

Trinity Episcopal Church
Forest Avenue
Portland, Maine

Trinity Episcopal Church, Portland, Maine, is seeking a priest in charge following the retirement of their long-serving rector. This is a two-year position; midway through year two, if the priest and the parish so discern, the priest could be called as rector. Otherwise a rector search will take place in the latter half of the second year.

The position could be either three quarters or full time, depending on the needs and discernment of the priest and the parish.

The Parish

Trinity is a pastoral-sized congregation located about half a mile from the downtown core of Portland. It was founded in the late 19th century as a Sunday School for the children of the Deering neighborhood, and for a long time it retained some of the low-church ethos from its origins. That is no longer the case; Trinity's liturgy and theology are mainstream now. But what has not changed is a strong, active and committed laity, who hold a deep sense that Trinity is called to be present with and to serve its neighborhood.

What it specifically means to be present with and to serve the neighborhood calls for discerning inquiry and new thinking. Initially, that service found expression through children's ministries, especially Sunday School.

Over the past 25 years, Trinity has developed a strong mission of inclusivity by welcoming and embracing newcomers to Maine and a diversity of families. Trinity hosted members of the growing Sudanese community as they established their own congregation and was one of the first Episcopal churches in Maine to perform same-sex marriages. And while traditional Sunday school has changed, the youngest members of the community come together regularly on Sunday mornings to participate in mission-based work. The annual Christmas Eve pageant is a tradition that is beloved and attended by many in the broader community. Trinity Day School for infants through age five continues to thrive and the Rector maintains a seat on its board and will be expected to nurture the church's long-standing relationship with this program. A spirit of inclusivity and the desire to work towards attracting and welcoming new families will also be expected of the new rector.

There are several other churches of other denominations nearby Trinity, all of which are navigating similar change. That is a great asset; there is already a lot of collaboration, including a shared youth group among several churches, and there is room for much more.

The Work Ahead

Trinity will soon mark the retirement of its long-time rector, the Rev. Larry Weeks. Larry has been a faithful and thoughtful leader of Trinity for nearly 20 years, and he led Trinity in a number of new directions. Significantly, he worked to link Trinity with St. Peter's, Portland--a much smaller congregation with an Anglo-Catholic history, located a couple of miles from Trinity. That partnership flourished for a time, and Larry in the past few years has served as rector of both parishes. The partnership was based in large part upon sharing Larry's ministry, and St. Peter's has decided to end it with Larry's retirement.

As with any long-term rectorship, the congregation has taken on the character of the rector, and vice-versa. So, part of the work of the priest in charge will be to help Trinity learn who it is separate from its soon-to-be-former rector. What should be carried forward? What should be put down? What habits have arisen that are no longer helpful? And what new things are there to see?

In addition to the central work of pastoral care and leading worship, the priest will have the opportunity to help Trinity discern a future that is different from its past. That future will probably be more ecumenical and less churchy than the past... or maybe not. The questions are wide open, there are good people to work with, and there's the chance to take part in the work of the spirit as God does a new thing.

Support

As noted at the beginning, this call is flexible: it could be either three-quarter or full time. The reason is simple: the parish believes that the work could easily occupy a priest's full-time energy, but also thinks that if the right priest wanted to serve in a way that left time for other undertakings, that could be successful. In either case, there will be solid compensation (see the OTM Portfolio for details) and good support from the vestry and congregation.

There is also an abundance of good clergy colleagues in the Portland area, many of whom are closely connected and working towards an interdependent vision of the future church.

Portland is a thriving small city, with big-city attributes, set on the ocean with mountains and lakes nearby. Its restaurants get national press, there is a lively arts scene, two major and highly-regarded medical centers, and a well-connected small airport, which (along with good highway access and Amtrak service to Boston) makes it easy to get here and away.

If you think you might be called...

To this ministry, the way to open the conversation is with a cover letter addressed to the Wardens and Vestry of Trinity, describing what it is that draws you to this possibility. Please send that letter, along with your resume and OTM Portfolio, to the Rev. Canon Michael Ambler, Canon to the Ordinary: mambler@episcopalmaine.org.

Canon Ambler would also be delighted to arrange a phone call to talk about Trinity. Just email him at the above address if that would be helpful to you.