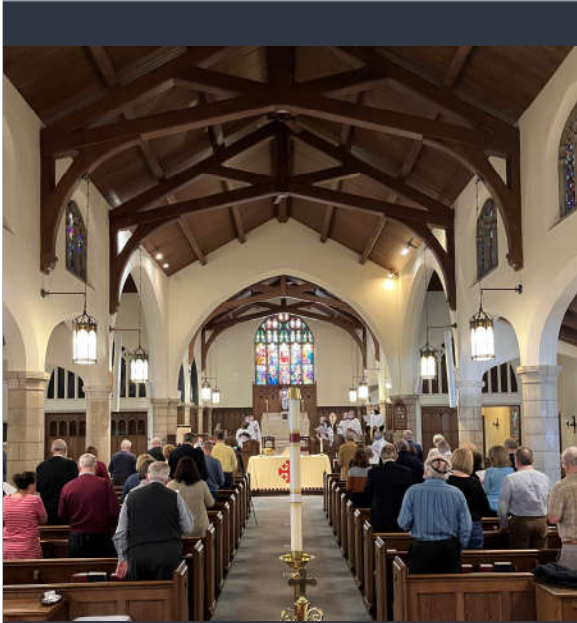


Parish Profile  
ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
July 2022





## Parish Overview

St. Peter's Episcopal Church is a vibrant, welcoming community of God. The church is located in Lakewood, Ohio, a western suburb of Cleveland situated along the southern shore of Lake Erie, and is within the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio. The mission of St. Peter's is centered around worship of God and service to others. The congregation is highly engaged in this mission, playing an active role in worship ministries, lay leadership, including vestry, pastoral care, adult formation, youth ministry, fellowship, and outreach to the community and wider world.

The parish consists of approximately 396 members from 204 households drawn from a number of communities in the Cleveland area and representing a range of ages and different backgrounds. The church completed a successful capital campaign in 2020, which led to the construction of a new building containing a chapel, administrative offices, and a childcare center, which is affiliated with the church but exists as a separate entity. St. Peter's Childcare Center holds the highest rating in the State of Ohio.

In 2022, the St. Peter's Vestry set three goals: (1) engage and revitalize current membership; (2) expand the visibility of St. Peter's in the greater westside Cleveland neighborhoods; and (3) welcome the church's neighborhood onto the church's physical campus.

These goals, which were set to chart a bold path forward coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, encompass both revitalization and reinvention. While the parish recognizes that things will not be the same as they were prior to the

pandemic, the parish also has a strong tradition and foundation on which to build. To the extent that essential, life-giving activities or practices were interrupted or put on hold during the pandemic, such activities and practices merit revitalization rather than simply being permanently changed or stopped.

Examples include the music ministry and children's worship, both of which changed drastically during the pandemic but remain essential to the life and worship of St. Peter's. Both are now emerging and finding new life through creativity and new leadership. St. Peter's also plans to actively engage the wider community through participation in the Lakewood Arts Festival, continuation of the Community Meal, which is an outreach ministry, and opening its doors to community organizations including Alcoholics Anonymous and the North Shore Men's Chorus.

St. Peter's is searching for a rector following the retirement of its prior rector after 17 years of service to the church. The parish has completed a three part discernment process, which confirmed the following priorities for the parish: (1) a rector who serves as the central figure in pastoral care, communication, and welcoming new members; (2) the importance of liturgy to the life of the parish, including music and altar service; (3) the importance of outreach and service to the community and wider world; and (4) the continued commitment to a vibrant youth ministry.



## **MINISTRIES**

Ministry, both within the parish and in the community, is the lifeblood of St. Peter's Parish. Participation in ministry is high and engagement is strong.

### **Music Ministry**

Music, an important part of St. Peter's for over 70 years, provides the heart and soul of its worship experience. The choir, made up of a small, highly committed group of talented volunteers and professionals, supports the congregation in psalmody, service music, and hymn singing. They also provide uplifting and diverse musical offerings during communion and offertory, ranging from early music to modern. Music is an essential and special part of feast days and seasons, including Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter. Special musical events as part of worship in the past have featured Jazz, instrumentalists, and soloists.



### **Acolyte Service, Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers**

St. Peter's has a strong tradition of liturgical ministers, including acolytes, lectors, eucharistic ministers, and ushers. Acolytes consist of youth and adult volunteers who participate in altar service, including service to the celebrant and congregation during the service. Acolytes carry the cross during the processions, light candles, assist during the gospel reading, and provide support during the distribution of communion. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the parish maintained a strong group of volunteers who were consistently trained and scheduled for service on a regular basis. The church is in the process of rebuilding this group as the pandemic has waned.

Similar to acolytes, a committed group of lectors and chalcers, who assist in distribution of communion, and ushers support weekly worship services. All groups enjoy broad participation and can be counted on to ensure that liturgies are well supported on a regular basis.

St. Peter's counts among its members two retired clergy who graciously serve in a pinch when called upon. St. Peter's also has a licensed Lay Preacher

and embraces this ministry, which provides the opportunity for the congregation to have another perspective, recognizing we all have spiritual lives and perhaps a new message to share.

### **Chancel Guild**

The Chancel Guild is a dedicated group of approximately 22 parishioners who work in teams to ensure a seamless worship experience for both celebrant and parishioners. These individuals truly treat this as a ministry of service, and take their role seriously, preparing the sanctuary for worship services of all kinds.

The team's work includes changing vestments and altar linens based on the season and event, polishing silver and brass, washing and pressing linens, hangings and



vestments, setting up and cleaning up vessels for the elements, counting wafers and measuring wine for the Eucharist, filling candles with oil, placing flowers, healing oil, service leaflets, and collection plates out for two services each Sunday as well as all holy holidays, funerals, baptisms and weddings, cleaning the sanctuary, setting the hymn-board settings, and more.

Members carry out their work with joy and aplomb, and seek nothing in return. For some, it has become a source of spiritual nourishment, and a place to share, often in silence, a sense of fulfillment in serving the church. For all, it is an opportunity to be in community with others who enjoy quietly serving behind the scenes.

### **Parish Vergers**

St. Peter's has two volunteer vergers who faithfully ensure that the Sunday morning celebration team is prepared for service. The Vergers ensure that all lay participants, including acolytes, chalice bearers, lay readers, bell ringers, and ushers are present or where needed and substitutes are secured before the start of the 10:00 a.m. service.

## Outreach

For 15 years, St. Peter's has engaged in the practice of regular giving through Outreach Partner of the Month. This ministry involves learning about a charitable organization that a parishioner either uses or serves, including that organization in the parish's prayers, and donating to that organization through the parish's weekly "loose plate" collections and designated offerings. Regular outreach partners have included the Bishop's Annual Appeal, the parish Community Meal, Episcopal Relief and Development, Lakewood Community Service Center, and new organizations that are introduced each year. Before the pandemic, it was not uncommon for these monthly donations to be between one to three thousand dollars.

## Community Meal

The Community Meal program has been an ongoing ministry for 32 years. The parish's first monthly meal was served in September 1989, where the parish served chicken noodle casserole to 120 people. Since that time the number of guests has been closer to 90-100. During the pandemic, the community meal continued, serving approximately 50 meals per month "to go" in the form of a brown bag, curbside delivered meal. Desserts are homemade by parishioners.

## Children and Youth Ministry

Children's and Youth Ministry is a significant part of parish life at St. Peter's. As with other ministries, the Children's and Youth Ministry was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, but with the reduction in Covid restrictions, the parish is re-establishing this ministry.

A new space for small children has been opened in the sanctuary, where, with the supervision of adults, young children engage in quiet activities and receive a special message from the rector at the beginning of her sermon. The teen group has also restarted, consisting of meetings guided by adult volunteers during the first half of Sunday eucharist.



Prior to the pandemic, the younger children would meet before Sunday services for "family time," where a parent or other volunteer would facilitate an activity. The children really bonded over family crafts, games, and other activities before services. These were followed by Sunday school lessons led by volunteers. Other activities include the annual Christmas pageant and a family campout at [Bellwether Farms](#). The children have always been included in special moments in services as well with glow sticks during the candlelight Christmas Eve service and an open invitation to sit up front for baptisms.



The teens and pre-teens address more complex themes in their discussion groups. Volunteer work has been the cornerstone of this group, including mission trips (both in Cleveland and out-of-state), the annual (and very chilly) homeless sleepout in January, assisting with church-wide events, and supporting community meals. An annual fundraiser for the group was a plant sale. As with the younger children, we are working to re-establish this group, which enjoyed many years of regular Sunday evening youth group meetings, followed by several years of active Sunday school discussions paired with a variety of other weekend events, including ski club for a few years.

Events that included the whole family, such as picnics in local parks, sap harvesting and other time spent at Bellwether Farm, intergenerational activities during Lent and Advent, and parish breakfasts, have been integral to the community feel of St. Peter's.





### **Adult Formation**

Weekly Bible study has been a staple of adult formation at St. Peter's for years, with two groups actively meeting each week. Rectors have led adult formation sessions focused on specific topics on a periodic basis over the years, typically held between the two Sunday morning services. In addition, the parish has offered "quiet days" and retreats over the years, typically during Advent and Lent.

### **Fellowship**

St. Peter's offers a wide range of fellowship activities. Coffee hour and lemonade on the lawn after church have always been a staple. Several times throughout the year a series of meetings called "Explore and Connect" are held, which allow potential and/or new parishioners to meet with church leadership and other members to learn about St. Peter's.

Foyer groups were active for years, encouraging small, rotating groups of members to gather for meals at each other's homes or local restaurants. Parish breakfasts were a monthly occurrence, spearheaded by a different group each month (e.g. vestry, St. Cecilia's guild, youth group, office staff, etc.) and enjoyed by many. A yearly outdoor service and parish picnic at Lakewood Park included corn hole tournaments, games for kids, and unending burgers and hot dogs. Even events such as parish clean-up create opportunities for visiting and sharing a box of donuts.

### **St. Cecilia Guild**

The St. Cecilia Guild meets monthly for lunch and discussion in the new chapel with box lunches provided. Traditionally, the Guild has had monthly meetings at various museums, churches, concerts, or other outings. For the first time in two years, the spring luncheon will be held at the Cleveland Yacht Club. The group is seeking to expand to newly retired people and others available during the daytime.

### **Stewardship**

The St. Peter's Generosity Team (Stewardship) is composed of seven members who plan and execute the annual stewardship campaign. In the past several years, the Generosity Team has transformed the concept of stewardship into a year-round ministry focused on fellowship and spiritual growth to help the congregation explore the wonders of God's gifts.

The Generosity team uses "Seasons of Stewardship, Seasons of Love" as its overarching theme. The team develops a calendar of events and activities that help the congregation explore God's gifts through the seasons of Enjoy (Advent,) Plant (Easter), Nurture (Ordinary Time), and Harvest (Stewardship Campaign).

The Fall 2021 pledge event, "Harvesting Our Future Together," focused on St. Peter's journey of preparing parishioners' hearts and minds for the search for a new rector by examining five topics to help with the journey:

It's about Communication - "What is important to you at St. Peter's?"

It's about Involvement - "What are you willing to do?"

It's about renewing our commitment to each other, to our Church, and to God - "We are All in This Together!"

It's about strengthening our community - "How can we help each other?"

It's about Appreciation - "Love, Gratitude and Generosity in all ways!"

### **Pastoral Care**

Ministry to the congregation occurs through weekly prayer requests and a daily parish prayer rota, published monthly in the Fisherman's Net, the parish's monthly newsletter. In addition, St. Peter's has had an active Pastoral Partner group, consisting of individuals who have responsibility for a monthly contact with their assigned partners. This ministry began in 2011, and still continues, although not as robustly. Another "in reach" program, not currently formally operating, is Martha's Table. This group would prepare a meal or more, for individuals or families who were undergoing some stressor, such as birth, sickness, or bereavement. This type of ministry continues to take place at St. Peter's, but on an informal basis and through such vehicles as Meal Train. St. Peter's is a parish with a joyful, generous heart.

### **Weekly video broadcast**

Beginning during the Covid-19 pandemic, St. Peter's, like many churches, began broadcasting Sunday services on YouTube. This service continues, with links provided on the parish website and the weekly "*What's Happening*" email to all parishioners. The Sunday service leaflet is also posted online so that those attending services virtually can participate.

## Community overview



Lakewood, Ohio, established in 1889, is one of Cleveland's historic "streetcar suburbs" with easy access to downtown Cleveland. The population was 50,942 as of the 2020 US Census, making it the third largest city in Cuyahoga County. Lakewood is home to a young and diverse population, including a significant number of immigrants.

Lakewood is the most densely populated city in Ohio. Sitting at between six and seven square miles, it is also ranked as the most walkable community in the state of Ohio. Neighborhood schools are connected by 180 miles of sidewalk, which allow the community to be bus free. Lakewood has received recognition as one of "Ohio's Best Hometowns" (*Ohio Magazine*), "Best Suburb" (*Scene Magazine*), "Coolest Suburb Worth a Visit" (*Travel + Leisure Magazine*), "Best Place to Raise Your Kids in Ohio" (*Business Week*), one of the "Best Places for Families with Kids to Buy an Old House" (*This Old House*), and one of the best and affordable neighborhoods to live in by Thrillist ([www.thrillist.com/lifestyle/nation/best-suburban-neighborhoods-us](http://www.thrillist.com/lifestyle/nation/best-suburban-neighborhoods-us)).

Lakewood's commitment to cleaner living is illustrated by the addition of electric charging stations throughout the city, as well as an ever-increasing tree canopy and a Bike Master Plan. Known as the crown jewel of Lakewood, Lakewood Park is a

31-acre greenspace that includes the Solstice Steps and a wonderful view of Cleveland, along with indoor and outdoor picnic spaces, a large playground and a public pool. Additionally, Lakewood boasts a bustling downtown, complete with locally owned restaurants, boutiques and a nationally ranked public library.

### Greater Cleveland

Cleveland is the center of one of the most populous urban areas in the country, anchoring the Greater Cleveland Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and the Cleveland Akron Canton Combined Statistical Area (CSA). The CSA is the most populous combined statistical area in Ohio and the 17th largest in the United States, with a population of 3,633,962 in 2020. The city proper, with a 2020 population of 372,624, ranks as the 54th-largest city in the U.S., as a larger portion of the metropolitan population lives outside the central city. The seven-county metropolitan Cleveland economy, which includes Akron, is the largest in the state.

Cleveland boasts a variety of neighborhoods within easy commuting distance of Lakewood, including West Park, Detroit Shoreway, and Ohio City. All are vibrant communities and offer a diversity of housing options, including traditional single family homes and condominiums and apartments in new and renovated historic buildings.

West Park is known as a family oriented community with Irish roots. Detroit Shoreway boasts a dynamic arts scene and an array of newly constructed apartments and condominiums. Ohio City is known for its craft-breweries, the historic West Side Market, historic homes, and newly constructed apartments and condominiums.

### **Cleveland's Suburbs**

Cleveland also is surrounded by a diverse array of suburbs offering a living style for everyone. To Clevelanders, the city is divided into two sides, the East Side and the West Side. Fanning out from the city, the first suburbs include cities such as Lakewood and Rocky River on the West Side, and Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights on the East Side. These suburbs, first developed in the 1920s, offer easy commuting to downtown Cleveland, ready access to public transportation, walkable neighborhoods, quality schools, and an abundance of well preserved classic homes primarily built from the 1910s to the 1960s, with some exceptions.

Beyond the "inner" suburbs are a variety of newer suburbs offering a newer housing stock including new construction. These suburbs include Bay Village, Westlake, Avon Lake, and Avon on the West Side. All are within a 10-20 minute drive of St. Peter's and feature some of the top ranked schools in Ohio as well as all of the shopping and commercial amenities one would need. East and South of Cleveland are a variety of other suburbs offering a diversity of housing options, quality schools, and amenities.

### **Cost of Living**

Cleveland and its surrounding suburbs enjoy a low cost of living relative to other large metropolitan areas in the United States. By an estimate on Salary.com, Cleveland's overall cost of living is 6.9% below the national average, and housing costs in Cleveland are 20.4% below the national average. According to Bankrate.com, Cleveland's cost of living is 31% lower than that in the Washington, D.C. metro area. And finally, according to CNNMoney, housing costs in Cleveland are 64% lower than in the Los Angeles area.

### **Education**

Cleveland is home to a diverse collection of quality higher education institutions, including Cleveland State University, Case Western Reserve University, Baldwin Wallace University, John Carroll University, Oberlin

College, Cuyahoga Community College, and many more. All have deep roots in the community and are major employers in addition to serving as important educational and research institutions.

The Cleveland suburbs, including Lakewood and surrounding westside communities, feature strong public schools systems, as well a variety of private and parochial school options. A number of the westside suburbs boast school districts rated among the best in Ohio.

### **Healthcare**

Cleveland is home to world-class and highly ranked health care institutions: Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, and Metrohealth Medical System. Cleveland Clinic has been named the No. 2 hospital in the nation and the No. 1 hospital for heart care in U.S. News & World Report's "2021-22 Best Hospitals" rankings. University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center has been recognized as a Best Hospital for 2021-22 by U.S. News & World Report. UH Cleveland Medical Center ranked in five of 15 adult specialties. It is ranked third among all hospitals in Ohio. The MetroHealth System is one of the best hospitals in the country when it comes to overall care, value of care and civic leadership, according to a recent study. All of these healthcare systems offer residents easy access to high quality care, from specialties to primary care.

### **Culture**

Cleveland is home to the Cleveland Orchestra, widely considered one of the world's finest orchestras, and often referred to as the finest in the nation. The Cleveland Orchestra plays at Severance Music Center in University Circle during the winter and at Blossom Music Center during the summer. The city is also home to the Cleveland Pops Orchestra, the Cleveland Youth Orchestra, the Contemporary Youth Orchestra, the Cleveland Youth Wind Symphony, and the biennial Cleveland International Piano Competition which has, in the past, often featured The Cleveland Orchestra.

Cleveland is home to Playhouse Square, the second largest performing arts center in the United States behind New York City's Lincoln Center. Playhouse Square includes the State, Palace, Allen, Hanna, and Ohio theaters within what is known as the Cleveland Theater District. The center hosts Broadway musicals, special concerts, speaking engagements, and other



events throughout the year. Its resident performing arts companies include Cleveland Ballet, the Cleveland International Film Festival, the Cleveland Play House, Cleveland State University Department of Theatre and Dance, DANCECleveland, the Great Lakes Theater Festival, and the Tri-C Jazz Fest.

The Cleveland Museum of Art, which has been ranked the second best art museum in the nation, was founded on the principle “for the benefit of all the people forever.” The museum provides special and permanent exhibitions of the world’s great art and engages the Cleveland community with multiple interactive programs and learning opportunities for all ages.

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History provides the opportunity to delve deep into the past in the dinosaur hall, discover the outer reaches of the Universe through its astronomy programs, experience natural wonders in the outdoor galleries, and participate in a host of classes and activities.

The Cleveland area boasts one of the best public library systems in the country, with three distinct systems, many of which have inter-library loan, and access to virtually any library in the country through OhioNet.

### **Recreation**

One of the special features of the Cleveland area is its park system, the Cleveland Metroparks. Unlike other cities with impressive state or federal parks that are only easily accessible for those that live nearby, twenty-four thousand acres of park weave in and out of many cities in Greater Cleveland, including Lakewood. Walking paths, hiking trails, lakes, and educational programs are all fantastic. The Cleveland Metroparks Zoo is a popular destination within the parks system. Smaller parks in the area include Lakewood Park and Edgewater Park, both situated along Lake Erie and both offering a range of recreational activities and beautiful views of downtown Cleveland.

The greater Cleveland area is a bicycle rider’s dream. In the past fifteen years, there has been a concerted effort to install scenic rural, suburban, and citywide bicycle traffic lanes and cycling trails. One can travel most anywhere in the Northern Ohio region under an accommodating bicycling-friendly atmosphere. Locally,

the trails along Lake Erie and through the Metropolitan Parks Emerald Necklace are unsurpassed in scope and beauty.

We have the good fortune to be located on the shores of the Great Lake Erie. The recreational choices are boundless. Beachgoing, pleasure boating, and bountiful sport fishing all lead the list. From Huntington Beach, to Lakewood Park, Edgewater Park and Beach, to massive Mentor Headlands State Beach and Park, the lakefront welcomes swimmers and beach enthusiasts. Public on-shore fishing access, pleasure boating marinas galore, and numerous Lake Erie fishing charters, make it comparatively easy to participate in the vast array of fresh water recreational pleasures. Our sunrises and sunsets on the Lake are awesome!

Sports are also part of the lifeblood of Cleveland with a devoted fan base for the NFL Browns, MLB Guardians, NBA Cavaliers, and AHL Monsters.





## ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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