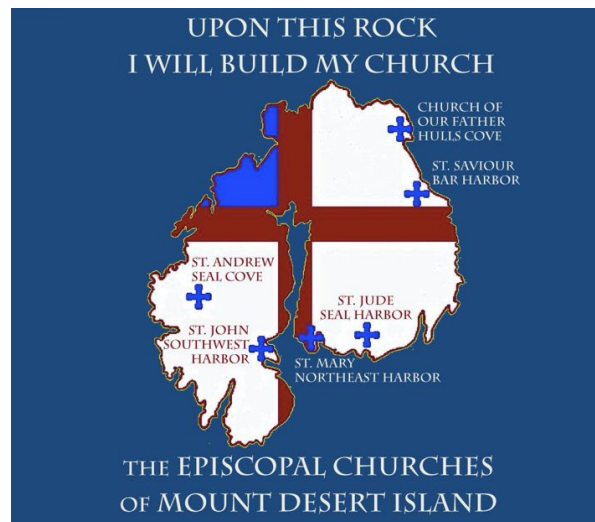


The Churches of
St. Saviour, Bar Harbor
St. Andrew and St. John, Southwest Harbor
and
Church of Our Father, Hulls Cove

seek a priest to lead them into their shared future
as centers of the Jesus Movement on the coast of Maine



For many years, the Episcopal Churches on Mount Desert Island have been drawing closer and closer together. Several of them have shared clergy, all of them have joined on regular intervals for shared worship, and increasingly they imagine a future where the Island will function as one parish with several places of worship. Now three of those congregations--St. Saviours, St. Andrew and St. John, and Church of Our Father--want to take the next step: calling a Priest in Charge who will serve and lead all three congregations, with appropriate assistance, and help them deepen their shared response to the call of Jesus Christ. (The Church of St. Mary and St. Jude, while not a participant in this call, will be very much a part of the Island context, as they discern how and whether to deepen the connections that exist between them and the other congregations.)

The Place

Mount Desert Island is many things. It is a vibrant year-around community. It is a summer playground for people from across the United States and beyond. It is a scattering of fishing

and lobstering villages, where work is hard and profits can be slim. It is Acadia National Park, with its elegant carriage roads and its dramatic rocky shoreline. It is Bar Harbor and other towns where summers can mean crowds elbow to elbow, and winters can be long and quiet. It is College of the Atlantic, a small liberal arts college with a focus on environmental stewardship, the MDI Biological Laboratory for biomedical research, and the Jackson Laboratory for Mammalian Genetics, with a staff of 1500 supporting over 200 doctoral-level researchers. It is independent artists, shopkeepers, small businesses, and tradesmen. It is at least half an hour to the nearest year round commercial center, across the bridge on the mainland. And it is a faithful body of Episcopalians (some of whom live on the mainland and worship in Island churches), who are dedicated to worshiping God and loving their neighbors, who are grateful for the legacy left them by their forebearers, and who know that in the age of the car and the internet, four substantial parishes is just too much structure for an island of 10,000 year round residents.

MDI, as those who live there call it, is a little over an hour's drive from Bangor, a lively small city with a well-connected airport. In normal, non-Covid times, there are multiple daily flights from Bangor to hubs throughout the northeast and midwest. The Bar Harbor Hancock County Airport, just over the bridge from MDI, also has daily flights to Boston, and is the landing for numerous private planes during the summer season, so while its remoteness is part of what makes MDI special, it is not actually that hard to get to and from there.

The Churches

Each of the three partnering churches has its own distinct history, charisms, and character. For that reason, each has prepared an Office of Transition Ministry Portfolio, and each has its own presence on the Web; those are the places to begin for real insight into the individual churches. But for a little bit of context, here is a snapshot overview of each:

St. Saviour's is a grand old beamed building in Bar Harbor, the principal town on the Island. It is near the center of the village and attracts tourists and sightseers in the summer. The values are progressive, worship is fairly traditional, and the congregation supports a number of outreach ministries. Music is a vital part of their ministry both choral and instrumental sometimes featuring the 1976 Visser-Rowland organ (Opus 6) Tracker organ with its three manuals, thirty-one ranks, and twenty-five stops

Church of Our Father is in the small village of Hull's Cove, which is halfway between the bridge and Bar Harbor village. The congregation has a significant history with the Cursillo movement, and is committed to a style of worship that recognizes the presence of the Spirit. The congregation support social outreach ministries locally, as well as overseas mission.

St. Andrew and St. John are on what is called "The Quietside" of Mount Desert Island. St. Andrew, in Seal Cove, is a summer chapel. St. John is right in the center of the small village of

Southwest Harbor; its connection to the village is exemplified by the fact that under normal circumstances it never locks its doors. It runs an active and well-supported food pantry.

In the past, as was true in many places, the churches were protective of the ways they were distinct from one another. But Maine is a small state, and Mount Desert is a small Island, and a number of years ago the Wardens of the several congregations decided that it was important to get to know one another. So began a series of dinners, which evolved into conversations, which in time led to an experiment in shared ministry between St. Saviour's and St. Andrew and St. John, and now has expanded to include Church of Our Father.

A note about the fourth church on the Island: The Church of St. Mary and St. Jude, in Northeast Harbor (St. Jude, in Seal Harbor, is a summer chapel) is an active collaborator in combined worship events and other Island-wide activities. St. Mary and St. Jude is currently served by a gifted Priest in Charge on an interim basis. When that priest comes to the end of his tenure, the relationship between St. Mary and St. Jude and the other churches will come to the fore again, and the Priest in Charge of the partner parishes will have the chance to offer significant leadership.

The Ministry

The three partner parishes want to call a Priest in Charge who will serve them collectively. The day to day work will be that of leading worship, preaching, teaching, offering and coordinating pastoral care, and connecting to the community. The larger purpose will be to help the parishes deepen their connection with one another, and use that deeper connection to enrich their worship, discipleship, and engagement with their communities. All three congregations are aging, and all hope to find ways to connect better with younger people in their communities.

That is a big undertaking, and there will be lots of help:

- The parishes have budgeted for and expect the Priest in Charge promptly to seek an Assisting Priest.
- There are a number of non-parochial clergy on the Island who are gifted and helpful, including priests who have long histories with the summer chapels
- The vestries and other leaders are dedicated to supporting the ministry of the clergy, as the clergy support the ministries of the congregation

Structure and Compensation

Because the three partner congregations are all separate entities, the Diocese has offered to "host" this position. The Priest in Charge will be a diocesan employee for payroll purposes; but for all other purposes will have the status and responsibilities of the Priest in Charge of each of the three partner congregations.

Compensation will be based on diocesan standard for that region of the state; figures are on the individual parish OTMs. St. Saviours, and St. Andrew and St. John, each own rectories; residence in one of those rectories could be part of the compensation package.

Might this be for you?

If this opportunity to move to a challenging, beautiful, and unique place, to help the people of God respond to and live the Gospel in a new way--if that sounds like ministry for you, then please take this as an invitation to open the conversation.

The way to do that is to send your OTM Portfolio, your resume, and a cover letter telling why you feel drawn into discernment about this possibility, to:

The Rev. Canon Michael Ambler
Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of Maine
mambler@episcopalmaine.org

It is very helpful if you (1) send each document as a pdf, and (2) send all three as attachments to a single email.

Additionally, if you would like to talk further about any aspect of this possibility, Canon Ambler would be more than happy to have a phone conversation. Just email him at the address above.