@comcast.net (860-300-6241) and Kathy Buck at 786lambchops@sbcglobal.net (860-639-6778)

Sincerely yours in God,

The Vestry of St. James
April 19th, 2023