



Holy Cross Episcopal Church

Of Castro Valley & Hayward

**You've got questions...We've got questions!
Let's go on a journey together...**



Parish Profile 2024

Holy Cross Episcopal Church
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What We Seek in a Rector

At Holy Cross our most cherished value is our commitment to having our church open to everyone without exception and making them feel welcome. For that reason, first and foremost our new rector must be committed to that value. We are a close-knit family of parishioners with diverse stories and backgrounds. Being pastoral is another important quality to our community of worshippers. Because we care so much for each other, our rector must be someone who knows us individually and is willing to care for us spiritually and emotionally.



We are looking for someone with strong leadership skills overall. This means that they should be able to help the congregation move into the future and support those with any misgivings. Our rector should also be able to stand up for our values within the community, and lead us in our existing, as well as new, outreach opportunities. Though we have very little conflict within our congregation, a good leader can manage any that arise and help facilitate congregants working collaboratively. As a skillful administrator, our new rector will continue our efforts to manage our finances successfully and hopefully keep us running “in the black” as we have historically.



We are a congregation of intelligent, thoughtful and deeply spiritual people who appreciate a sermon that will make us think: it should help us to understand the context of the Bible as well as inspire us to follow the example of Christ. Our parishioners are strongly involved in lay ministry, and we would expect our new rector to be able to work with us collaboratively. Being part of our activities and programs either by leading them or taking part in them is expected of our new rector as we are a community.

There are three events that very much help to define who we are: Holy Week, Vacation Bible School and the annual Women’s Retreat. We are devoted to our Holy Week tradition, which includes an entire week of services, and we would expect our new rector to honor this tradition.

Diversity of all sorts is encouraged and respected. An expectation of diversity, practiced in a Christian context, has made us a vibrant family, extending our love for each other across generations, gender, race, sexual orientation, and physical or mental ability.

Holy Cross parishioners care about serving God and each other. It's important to us that our church runs smoothly - everyone is willing to step up and assist wherever needed - whether that's worship services, receptions, finances, operations and maintaining the facility. When asked which aspects of Holy Cross are most important, members' most popular responses were worship and liturgy, community and support from other parishioners, preaching, music, and outreach.

Around half of our members have been attending for more than 10 years, and more than 25% have been attending for five years or less - ensuring a good balance of institutional knowledge and new perspectives.

Parish Programs

Put simply, we are a church that loves to get together to learn, laugh, and especially to eat. We have programs for all ages and stages running year-round, mostly lay-led and lay-driven.

Preparations for VBS start a year ahead of time, when we choose a theme and begin work on planning crafts and creating decorations. Past themes have included Harry Potter, Dr. Seuss, Toy Story, and Zootopia, and this year we will be doing Superheroes. Adults and teens work hard to create an immersive experience through songs, visuals, snacks, and art projects that illuminate the connections between our theme and the lessons of scripture and Christian living. Attendance varies between 40 and 100 campers (we're still recovering from the COVID drop) from the whole Castro Valley and Hayward community, as we have developed a reputation in

the area as an outstanding summer experience.



Our Women's Retreat is held each year in January at San Damiano Franciscan Retreat Center in Danville. From Friday evening until Sunday lunch, a group of 35-40 women from Holy Cross and beyond gather to share our life experiences along the age spectrum. We rest, make crafts, sing, eat chocolate, worship, and challenge ourselves and each

other to grow in faith and into a closer relationship with God and each other. After over a decade of inspired leadership by our Associate Rector, who originated the retreat and its format, in 2024 the retreat was led by a team of clergy and lay women with the same energy and enthusiasm that has always made this a “can’t miss” event for women in our parish.

Beyond these yearly events, we offer weekly, monthly, seasonal programs for all ages. For our youngest members, we have Godly Play and Youth Talk and Donuts on Sundays. Throughout the year, we have youth outings, Trunk or Treat and Easter egg hunts, Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner, Movie Nights, Sandwich board, Ceilidh, Art Show, Lenten bread baking, and other kid and family activities. At the seasoned end of the age range, we have monthly gatherings of Aging Gracefully (educational and informational), senior outings, and On Our Own (a dinner for unpartnered members).

We also offer weekly and monthly book groups, fall and Lenten adult education programs, a monthly potluck where we gather to discuss a range of questions from the silly to the sacred, and occasional one-off gatherings to go over the voter’s pamphlet at election time or to celebrate milestones in the life of our community.

Almost every one of these programs is lay-led, so we aren’t seeking a rector who will be in charge of this large portfolio of activities, but rather a rector who will participate in, engage with, sometimes lead, always support, and actively promote these groups, and once in a while help us wind down a program that is no longer serving us.

Finances

We are a financially healthy congregation: our annual budget is around \$340,000, and we have ended the last several years “in the black”. Our parishioners are quite generous - in 2023 we collected \$298,000 in pledge income. We also receive about \$25,000 in income per year from two cell phone towers.

Holy Cross is also blessed with a small, relatively new endowment fund, the purpose of which is to care for our property and facilities. Any time an unexpected expense arises, our congregation doesn’t think twice about meeting the need - recent examples include funding a new commercial dishwasher, and the re-paving of our parking lot.

Here is an excerpt from our Annual Report by our Rector’s Warden and Bookkeeper:

Our income budget is based primarily on what our members say that they will give to Holy Cross, as well as payments made for the two cell phone towers. The expense budget is based on personnel costs (salary and benefits), predictions from previous years expenses for known bills (e.g. trash pick up, gas, electricity, water, sewer), and

costs of programming that the community has indicated that it wants. The discrepancy between income and expenses has, for years, resulted in a budget that is seriously in the red. Each month (save January) our financial reports show income ahead of budget and expenses close to budget. One conclusion is that the finance team is pretty good at analysis and prediction and our congregation is much more generous than they are willing to admit to. Hence, for over a decade we have turned these embarrassing January budgets into December money for reserves. We are gratified by the generosity of our congregation and puzzled by their reticence.

[Holy Cross Annual Report 2023-2024](#)

History

Our history in Hayward and Castro Valley goes back 130 years. In 1871, the Rev. Edward Warren ministered occasionally in Hayward. By 1886, it was organized as Trinity Mission by Rev. Hamilton Lee. The first service at Trinity Church was held in downtown Hayward on October 31, 1886.

In 1977, Trinity's world turned upside down. The current rector called a special meeting of members to "repudiate those divisive actions of the 65th General Convention of the Episcopal Church" and to propose that Trinity disassociate itself from the Diocese. On April 2nd the rector and vestry voted to begin the process of separation.

Under the leadership of Bishop William Swing, on April 10th 1983, Holy Cross Episcopal Church was formed, and after a final service was held at old Redwood Church in Hayward, 200-people strong marched the two miles to their new home at Independent School in Castro Valley. A building fund was started. And in 1985 Holy Cross purchased an empty lot at Center and Heyer Streets and began plans for a new sanctuary. Bishop Swing consecrated the sanctuary on September 11, 1988.

<https://holycrosscv.org/weare/>

Demographics

[U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Castro Valley CDP, California](#)

[Census Bureau Profiles Results](#)

[Some of our best stories are told in numbers. Dive deeper to get the full rundown on Hayward, from our unparalleled diversity statistics to our amount of open space and parkland.](#)

[U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Hayward, CA](#)

Looking Forward

On the minds of parishes everywhere is the declining population of churches, so it goes without saying that we are always looking to grow our church and have it reflect the wide diversity of our local community. With so much pain and unrest in the world, churches are important institutions that can meet the needs not just of individuals but also whole communities. Therefore outreach must be a critical piece of the future of Holy Cross so that we can help to fill a need for the wellbeing of our local and global communities.

One ministry that we would like to continue to develop is our outreach to those people who are unhoused or vulnerable to food insecurity. We also have a history of working with seniors and local retirement or memory-care facilities, and we would like to further explore opportunities to meet the needs of our seniors. Our commitment to providing care and education for our children and youth is one of our highest priorities. Our next rector should be ready and willing to help us to attract families and support the children in our care. This includes not only providing Sunday school or nursery care but real opportunities for children and youth to take up important roles in worship services.

Adult education is and should continue to be a critical service that our church offers. This may include Bible study, church history or any number of topics that also utilize the many talents and gifts of our congregation.

We appreciate tradition; however, we are willing to consider new ways of worshiping and working together. For example, Rite I is enjoyed by many at our early service, but our Prayers of the People are written by church members. Again, in order to meet a wider audience, we must consider those practices that we take part in “because we’ve always done it that way” and ask whether they are serving our goals. Yet we must also appreciate our Episcopal traditions.

The Parish Cat



In 2014, a rescue cat named Ted joined the Holy Cross community. Ted mostly resides in the conference room, where he has his own mini loft apartment, but he has the run of the campus during the day. He often joins us for worship, sauntering through the pews soliciting head scratches, and napping on the soft chairs in the back of the sanctuary. He is one of our best evangelists, engaging with children and adults, and embodying our “come as you are” approach to our shared life. He is also the source of considerable humor, as we have been forced to devise methods to keep him out of coffee hour snacks, and he recently ate part of our Epiphany token sign-up sheet.

Ted is a senior cat and has some ongoing medical needs, and he is fed and cared for by a dedicated team of volunteers who answer his howls for dinner and make sure he is tucked inside safely at night.