

St. Edward the Confessor Episcopal Church – Wayzata

Transition Document

St. Edward the Confessor Episcopal Church (865 Ferndale Rd. N., Wayzata MN 55391) is located 15 miles west of Minneapolis at the intersection of Orono, Plymouth and Wayzata. Our members come from a wide geography -- Eden Prairie and Edina in the south, Delano and Corcoran in the west, Maple Grove in the north, Crystal and Arden Hills in the east, and communities in between.

Our story

St. Edward's was established in 1962 as a new parochial mission of St. Martin's Episcopal Church. Groundbreaking for the new church took place on July 20, 1966, and on Jan. 30, 1968, St. Edward's became an independent parish. St. Edward's has been tested over time, including changes in our status as a parish, but members have been resilient and steadfast, and the church has overcome its trials. A crucial challenge came in April 2002 when the original church building was destroyed in a fire and questions were raised about whether the church should rebuild. However, after a vote of 90 percent in favor, the church was re-built and was re-dedicated by Bishop James Jelinek in May 2005.

Today we have an older, long-time membership of 36 households. (54% are age 66 or older and 42% have attended for 21 years or more.) Our average Sunday attendance in 4Q2022 is 35 (in-person and online), and we are welcoming more visitors as we continue to emerge from pandemic restrictions and return to the community life we cherish.

At St. Edward's we strive to be a **community**, not just a group of people who come together on Sunday morning. We draw strength and courage from each other to share God's pure, unconditional love, both within the church and in the broader community. We describe ourselves as a small, friendly and welcoming church that strives to live our mission statement --"A faith community where all are welcome, all are fed, and all are loved."

We are financially stable with no mortgage and a \$100,000 endowment. We continue to pay our annual diocesan assessment in full. Although the number of pledges has declined, pledged amounts and plate contributions are up, enabling the Vestry to adopt a balanced budget without fund-raising income for 2023.

Our assets, wants and needs

Our newer building is an attractive, underutilized asset with an open design that is flexible for a variety of uses, has an abundance of natural light, and has excellent acoustics. A very special feature of the new building is a labyrinth inlaid in the floor of the worship space. Our members cite the labyrinth as a valuable asset which sets us apart from other churches in our area. We use the labyrinth to encounter God in a new way. By intentionally walking as we pray and taking time to be silent, we become more open to God. We want to invite the broader community to use the labyrinth.

We see being small as an asset. Everyone knows one another – no getting lost in the crowd! Our sense of community is that of an extended, multi-generational family, and members are eager to improve and build relationships with each other. We recognize needs to more readily include newer members in the life of the church and to extend community to members who cannot attend or may feel isolated due to health or other concerns.

We typically follow Rite II for Sunday worship but are open to other liturgies and contemporary prayers and music. We cite our music program as an asset and are blessed with an outstanding music / choir director and a choir that sounds larger than it is. Our members have expressed a desire for spiritual growth outside of Sunday worship.

Like many churches, we are challenged to get volunteers for projects and lay leadership due to time constraints or health concerns. However, recently we have been encouraged by those volunteering for the first time to serve on Vestry and standing committees, such as Buildings & Grounds and a new Faith Formation Committee.

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Our vision for future ministries

1. Enrich church family life by sharing God's pure, unconditional love

"Friends/sense of community" was the most cited reason for attending St. Edward's. Frequent mentions of time to gather - especially with food! - convey that our members value social time. In the past we enjoyed events that all ages could participate in, such as making Advent wreaths and service projects before or after church. We see St. Edward's as an extension of Christ's family and want to resume social and multi-generational events.

We want to do more to make new members feel they are "part of the family." In addition to re-starting our welcoming committee, it was suggested we try a "buddy system" to pair a long-time member and a new member so there is a friendly contact. Our newer members tell us that a barrier to volunteering is knowing what is expected and who to contact. We have begun to address these needs but can do more.

We want to renew our in-reach ministry to those unable to join us in person. In the past volunteers sent cards "from your St. Edward's family", took meals to those experiencing a challenge and provided rides to those unable to drive.

2. Nurture individual spiritual growth and invite the Holy Spirit to bring us closer to the God of love

Both newer and long-time members expressed a desire for more religious study to be done together and individually. There is interest in learning more about contemplative prayer and services, such as Taize, and to incorporate the labyrinth in our individual prayer lives.

Our members have expressed a desire to know more about the Episcopal Church and its traditions. There is also interest in a fresh look at the basics ("Prayer Book 101") for everyone.

Although we have only a few children today, we see a need to plan for the future. Initially we may plan something for one Sunday a month. The 2023 budget includes some funds for Sunday School, which one member said "shows intent."

3. Renew and focus community involvement and outreach to show God's love to the broader community

St. Edward's continues to be committed to addressing food insecurity. Historically our efforts have supported Interfaith Outreach and Community Partners initiatives. Suggestions were made to extend this outreach through use of our building and /or partnering with a school.

Before the pandemic St. Edward's was an active partner in West Metro interfaith services and informational meetings. Our members are interested in resuming those collaborations with other Christian and non-Christian faith communities.

Today we rent office space to Episcopal Group Homes and host Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and we see potential to use the building to meet overlooked needs in the community, especially with those who are disenfranchised, such as homeless youth, LGBTQIA, and people of color. We want to do more to welcome diversity.

Our next priest

St. Edward's seeks a 20 hours / week priest-in-charge with gifts in our areas for future ministry to both lead us and partner with us as we seek to understand God's vision for us. Our new priest would be someone who recognizes that direction as well as delegation is crucial to ensure needs are met within the church and the community. The ideal candidate is someone who has excellent skills in communication, sermons and pastoral care, and who welcomes diversity. Priorities for the new priest in partnership with lay leadership are worship, pastoral care, community involvement and religious education.