



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Sep 3, 2024)

Church of the Holy Communion, West Tennessee

4645 Walnut Grove Road, Memphis, TN 38117, United States

Contact:

Assistant / Associate / Curate

swebb@holychommunion.org

Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) 316	Number of Weekend Worship Services 3	Number of Weekday Worship Services	Number of Other per Month Worship Services
Current Annual Compensation	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position \$70000	Housing Available for	Pension Plan We're in compliance with CPF requirements.
Healthcare Options Clergy only	Dental Yes	Housing Equity Allowance in budget	Annual Equity Amount
Vacation Weeks 4	Vacation Weeks Details	Continuing Education Weeks 2 (standard)	Continuing Education Weeks Details
Continuing Education Funding in budget	Sabbatical Provision Yes	Travel/Auto Account Yes	Other Professional Account Yes

Health ins. is 90% of an individual plan, with fully funded deductible; 90% of an individual dental.

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Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

Picture the large cardboard bin of sweet potatoes at your grocery store around Thanksgiving time; it weighs about 1000 pounds. Now picture a semi-truck pulling into the church driveway on a beautiful autumn morning, carrying 40,000 pounds of sweet potatoes. Picture 100+ volunteers from the parish, city, and diocese showing up to unload, bag, and distribute those potatoes to dozens of local agencies. Led entirely by our lay-driven food ministry team, in partnership with the Society of St. Andrews Tennessee and Project Green Fork Memphis, our Saturday morning "Crop Drop" event rescued potatoes leftover after harvest while leveraging cross-community relationships small and large. Just in time for Thanksgiving, it provided healthy produce to those experiencing food insecurity. And, it was a lot of fun, as folks of all ages worked together to sort the spuds into 10-pound bags. Most importantly, the "Crop Drop" showed, once again, that God's spirit of abundance can expand Holy Communion's imagination and inspire us to do big things. - The Rev. Sarah Cowan, Associate Rector

How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?

The church of the future is up to us. And, Holy Communion's future is bright! Holy Communion has (and has had) strategic, forward-thinking clergy and Vestries who recognize that what "church" represents to most parishioners is worship, ministry, and fellowship. These priorities are reflected in our corporate delegation of time, talent, and treasure. We have focused on sustainability by budgeting and spending prudently, avoiding waste, investing in our endowment, and operating within our means while ensuring we have well-maintained buildings and systems. We have re-imagined our annual Stewardship campaign by employing ideas that have clearly worked for sister parishes of similar size across the nation. Recent results validate the value of this approach. We recognize that changes are happening as Baby Boomers pass their torch to Generation X and Millennials. The Vestry discusses this generational transition openly and seeks to anticipate changing ministry needs, particularly in youth and children's activities. Our commitment is to be prepared, be flexible, be good stewards, and to always thank God for all we have. -- Jack Nelson, Former Vestry Sustainability Officer

Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

Welcoming and Engaging, Community Builder and Shaper, Forward and Creative, Curious and Insightful

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Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services provided by your community.

Church of the Holy Communion's year-round Sunday services include an 8 a.m. service with the poetry of Rite I in the chapel with no music; a 10:30 a.m. Rite II Eucharist with choir (25 singers, some paid) and congregational singing; and a 5:30 p.m. Contemplative Service with quiet mediation, a lay-offered reflection, and acoustical music. The Contemplative Service originally drew exclusively from the Taizé and Celtic traditions, but has recently broadened its sources. Choral Evensong is sung quarterly in place of the Contemplative Service. Our worship style is traditional, though without incense, and accessible to people from many backgrounds and traditions. Our Choirmaster/Organist for over 20 years holds a D.S.M. degree from the Graduate Theological Foundation and diplomas in Anglican Studies and Sacred Music from Berkeley Divinity School at Yale. Full-time staff for Children and Youth integrate young people into our liturgical life and provide creative worship experiences on occasion. Dozens of trained Lectors, Acolytes, and Lay Eucharistic Ministers serve in worship. - Daniel Amsler, Former Vestry Member

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

Post-pandemic, many churches have continued their online worship options, but Holy Communion has developed an online community. Our members who worship via Facebook are a very chatty bunch! We greet one another when we arrive, exchange the Peace, and even present our financial offerings. As one of the online community leaders, I reply to various comments throughout the service, but I'm not the only one who does. Our practice of chatting live started with people wanting to feel more connected during the pandemic. First, it was the basics such as "Good morning" or "Peace." After several months, I started adding prayer requests during Prayers of the People. This encouraged others to add their own prayers. The clergy read our chats after worship and follow-up on any pastoral concerns. We love that our clergy greet us in their announcements! And our Tech Team ensures that we get to watch the choir and organist as they perform. We even get some zoom-ins of the altar flowers, readers, and whoever is preaching. By working together, we make online worship feel like an authentic liturgical experience and a community connected to each other. - Brooke Caldwell, Online Community Leader

As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

At Holy Communion, we care for our spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being through a holistic approach that nurtures every aspect of our lives. Our vibrant recreation programs offer opportunities for physical activity, fellowship, and connection not only for our members but for the wider community. Over 700 individuals participate in our programs each year. We also cover fees for those that can't afford it as an important part of our outreach. Whether it's through sports, fitness classes, or outdoor activities, we believe in the importance of maintaining a healthy body. Additionally, our long-standing partnership and support of Samaritan Counseling Center provide our clergy with a referral source for individuals in our community that need counseling. This collaboration ensures that our community receives compassionate and professional mental health care through individual, couples and family counseling as well as educational programs. What sets Holy Communion apart is our deep, visible commitment to these programs, demonstrating that we value the whole person—body, mind, and spirit—as an integral part of our worshipping community. - Sarah Cowens, Samaritan Counseling Board

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How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

Holy Communion has the opportunity for pastoral care daily with St. Mary's Episcopal School, a K-12 school for girls which shares our campus. Girls of all faith traditions gather for chapel where they often interact with our clergy. Girls in 5th - 12th grade attend chapel and hear announcements daily in our nave. Many special traditions such as the Christmas Pageant, class days, and graduations also take place in our nave. The nave is a safe and comfortable place which holds many memories for the girls upon graduation. Some non-member alumnae even choose to be married by our clergy in this sacred space. This relationship with the school sets us up to be a very close-knit community. We have an opportunity to share faith with families who don't have a community of faith. Unfortunately, St. Mary's has experienced several teacher and student deaths over the past few years. Given our close relationship, it was only natural for the church to support the school in responding to the needs of their teachers, students, and families in crisis. -- Lisa Roberts, St. Mary's Trustee

Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.

Being a large church in a small diocese creates an unusually large number of opportunities for Church of the Holy Communion's clergy to serve as leaders in the wider church and the wider community. The Rector currently serves on the Diocese of West Tennessee's Bishop and Council, as chair of the Salvation Army's advisory board for Memphis and the Mid-South, and as president of the Urban Suburban Clergy Conference, a gathering of rectors of large Episcopal congregations. He recently concluded a term on the Church Pension Group's churchwide client council and on a task force that the General Convention appointed to review the Denominational Health Plan. The Senior Associate Rector chairs the Diocese of West Tennessee's Commission on Ministry and was elected as a Deputy to the General Convention. The Associate Rector serves on the Standing Committee. Our next associate rector will have many opportunities to be involved in the wider community and the wider church. -- The Reverend Sandy Webb, Rector

Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?

Church of the Holy Communion's response to community hunger began with a monthly commitment to support another congregation's feeding ministry. (We made this commitment in 2001 and it continues.) In 2020, our food ministry evolved and expanded to address Memphis' food deserts. We began working with other organizations to help our hungry neighbors while also eliminating food waste. In 2021, we began "gleaning" unsellable produce from local farmers markets and turning it into nutritious meals. In 2022, we started receiving unused food from local caterers, restaurants, and the cafeteria at a nearby college. We currently receive and repackage more than 1,800 pounds of food each month and send out more than 800 meals each week to our community partners. The success of this outreach ministry is attributed to the many volunteers, Holy Communion's parishioners and friends, who have rolled up their sleeves to serve our neighbors in need. -- Barb Boucher, Food Ministry Leader

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What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

Church of the Holy Communion's parishioners are very generous. They are also business-minded and expect a high degree of transparency regarding current and future financial needs and hopes, as well as progress toward monetary and participation goals. Stewardship efforts are lay-led with active support from the vestry, the Rector, and the parish staff. We focus on improving our participation rate, pledging versus ad hoc giving, and growing your pledge over time rather than tithing as the only standard. Current technology supports the campaign. Each potential donor is contacted through a variety of channels: postal mail, email, phone calls, texts, in-worship presentations, formation presentations, social media, and online videos. Pledges can be made via pledge card, QR code, text, or website link. In 2024, we received national recognition for our campaign's print materials and videos. Efforts are coordinated with fundraising for capital projects or the endowment fund to avoid donor fatigue. - Liz Crowder, Former Stewardship Chair

What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

Occasional disagreement or conflict is to be expected in any organization, even a church. To my knowledge, Holy Communion has not experienced serious conflict in the past ten years. We haven't, I believe, due to a strong sense of community and mutual respect along with a commitment to giving every voice an opportunity to be heard. A good example was the design process for the renovation of the nave. First, we held many listening sessions to allow parishioners to comment on the plans. Some held and expressed very strong opinions regarding certain elements of the design. We addressed the tension of those strong opinions by letting everyone speak, doing so patiently and respectfully without pressure. We endeavored at every step to narrow differences of opinion, to encourage compromise and to emphasize that we would continue working towards a consensus that would signal to all that their thoughts and opinions mattered and were appreciated. I know that to be true since I was one of the most outspoken and held some of the strongest opinions. Consequently, I treasure Holy Communion even more. -- Mike Murphy, Former Sr. Warden

What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

Church of the Holy Communion (CHC) has navigated many changes recently, most notably a major capital campaign and renovation that coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. A more specific example of change was CHC's conversation about blessing same-sex marriages: The rector organized a series of lectures that addressed scripture, theology, liturgy, and ethics. These included good faith perspectives on both sides. There were forums for parishioners to ask questions, voice perspectives, and share feedback with the vestry. After this, the vestry voted, with no votes against, to support the clergy in offering this element of their sacramental ministry. CHC's first same-sex marriage was blessed in a joyful ceremony that was livestreamed due to pandemic-era gathering restrictions. In CHC's past, attempts to effect change without building pastoral relationships and trust and without the opportunity for non-judgmental listening have gone poorly. However, there were no negative comments or incidents after CHC's first same-sex blessing. When people know they are loved and heard, they are more willing to approach change with an open mind. - The Reverend Jonathan Chesney, Sr. Associate Rector



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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
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Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
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Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
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Church School		Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School
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Number of Teachers/Leaders for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Students for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Adults School	Number of Students for Adults School
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Day School	Number of Students for Day School	Number of Teachers for Day School	Number of Total Staff for Day School
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Worshipping Community Web site: www.holychommunion.org

Media Links:

> <https://www.ecfvp.org/blogs/author/291/sandy-webb>

Online References:

facebook.com/holychommunion

Languages Significantly Represented:

English

Provide Worship or Classes in:

References

Bishop:

The Rt. Rev. Phoebe A. Roaf

Diocesan Transition Minister

**The Rev. Canon Rob
Courtney**

901-937-4782; rcourtney@episwtn.org

Current Warden/Board Chair

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader