

Parish Profile
St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church
Pittsboro, North Carolina
www.saint-barts.org

This parish profile attempts to represent the scope and depth of Saint Bartholomew's Parish. We pray that this search process will result in the hiring of a full-time priest whose spiritual vision will enrich and expand what we have built at St. Bart's. We seek a priest who desires to be among us, to minister and bless us in the Holy Eucharist, and to share in our joys, sorrows, and struggles as faithful believers, to the glory of God and for the blessing of this parish and community.

Who Are We?

“St. Bartholomew’s - The Little Church that Could!”

St. Bart's is a church with a 200-year history that we are building upon and that propels us forward. We are located in a rapidly growing area adjacent to the “Triangle” and we actively seek opportunities to serve our community. We have a strong reputation as a “feeding” community; we have served a Community Lunch every Thursday for 14 years, currently feeding an average of 150+ people each week. Since the pandemic prevented our serving indoor sit-down meals, Community Lunch is now a drive through service, and allows us to serve even more people.

In August of 2021, we initiated a new ecumenical initiative as the leading partner in the Chatham Chuckwagon, a collaboration between local churches and commercial enterprises. The Chuckwagon prepares and cooks food, bags and freezes it, and distributes it on a weekly drive by basis. The Chuckwagon distributes an average of 240 meals per week. Last year the number of meals served by the two ministries combined was 19,918; the total for 2022 is anticipated to be between twenty-five and twenty-eight thousand!

St. Bart's was also there at the inception of CORA, the county-wide food pantry, and Chatham Habitat for Humanity in the 1980s. St. Bart's has played an important role in the formation of each of these initiatives. We will continue to be active in all these ministries.

Our History: St. Bartholomew's and St. James

St. Bartholomew's Parish was formed in 1831 by a group from the port of Wilmington, North Carolina who had settled in Pittsboro as long ago as the 1790s. The cornerstone for St Bartholomew's Church was laid in 1832, and Bishop Ives consecrated the sanctuary, in which we still worship. Our first parishioners consisted primarily of these

families and the African-Americans who served them as slaves. After the Civil War, the Vestry voted to establish a separate mission for "the colored people in Pittsboro," and St. James Mission was activated in 1883.

This congregation of African-American Episcopalians existed until 1968 when Bishop Penick deconsecrated the church due to its dwindling membership over time. Many of the families who attended St. James joined St. Bartholomew's Parish in 1968. Together we have gone forward as a unified congregation and continue to dig into the complexities of this historical relationship. Although St. James' parish building no longer exists, St. Bartholomew's takes ongoing responsibility for the maintenance of St. James' graveyard, and for preserving its history in our living memories.

Today, we intentionally practice welcoming all who wish to join with us in seeking God's will for our lives.

Building and Facilities

St. Bart's takes great pride in our beautiful and historic church building. Built in 1831, it was this church which enabled the town of Pittsboro to incorporate, since a church was required before incorporation. Our sanctuary includes beautiful original stained glass windows and chandeliers. The Parish Hall was added in 1955, and was completely remodeled in 2019. In 2021, a beautiful outdoor worship area called Celebration Hill was added, and is expected to provide a space for weddings and other celebrations, as well as outdoor worship services. Our historic cemetery is a notable feature. The children's playground has also been renovated recently, and provides a safe and inviting place for children to play.

Mission and Vision

Our Vision Statement: At St. Bartholomew's, we are called to be a joyous community of followers of Jesus Christ, committed to the love, care, support, and nurture of all God's creation.

Our Mission Statement: Our mission is to use the gifts, talents, and interests of the St. Bartholomew's community of faith to nurture one another in worship and praise of God, to serve the community of need with the loving care of Jesus Christ, and to witness to the spiritual presence of the Holy Spirit by living the Good News of the Gospel.

Objectives and Goals for St. Bartholomew's Church

I. Love God More and Grow in Faith

- Actively involve children and young people in all aspects of the life of the church.
- Make worship increasingly spiritually alive through preaching, prayer, and music.

- Explore, identify, and deploy spiritual gifts in the congregation and wider community.
2. Continue to Develop an Inclusive, Welcoming, and Active Faith Community
- Support and deepen our culture of welcoming new members.
 - Widen mission to the community by engaging all members in the scope of outreach ministries, according to the gifts of each.
3. Teach and Nurture a Community of Disciples of Christ
- Teach stewardship as a spiritual discipline that provide opportunities for discipleship and the development of faith.
 - Continue to offer leadership training for different church ministries.
 - Maintain and further develop lay ministries for pastoral care.
 - Involve and encourage all, no matter where they are on their faith journey.

Our Search Process

In the winter of 2021, following Fr. Mundia's announcement of his intention to retire at the end of January 2022, St. Bartholomew's began the search process for a new rector. Canon Catherine Massey provided guidance and pastoral leadership and, after an interview process with the vestry and the approval of Canon Massey and Bishop Rodman, we called Rev. Susan Keedy as interim rector on a three quarter time basis.

Since Father Mundia's retirement, we have been well served by the Rev. Susan Keedy. Under her leadership, the parish has continued to experience significant spiritual growth and a concurrent renewal of congregational commitment. After the difficulties caused by the pandemic and quarantine, the parish is maintaining slow but steady growth, administrative and financial clarity, renewed enthusiasm for outreach through the community lunch and other programs, and a new dimension of ecumenical engagement with the Pittsboro and Chatham County churches, several of which have joined with us in the ecumenical Chatham Chuckwagon.

We seek a priest who will be committed to:

Implementing Our Draft Strategic Plan

- This includes three main goals:
 - A fiscal plan to stabilize and transition to a more solid fiscal footing;
 - A communications plan to promote and attract both current and new parishioners;
 - A plan to restore and refresh activities post the COVID-19 vaccine.

Outreach into the Community

- St. Bartholomew's considers community outreach to be "our most important product". We are proud to be known as a "feeding church", and will continue to "feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick, welcome the stranger, and visit the prisoner."

In-reach and Welcome

- We at St. Bart's value our history as a welcoming and open-hearted church, some even saying that coming to St. Bartholomew's feels like "coming home." Parishioners have a sense of belonging, understanding, fellowship, support (including in illness and bereavement), friendship, and hospitality, even intimacy and caring.
- St. Bartholomew's values the inclusiveness of its congregation. One member loves "seeing the active involvement of people of color in this Southern congregation," and many look forward to an even more "racially and culturally diverse congregation." Diversity is valued, not just as black and white, but also in terms of sexual orientation, rich and poor, different physical and mental abilities, different interests, and different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Truly, all are welcome!

Supporting our Ministries

- Parishioners in our small church find a wide range of ministries suitable to their gifts and interests: serving on the vestry; assisting in worship as lectors, lay Eucharistic ministers, choir members, ushers, and altar guild; serving on various outreach ministries, particularly the community lunches, the Chatham Chuckwagon, children's and young people's ministries, as well as adult Christian formation; and maintaining our buildings and grounds, including our cemetery and our community garden.
- Our parishioners have also been involved with prison ministries, and with Cursillo weekends. Parishioners also serve by offering hospitality (managing the Sunday coffee hour and organizing our parish meals), by serving on a care team to call on newcomers or attending to the needs of those homebound or bereaved, and by lending a hand in the church office, in church finance, and other areas of church administration.

Expanding Children and Youth Involvement

- At St. Bartholomew's, we seek to be an open door to Christ for children and youth in our community. One of our primary goals is to increase the number of children and young people in our congregation by building on and expanding our current programs for children and young people.

Supporting Lay Eucharistic Ministry

- Worship is central to the St. Bart's community, and members of the lay eucharistic ministry (LEM) team view their service as personally fulfilling and rewarding in their faith journeys. At each of the two Sunday worship services, a LEM assists the celebrant at the altar. The team (8-10 people) are faithful volunteers, trained by the rector and licensed by the Diocese. LEMs may also take communion to homebound church members.

Supporting Men's and Women's Ministries

- Meeting monthly we have two women's groups and one men's group. All provide fellowship and support for St. Bart's activities. The Episcopal Church Women provide hospitality for such as Bishop's receptions, congregational celebrations, and funeral and wedding receptions. The ECW also raises funds and participates in programs that involve community needs such as the Community Lunch. Our Mary and Martha of Bethany chapter of Daughters of the King engage in book studies, maintain a prayer list, and work on projects in conjunction with the ECW. All three groups assist the rector whenever requested.
- We also have Adult Bible study which has been a treasure at St. Bartholomew's, with great materials and thinkers who study the Bible in an open-minded manner.

Conclusion

St. Bart's strength lies in its ability to create and nurture an open, diverse, and welcoming community that values and channels the unique gifts of its parishioners to serve the wider community of Chatham County. Without our valuing the talents and dedication of many, St. Bartholomew's would not be the strong Spirit-filled church that it is today. We have a strong sense of relationship with one another; people often reflect on St. Bart's as a spiritual and interpersonal home.

We are called to serve a growing community. This will take courage to face change, and we believe that we have the strong foundation that will allow us to change, to develop, and to grow into what God calls us to be. It will require much work from all of us to achieve God's dream for us in this good place and we are ready for that work. We seek a new, full-time rector who will have the spiritual skills, wisdom, and energy to accompany us on this journey and beyond.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S PARISH, DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA
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The Rt. Rev. Samuel Rodman, The Bishop of North Carolina The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple., Bishop Suffragan The Rev. Susan Keedy, Interim Rector
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