

St. Andrew's by the Lake Episcopal Church Profile 2023



St. Andrew's by-the-Lake Episcopal Church (2802 Minnesota Ave., Duluth, MN 55802) is located in the Park Point neighborhood of Duluth, a sandspit 'barrier island' that shelters the Duluth-Superior harbor and influencing our connection to God's creation. Our members are drawn to us from across the region – from Hawthorne, Wisconsin to Eveleth and Halstad Minnesota, as well as from throughout Duluth and the surrounding communities.

We Are a People "On The Way"

St Andrew's was established in 1902 as a community-centered mission church of the Diocese of Duluth and remains a mission within the Diocese of Minnesota. Initially meeting in member's homes, the building for the original parish hall was dragged across the harbor ice from Superior, Wisconsin, and the sanctuary began construction 1913. Following a strong tradition of educating our children, the original hall was replaced, and an education wing added in the 1990s. New stained-glass windows have been added throughout, representing faith, family, and our ties to the lake and earth. The sanctuary was updated in 2008, retaining the original warmth of our worship space while making it more accessible.

As a small parish in what was originally a poor neighborhood, St. Andrew's has seen significant changes. In the early days of many members but little money, the Women's Guild sustained the parish through funds collected from numerous small projects. When population on the Point began declining from the 1950s to the 1970s, the willing hands of young Park Point

families continued providing energetic support. Then in the 1990s and early 2000s we were further blessed with active and enthusiastic members who drew new families from outside Park Point, leading to a mini-boom in children and youth. The congregation continues to reflect the changing demographics of Park Point as it has shifted from a family-centered neighborhood to one of smaller households, snowbirds, climate refugees and tourist rentals.

We currently have 80 members made up of primarily older members, with a handful of grandchildren. While numbers of young people have decreased in the last 12 years, our commitment to Christ-centered education for all ages remains important to us. In recent years we have mourned the passing of many of our long-time parishioners, but also welcomed new members who bring fresh vitality and commitment. Our recent survey revealed one person who identified as a member of 81 years, while several have joined in just the past year.

In choosing St. Andrew's, newer members claim they were responding to a sense of expansive, non-judgmental openness, as well as a call to actively participate in sharing God's love that made them feel immediately included. As one member said, "We knew right away that we had found the right place. It felt as though we were being welcomed home."

Led by the Spirit

Sunday morning service is our foundation where, as a community, we come together to feed our spirit with the knowledge and love of God and renew strength to continue our work serving God. Our Episcopal service tradition is a relaxed and welcoming one, whether eucharist or morning prayer, with active participation by our Deacon, chalice bearers, and lay ministers. We use the Book of Common Prayer while embracing an inclusive and expansive theology by including alternative liturgies routinely throughout the year. We include and are patient with our young ones and assist our elders and those sitting around us with navigating prayer books, service leaflets and hymnals. We leave our pews during the Peace to greet and acknowledge each other, and extend our care for each other by providing a fragrance-free environment and open access to an AED and a Narcan kit. Designated a Green Episcopal Congregation in 2010, we strive to integrate environmental stewardship in our current practices and integrate our appreciation for the natural world into worship and faith formation.

During COVID we took advantage of member's technological skills to expand Sunday services via ZOOM, with an average combined attendance of 25-35 participants. We also added a weekly Zoom Compline and are committed to continuing to enhance our technology to offer both services via multiple modes. We love music, joyfully singing from the Hymnal, Gather and other sacred music that is played on organ or keyboard by our marvelous organist, or incorporating occasional guitar, bagpipes and other instruments.

Knowing, Loving, and Serving God and Neighbor

We remind ourselves of our commitment to service by reciting our mission statement, "*We are a people on the Way to knowing, loving, and serving God and neighbor,*" at the beginning of each Sunday service. As a small community we are intentional in our outreach efforts and have focused on supporting a few efforts well. We share our commitment to God by embracing not only those who attend weekly, but all the residents of our small Park Point community, its visitors, and

our broader community. As we are sent out, our small size allows us to be flexible and open to new ideas and initiatives, often arising directly from our members. We participate in the Diocesan *Faithful Innovations* as one of several ways to discern how we are being called to be God's hands and heart in the world. Led by our Bishop's Committee, the entire congregation is involved in discerning where God is sending us.

Financially, St. Andrew's has always had enough; and we have remained financially stable, always meeting our diocesan assessment in full. Our annual budget supports three part-time positions including a Vicar, organist, and custodian. Today parishioners continue to come up with creative ways to support the church and community projects, whether large or small. We plant beach grass and tend gardens; share meals, books and crafts; and host art exhibits and community speakers. In past significant projects we built a Habitat for Humanity house, initiated a running race that raised funds for hurricane relief, and sponsored a refugee family from Ethiopia. We are long-standing supporters of CHUM (Central Hillside United Ministries) and its many initiatives through volunteering at food shelves, packing bag lunches, and supplying provisions for its homeless shelter, as well as leasing space in our building for CHUM offices. Small in size, we nonetheless have a tradition of working together and committing to ongoing projects that positively impact our community and our world.

In recognition of our role in the community, we have recently been blessed with two large financial gifts, one of which requires only that we pay off our mortgage and tithes 10% of the funds to outreach, a requirement we willingly go beyond. One gift has already allowed us to provide financial support to "Stepping On Up - Safe Bay," providing safety for those living in their cars; "Annie's House" for homeless BIPOC mothers; "Safe Haven," a shelter for survivors of domestic abuse; "Bob Tavani Medical Respite;" and "Life House," supportive services for youth and young families. We are prayerfully examining how these gifts will continue to be used to support existing and new initiatives.

What We Hope for Our Vicar

In seeking a Vicar to join us in our journey, congregants expressed a desire for attributes such as Communicator and Listener, someone who provides spiritual support through pastoral care and an inclusive, liberal theology rooted in the Episcopal tradition and thoughtful, challenging preaching. We hope for a touch of humor and guidance in deepening our scriptural study and Christian formation, active and meaningful outreach, and supportive relationships.

Going On the Way...

Our future builds on themes of love and inclusion, by actively welcoming members of the community to join us in sharing our gifts and knowledge of a loving God. We continue to explore ways to grow in faith and service, whether developing projects that protect our delicate environment, or building deeper supportive relationships with community partners; hosting community meals, discussions, and celebrations, or just providing a place of quiet respite. We pray that our new Vicar will share our vision of radical love and join us *on our way*.