A photograph of a church service. In the foreground, several people are holding large, light blue and green flags with a white cross and other symbols. The flags are slightly out of focus. In the background, a group of people, including men, women, and children, are gathered. Some are looking towards the camera, while others are looking towards the front of the church. A stained glass window with colorful patterns is visible in the background. The overall scene is bright and festive.

ST. ANNE'S
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

PARISH PROFILE

RECTOR SEARCH

Welcome to St. Anne's, Conway

St. Anne's was established in 2012 as a congregation of principle and faith. We worshipped in homes and itinerant spaces, much like early Christians, and built our church's identity on inclusive and radical love. Trusting that God is love, we affirm that all genders and sexualities, all races and abilities, may participate fully in all aspects of the life and work of the church.

We are a member of a diocese that shares the tenets in our faith and commitments to deepening our engagement with racial reconciliation and inclusivity.

You will find our liturgy traditional, because we believe that history and tradition give us strong roots. You will find our faith progressive, because we believe that the study of the natural world and our species yields wisdom. We strive to allow room for the Spirit to help us discern the truth about our history, our tradition, ourselves, and our purpose. Together, we rise.



St. Anne's Episcopal Church
2104 Main Street, Conway SC
(843) 488-2445
stannesconway.org

Front Page: Procession of the congregation at Grace Cathedral, Charleston when St. Anne's was admitted as a parish at the 2018 Diocesan Convention.

6 FINANCES

Our financial foundation is solid to build a new campaign.

5 LIFE IN CONWAY

Our community is rapidly growing while retaining its village feel.

4 OUR NEW RECTOR

We seek a shepherd in liturgy, spirituality, and organization.

3 OUR FUTURE

We will grow in our children's programs, space, and outreach.

2 OUR CHURCH

How our congregation is growing in our new home.

1 OUR HISTORY

Founded in 2012 as a congregation of choice.

ST. ANNE'S



2012: Founding

In the fall of 2012, two dozen Episcopalians met in a living room in Conway, South Carolina, determined that the Episcopal Church would not disappear from this region, a casualty of controversy, politics, and schism. Stories of church divisions sometimes end unhappily. A few loud disagreements among Christians can undo—in the eyes of the skeptical world—a thousand quiet good works and years of Christian witness.

But something wonderful happened. In a borrowed worship space, with an improvised altar, a loaner communion kit, and a few prayer books, we were reminded how simple church is supposed to be.

No longer able to rely on a professional staff, volunteers took up the work. Without any permanent clergy, the lay people ministered to each other. With no social hall, we stood in the grass, gathered in kitchens, or pulled extra chairs onto back porches. It was all hands on deck in a community that was called “Conway Worship Group” (and “St. Nobody’s” when we indulged in self-pity).

But we were not without resources. We were able to rent Lackey Chapel at Coastal Carolina University, a beautiful, simple space built for the use of all faiths, but somehow equipped with Episcopalian-friendly kneelers. Individual parishioners felt a sense of ownership in the new enterprise, and there was (and still is) an organic feeling to our Sundays. Collection baskets were, literally, baskets taken from somebody’s closet shelf. Yet without the hint of a stewardship campaign, those baskets were filled. For our first baptism, a large porcelain bowl served as a font. The christening pitcher had spent most of its useful life as a means to serve sweet tea, but it did the job that Sunday. A tin cross came in from somebody’s yard to turn a table into an altar.

“Because of our origin, we cherish the community we’ve built and will keep building.”

An altar guild sprang up; among our little group we had just enough lectors, chalice-bearers, acolytes and ushers. It seemed that half the church could sing, and the other half was willing to croak, bleat, or holler as best they could, so a music ministry bloomed forth, leading to a choir so excellent we are willing to risk the sin of pride to give it its due.

In those early weeks and months, we felt the Episcopal Church like a wind at our backs. Holy Cross Faith Memorial Episcopal Church in Pawleys Island shared their expertise and extended a steadying hand. St. Stephen’s in Heathsville, Virginia and the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth sent liturgical items. The Bible and Common Prayer Book Society of the Episcopal Church sent copies of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Priests from hundreds of miles around came to Conway to lead services. We shrugged off the irony that a local church split bound us to national brothers and sisters we’d never met.

Eventually we found a name. A parishioner with a long memory recalled that at Coastal Carolina University there had been an Episcopal ministry called “St. Anne’s Chapel” in the 1980’s. The college group faded away decades ago, but that slim thread of heritage was enough of a sign, as was the story of St. Anne herself; tradition says that the grandmother of Christ was aged and barren when she cried to the Lord and asked for a child.

2013: Father Barry, Interim Priest In Charge

Our first priest-in-charge, Father Barry Stopfel, came to us after recently retiring to the area. He was called out of retirement to serve as our first interim priest, giving the congregation a sense of continuity and purpose.

Father Stopfel led the way for gay clergy to be ordained throughout the 1990s, surviving a heresy trial and ostensibly at the center of the very schism that formed St. Anne's. His book, *A Courage to Love*, chronicled his experience. Fr. Stopfel, in many ways, was the perfect first pastor, reminding St. Anne's, too, to have courage and find a way forward.

His dynamic preaching style challenged us as a congregation, often intertwining present-day headlines with the word of Jesus. He was a reminder for all of us to live boldly and with conviction. On paper, his was a part-time appointment; he gave us his heart full-time.



2016: Father Rob, First Rector

Father Rob joined our congregation in 2016 after our first search for a full-time priest. A graduate of Sewanee Theological Seminary, Father Rob brought an immense amount of energy to our rapidly growing congregation. Under his tenure, he began a children's sermon with beloved sidekicks Dominic the Donkey and Bartholomew "Barry" the Sheep, translating humor with the Christian message. Father Rob led, often through inspiring others to lead and innovate, as in the case of the Education for Ministry, increased social activities, and collaborations between St. Stephen's in North Myrtle Beach and First United Methodist Church in Conway. His collaborations established Saint Anne's as an active and connected part of the surrounding religious community.

Father Rob also served as a mentor to other congregations, within and outside the diocese, to transition to virtual services early in the COVID pandemic, and he worked with the Building Committee to ensure that virtual services are a permanent part of the congregation. It was with Father Rob's tenure that we were ultimately able to finally call a space "home."



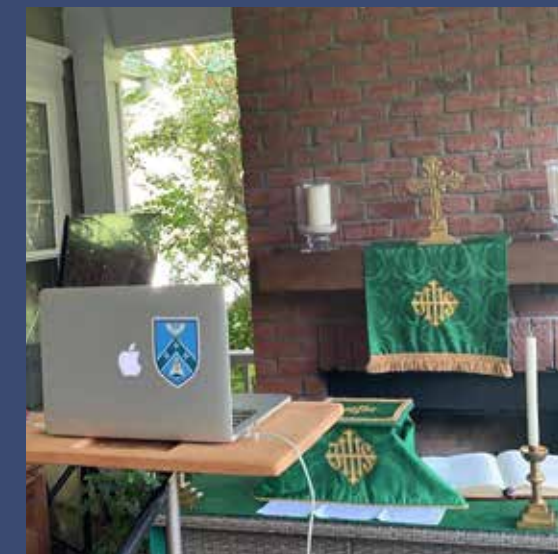
2018: Parish Status



In 2018, we celebrated our transition from mission church to parish status. Congregants travelled en masse to Grace Cathedral in Charleston to receive and represent our charge of becoming a parish.

2020-2021: A Virtual, then Physical Home

Like many congregations, the COVID pandemic shut down our home at Lackey Chapel, and we looked for a new way to worship. Within the week, our congregation organized to conduct services digitally. We spent hours setting up microphones, controllers, hosts, co-hosts, moderators. And ten minutes before our first service, our rector's internet failed. He quickly ran to the closest congregant: Kathleen Hearn and Lane Jefferies, and held service, socially distanced, on their outdoor porch. Over the next year, our congregation bonded over birds chirping during prayer, compiled choral mixes, and comments left on our Facebook stream. In some ways, we rediscovered the early days of Christianity and our church, finding congregation and the spirit in our homes.



Our ministries continued virtually, and even when we felt we would never be able to congregate or sing together again, our vestry and leadership took on this opportunity to find us a permanent home. Formerly the Lighthouse Christian Book Store, Saint Anne's purchased the building in March of 2020 through a capital campaign and with the help of the Episcopal Church Building Fund. The interior of the space has been completely remodelled, and we recently finished touching up the appearance of the exterior with a new coat of paint, a new sign, and a cross that took over the former lighthouse facade.

Despite our ability to congregate, we continue to invest in our online presence, looking and finding ways of allowing us to continue to gather from across the country. We also understand that the journey to a church community is not always straightforward, and we are happy to open ourselves online to those that are interested. And we hope after inviting us into their homes, they will invite our church into their hearts.

Each week new faces appear, many of them blissfully unaware of our recent church controversies. Just folks looking for a place to pray and sing and ask questions and experience the weekly miracle of the Eucharist. Our two dozen

has doubled and re-doubled, but we remain a cheerful, good-humored, earnest group—rather than the “frozen chosen,” we prefer to think of ourselves as the “thawed flawed!”

We are fully aware of the challenges and the politics that come with organized religion, but at St. Anne's, the most important mission is the work. We get along—not because we're particularly virtuous (when it comes to feet of clay, ours are thick with the stuff!). No, we get along because that thing your grandmother told you about “idle hands” is true. Recreating “church” each week, ministering to each other, finding our work in the world. At St. Anne's, there are few idle hands.



2022: Rev. Sandra “Sandy” K. Moyle, Interim Rector

Rev. Sandy came to St. Anne's in May 2022 during our time of need. Transitions are always hard and our spirits were down but not “out.” Rev. Sandy lifted us up and showed us that good things can come from change. Her warmth, irreverence, and colloquial style at the pulpit both resonates and reflects the congregants of St. Anne's. She has carefully guided us and reminded us of our congregational roots, and she has facilitated many important conversations.

Moreover, it was a privilege to welcome our first female priest and Bishop Ruth in the same year.



The cross that now hangs above the altar of St. Anne's is originally from the chapel at First United Methodist Church in Conway, where the congregation worshipped when on more than one occasion, flooding moved us from Lackey Chapel. The cross signals to us that we are always a part of our wider beloved community, and its presence shows that we are “home.”



“Come to this table,
you who have much
faith and you who
would like to have
more; you who have
been here often, and
you who have not been
for a while or ever;
Come, not because the
Church invites you.
It is Christ who invites
you to be known
and fed here.”

Buildings and Grounds

We purchased our current church home in 2020, and we officially opened for services in 2021. Our congregation building has transformed, nearly unrecognizable from the Christian bookstore that once occupied these walls. Our building has room to grow with an unfinished upstairs (photo taken from that space in bottom right), but we have a food storage and preparation area, conference room, and nursery. Our congregation hall has over 140 capacity.

Other Facts

- The cross, after its tenure at First United Methodist, hung in the Lighthouse Bookstore. When the building was transformed, our inaugural Education for Ministry class purchased and refurbished it.
- The altar furniture and outdoor sign were hand-crafted by a local craftsman and congregant, Ron Walker.
- Our church enjoys a fresh donation of altar flowers every week, donated from Daisy Fair Flower Shop in memory of parishioner David Summers.



Congregation Makeup

The congregation at St. Anne's has remained steady over the last three years, averaging around 140 members since 2020. Since the pandemic, our congregation has added between 20 and 40 active participants through virtual services, and at least 50% of those congregants have attended at least one in-person service.

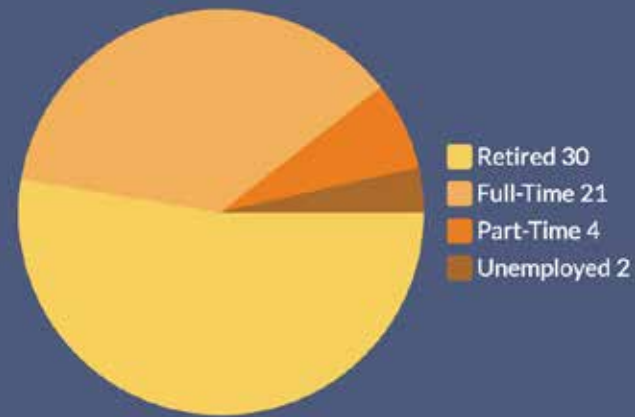
Our average weekly attendance is 81 (25 online). During Easter and Christmas, we welcomed 127 and 157 participants respectively in 2021.

From our recent Parish Survey, our distribution of 57 respondents was 10.5% between 30-39 and 40-49 respectively, 8.8% between 50-59, and 70.2% above the age of 60. Like most congregations, we hope to recruit more young families through providing youth programs and reintroducing the youth programming during our Sunday services. Currently, we have between 3 and 6 children who regularly attend our Sunday nursery/ children's programming during our 10:00 a.m. Eucharist.

All of our 57 respondents identified as White or Caucasian, with a 56% female response. Of the respondents, 12.8% also identified as members of the LGBTQ+ community. The majority of respondents are married or in a long-term relationship (77%).

Our community also has identified itself as intellectual, with the majority (60.7%) having achieved a graduate degree. While 52.6% are retired, 36.8% are employed full-time.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS



HOUSEHOLD INCOME



JOINED THE CHURCH



Stewardship

At St. Anne's, financial stewardship is an important part of an integrated part of our parish life. Together, we fund ministry within our parish, to the Conway community, and to the wider world. Our financial profile and donations show our continued commitment to feeding and providing support for those who are struggling within our community through our local soup kitchen and assistance programs. Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

Because we are a congregation of choice, our congregation is accustomed to making church through the gifts of our congregation. Our first meetings, and most of our social functions, are hosted in congregants' homes, and our church building is decorated with demonstrations of stewardship of many kinds: the decorative glass windows, audio and video system, hand-crafted credence table, chalice and paten, processional cross, hymnal, and even the funds for the organ are donations from individuals within and outside our congregation.

Stewardship at St. Anne's also includes giving gifts of expertise, from legal to technical, to help with the daily functions of the church and our missions. When we were assigned our first full-time rector, a congregant donated office space and facilities to allow Father Rob to provide parochial services and administrative support. We had many volunteers work to ensure that our new audio and video systems could work efficiently and effectively.

We look forward to expanding our stewardship campaign to document these non-monetary gifts and talents of our congregation. Our hope is that our new rector will work with the Vestry and congregation to renew our mission to one another and our community.



Parish Life and Special Events

After the throes of social distancing, our parish life and special events are beginning to take root and take advantage of our new space. These social events allow us to welcome new members and celebrate the fellowship of our growing church family.

- ECW (Episcopal Church Women)
- Collaborations with First United Methodist: Blue Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Lenten Lunch Lectures
- Collaborations with area churches for Christmas Concerts
- Annual Nativity Crèche Display
- First Annual Children's Christmas Pageant
- Mardi Gras/Fat Tuesday
- St. Anne's Birthday
- PRIDE Celebrations, Demonstrations, PFLAG Meetings
- Rally Sunday

Lay Ministries

- Altar Servers: Verger, Crucifer, Acolytes
- Altar Guild
- Cantors
- Lectors
- Eucharistic Visitors (we recently commissioned two new visitors)
- Lay Chaplains at Conway Medical Center

We strive to provide support to our congregants through the use of meal trains, providing communion, and lay pastoral care through our church volunteers.

Lay Leadership

In addition to our Vestry and staff leadership, we also have leadership in the Diocese: Mike Battle is a Trustee, and Mary Jo Roberts is on the Commission on Ministry.



Mike Roberts
Senior Warden



Cathy Battle
Junior Warden



Jen Boyle
Outreach



Pete Hearn
Stewardship



Rosemary Jenrette
Parish Life



Rudy Leustek
Communication



Erik Schrader
Worship



Susan Slavin
Admin. Assistant



Rebecca Lovelace
Treasurer



Sarah Abushakra
Music Director



Trudy Miller
Nursery



Sam Hickman
Digital Facilitator

VESTRY

STAFF

Communication

Newsletter & Prayer List

Congregant: Mary Jo Roberts

The newsletter is one of the principal forms of communication to our congregation. Alongside providing the weekly updates, the newsletter system provides our prayer list. The prayer list is a way to highlight the needs of St. Anne's and her community. Suggestions from *The Book of Common Prayer* are included for a reflective practice.

Web and Social Media

Congregants: Mark Jordan and Alli Crandell

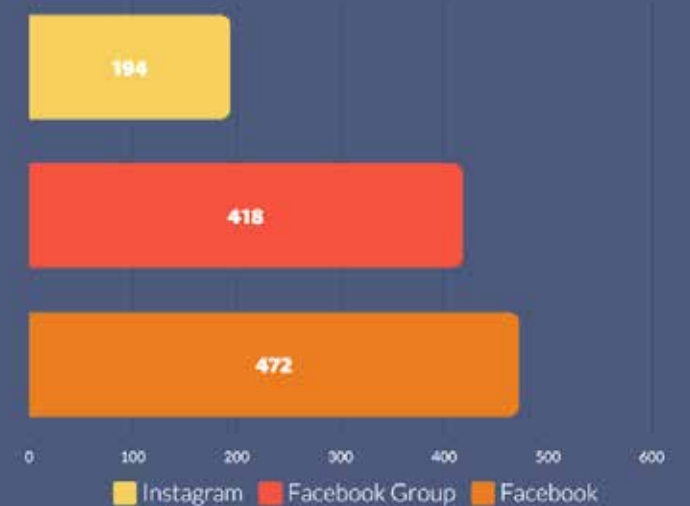
Today, St. Anne's is represented on Instagram and Facebook. Our posts focus on the calendar of Saints, announcements about upcoming events, and celebrations within our congregation. We also stream our 10:00 a.m. Sunday Eucharist to Facebook and Zoom. After we resumed in-person services, our congregation remained healthy in 2022, mostly due to individuals finding our services online, and we still enjoy on average 20-25 parishioners in online attendance every Sunday, and many more who tune in after Sunday services are completed.

Social media is the easiest way to communicate with church members and those seeking a church to call home, and we are in the process of invigorating our social media outreach and digital presence to better integrate our communication strategies.

In the future, we hope to expand the social media program at St Anne's to showcase our life, outreach, and services at St. Anne's and find ways of educating our parishioners and community partners to share our posts to broaden our social reach.

We are actively working on moving website platforms in the first quarter of 2023, as well as integrating our online streaming services, hybrid education events, and newsletter to provide a comprehensive view of our congregation. Our mission in adjusting website content is to invite people who know little about St. Anne's (confirmed by our most recent focus groups on community outreach) to safely engage with us online.

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



Music

The choir of St. Anne's boasts four-five-and six part harmonies with anywhere between eighteen and twenty-five voices. Two compensated vocal students from Coastal Carolina University join our service weekly to lend their voices and lead the congregation in responsively sung Psalms.

Our part-time Director of Music, Sarah Abushakra, has both a B.A. in Music and a M.M. in Piano Pedagogy and Performance. She leads our Sunday services on both a grand piano and organ. A parishioner donated money for an organ and the director found a beautiful instrument we purchased from another congregation. With the piano, organ, and talented choir and director, our worship is greatly enhanced.

Our music director and congregation actively maintain strong collaborations with our sister churches of St. James Catholic, Kingston Presbyterian, and First United Methodist, particularly around Advent and Lent.



Education

St. Anne's enjoys one of the few Education for Ministry (EfM) Programs in our region, which is unusual for St. Anne's size. Following the tradition of St. Anne's quickly employing the gifts of our congregants, when Dan Hutchins and Jim Gross stepped through the doors at St. Anne's; Father Rob, in greeting them, immediately noticed Jim was wearing an EfM pin, having completed all four years of the program. Within the year, the first class of seven congregants met, and this year, we will enjoy a course of fourteen. In 2023, our first class will graduate out of its fourth year under the leadership of Susan Slavin, who became the EfM mentor in 2022.




Outreach

Our main Community Outreach efforts support Churches Assisting People (CAP), The Shepherd's Table, Eastern Carolina Housing Organization (ECHO), Freedom Readers, and Episcopal Relief and Development. Every month, we send volunteers and financial support to these missions to love our community through Christ's mission.

The addition of our church building has created even more opportunities to provide space for community organizations, including a monthly PFLAG meeting, Grand Strand Episcopal Youth & Children's Ministry, summer Bible school of the Palmetto Missionary Baptist Church, among others. We hope to continue to grow our outreach, as you can read in our future visions.

The reputation of St. Anne's as a welcoming place of all genders and sexualities has given us positive media attention, several new congregants, and our first protester. While we have received consultations on safety measures to take to keep our congregation safe during worship and other times, we affirm the mission of St. Anne's.





“May the blessing of the Holy Spirit who broods over the world like a mother over her children be upon you this day and remain with you always.”

As part of the rector search process, our search committee led two surveys: a short survey to gauge interests and issues and a longer open-answer survey to drill down on our congregation's goals and hopes for the future. Based on both of these surveys, the Search Committee facilitated three focus groups surrounding the central issues and opportunities for growth our congregants identified. Our short and long-term goals fit within these three categories.

Children's Programs

Our small but growing congregation currently includes about twelve children ranging from toddlers to early teens. Parents who participated in the focus group said they choose St. Anne's knowing that this small number cannot support the full menu of youth programming that larger churches can offer. Parents choose St. Anne's because they are drawn to the integrity of its message of love, inclusion, and justice; the thoughtfulness of its sermons; and its traditional worship that remains family friendly and welcoming. Our new space includes a small nursery, and we pay a well-qualified adult to care for children there during Sunday services. In 2021-2022, St. Anne's began to partner with two other Episcopal congregations in the Grand Strand area to form Grand Strand Episcopal Youth Ministries. This group has the potential to offer enriching opportunities for the youth of St. Anne's, especially with ordained leadership. Currently, our members express greater interest in finding ways for our children to participate in the life of St. Anne's and in the community of Conway.

Near-Term Goals

In the near term, St. Anne's parents indicated that a priority is ensuring the safety of our physical space. Parents also expressed a desire to include the children more regularly and intentionally in our worship services. Given the range in ages, consensus was that once a month we would like to include a bell/voice choir for little ones and reading and/or music by older ones in the regular worship service. Older ones could also more regularly help with greeting and altar service. This Christmas Eve marked our first Christmas pageant which is led by parent members of St. Anne's. The small-scale pageant took place right before the Christmas Eve service and included children from toddler-hood to ten years old, some who are St. Anne's regular attendees and some guests and newcomers. Parents also expressed the near-term hope of including children in more service-related projects. A strength of having a small congregation is that our children can be enfolded into a multi-generational community and form meaningful relationships with children of other ages and adults. We hope to facilitate this enfolded more intentionally by encouraging and empowering lay leadership and will also welcome rector leadership for these efforts.

Given that St. Anne's cannot offer a full range of children's programming at this point, some members have participated in the programming of other Conway churches. Rather than allow them to feel disloyal about doing so, parents in the focus group suggested that we lean into this as an opportunity to establish and strengthen bonds with other local congregations who share many of our core priorities and values. They suggested that information on local programming of-

ferings be included in St. Anne's communications materials. As St. Anne's has lent its space to Palmetto Missionary Baptist for summer programming in the past, parents suggested that this might be one opening for further partnership. Members have also participated in programs at First United Methodist Church in Conway and expressed willingness to look into offerings at other churches as well.

Long-Term Goals

Some of our hopes for the longer term include improvements to our physical space and increases in our programming. In terms of indoor physical space, we would like to get the upstairs space usable for lounging and youth fellowship and education. We would also like to see an outside door installed next to the nursery. This door could lead to a fenced-in outdoor play area. As our numbers grow, we hope to include more religious education programming for all ages.



Our Space as a Church

Saint Anne's Church is much more than a place; we are a worship community which began in a living room ten years ago. Soon after, we were able to rent Lackey Chapel, the Coastal Carolina University campus chapel, on Sunday mornings. There we thrived for years with supply priests, then a Priest In Charge, and finally our own full time priest who helped us achieve full parish status. A parishioner donated office space and support for the rector.

There were times when the chapel was not available to us due to campus closings for hurricanes and floods, so we met in parishioners homes. During the pandemic, we held virtual church with fire-side sermons from a parishioner's back porch. As long as we are gathered, there is St. Anne's.

In 2021, with help from the Diocese, we purchased a Christian bookstore in Conway and transformed it into a beautiful worship space complete with a food preparation area, nursery, and church offices. Now we have a place to our own, for our own events and to host our community. We host monthly meetings for PFLAG (Parents, Families and friends of Lesbians and Gays). We hosted the Palmetto Missionary Baptist Church's Summer Bible School. We are grateful to have a flexible worship space that can quickly transform from Eucharist to lunch gathering within a matter of minutes.



Strengths

- Our church and congregation feel safe and welcoming to our congregants.
- Our space is a reflection of St. Anne's as a congregation of choice.

Goals

While over the next 12-18 months we are looking to establish a capital campaign to improve our physical space, in the short-term, the Vestry has applied to the South Carolina Diocese for a \$65,000 grant to help repave the parking lot.

We have the capacity to grow in our building including the second floor which is unfinished and currently used for storage. We are proud of our modest church, which we have made our home. Everyone who comes into Saint Anne's for the first time feels loved and welcome. It is not because of the church/space; it is the presence of the love of Christ.

Community Outreach

Our congregation views community outreach along three branches: visibility, food, and facilitating conversations. The church financially supports Churches Assisting People and the Shepherd's Table, both non-profit organizations that focus on supporting individuals experiencing hardship or homelessness within our community. Our congregants also volunteer at Conway Medical Center, work with other churches to provide food for unhoused people on Saturdays (when the Shepherd's Table is closed), and also participate in activism in support of the LGBTQ+ community.

Our church has also hosted joint services, Bible studies, celebratory events, and lectures with other congregations, such as a faith discussion series with Palmetto Missionary Baptist Church, Blue Christmas services with First United Methodist, and shared Christmas Caroling with Conway congregations. Several members of our congregation have also participated in the South Carolina Episcopal Diocese's racial reconciliation program Sacred Ground.

We wish to expand our adult education series, Education for Ministry, to include members from other churches, and utilize this group's readings to facilitate open discussions. For example, inspired by the sermon of Dr. Rev. Stephanie Sellers, we are hosting a collective discussion of her book, *The Church Cracked Open*, as we discuss what it means for our congregation to participate in the Jesus Movement.

Strengths

- Our congregants are already involved, through the church and in their lives, in multiple ministries and community work.
- Our church's culture hosts and encourages intellectual and educational discussions within our congregation.
- We have many gifts of expertise and connections within our congregation.

Future Directions

Our short-term goals are to focus on increasing visibility of our congregation, from ensuring we are listed in all church directories to renewing our focus on our social media plan. In conversation with our new website, we will be working on developing new marketing materials and tabling opportunities to offer our new physical space as a safe space for those looking to worship with a congregation where all genders, races, and sexualities are affirmed and loved as their whole selves. To do this, we will need to form a working group that will focus on discovering and developing these opportunities for the congregation.

Our congregation has expressed interest in creating programming inclusive of LGBTQ+ and allied communities, Black and Hispanic populations, young families, college students, and the aging population around our church as populations for outreach. Rather than engaging in community outreach for the purposes of recruiting (though growing our congregation is helpful), the congregation wants to be a dialogue partner and grow in its allyship. This includes hosting open discussions, dinners, and speakers that will do the work of fostering an open and inclusive space, especially for those who are not members of the congregation.

Responding to the initiatives of the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina, St. Anne's is working to educate ourselves on the tenets of racial reconciliation through the Sacred Ground education series. Over 90% of our congregation identifies White, and 85% of survey respondents expressed an interest in developing more relationships with our Hispanic and Black neighbors through community events and conversations.

Long term goals also include utilizing our outdoor space for more community events like the PFLAG festival. Many congregants also expressed a hope that they can open their homes to build relationships over meals.



Other Survey Results

IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+



No 86% Yes 12% Prefer not to say 2%

I FEEL COMFORTABLE AND SAFE AT ST. ANNE'S



Strongly Agree 82% Agree 18% Disagree 0%

LEVEL OF EDUCATION



“Y’all means all. My dream is to see the sanctuary filled every Sunday with as many ages and cultures represented as possible.”



St. Anne's is a motivated, inclusive, and well-organized congregation seeking a Rector who will complement our strengths and challenge us to address our weaknesses. We have been blessed with fiscal durability and a passion for our work as a congregation, and we need the liturgical presence, spiritual wisdom, and administrative skill of a full-time rector so we can fulfill our potential as a Christian community.

Liturgical Presence

In our brief history, we have been honored with skilled preachers and reverent celebrants at the altar. Our parish craves and is gratified by worship leaders that are graceful, wise, and provocative.

Our next rector will find that homilies are consumed, discussed, (occasionally!) critiqued, and that the preacher is given due respect by our attention and reflection. Some listeners will be theologically sophisticated, seeking nuanced exegesis. Some will be unchurched or newly re-churched, seeking comfort and welcome in the message. Some will appreciate wit and irony; others will want anecdotes and affirmation. All in all, however, our next rector will find in the homily a space to connect with an earnest and generous congregation that is eager to learn and grow.

Outside the homily, our worship has been traditional, with forays into alternative prayers and canticles as the seasons require. Our next rector would be wise to study the context of our combination of orthodox liturgy and progressive ministry.

When the schism came to the Diocese of South Carolina in 2012, our former bishop and his following clergy took special care to tear down the unifying elements of The Episcopal Church in order to make the case that the diocesan bishop had magisterial authority. Chief of these elements to be de-legitimized was *The Book of Common Prayer*, especially and including the familiar formularies and eucharistic prayers. Those self-styled "Anglicans" held up the 1928 prayer book as theologically sound and the 1979 prayer book as a product of progressive theology.

As a worship group and later a mission church, St. Anne's viewed weekly liturgy as derived from *The Book of Common Prayer* as a core part of our heritage, and a unifying element in a time of dissension and diaspora. And, practically speaking, we had so many supply priests that there was no good way to innovate in liturgy. The old familiar, rather than being worn out by use, became a refuge, even as we had uncertainty about our fiscal viability and physical location.

This is not to say we are inflexible and hide-bound when it comes to worship. A skilled rector will know how and when liturgical changes are appropriate and invigorating. But for St. Anne's the liturgy has had a particular and peculiar centrality to our identity as a congregation.

Finally, whatever one thinks of homilies and liturgies, we seek a rector who is committed to missional worship. We don't want or expect to file out of the church on Sundays satisfied and comfortable; we hope to be charged through worship to minister in our community and the world. St. Anne's views liturgy as the vessel of The Great Commission, not an end unto itself.

Spiritual Wisdom

Because St. Anne's was formed by the laity and was lay-led for much of its formative years, we do not seek a rector-as-CEO, but instead a rector-as-shepherd. We are a worldly church, perhaps too worldly, with an educated and privileged membership that is prone to self-satisfaction and even occasional self-righteousness. Rugged independence and pragmatism served us well as we grew up against daunting odds, but we crave a rector who will call us to our higher selves and lead us to be more thoughtful, prayerful, and humble.

This may be an odd thing to put in a parish profile, but we are an odd church. Many of us know how to be Episcopalians. We can be more Episcopalian than thou, as it were, because we wanted to create an outpost for our denomination in a community that ranges from indifferent to hostile to forms of Christianity that are radically exclusive. That mission has cultivated strong, dedicated, and self-confident lay leaders; we've never lacked for talented Wardens, and competent vestries.

But no lay leaders, no matter how well-informed, can replace the priestly function. Our next rector will find that the spiritual needs of our community are yet to be met, and that we have a great deal of work to do to become true brothers and sisters to each other and servants of Christ. We need a deeper, more active engagement with the Holy Spirit. We seek a rector who can foreground spirituality as a necessary priority of a healthy Christian community.

Administrative Skill

St. Anne's is brimming with opportunity and energy, and its direction will require a deft hand at organizational leadership. Ought we continue to invest in our physical plant, and take up ideas of a capital campaign that were set aside when this search became necessary? Are there new ministries we should establish, and old ones that warrant review? We are well-governed, but could we be more efficient, more transparent, and more responsive to our brothers and sisters?

As a one-clergy congregation, St. Anne's needs a rector who can handle the operations of the parish, in partnership with the Vestry, so that we can take advantage of all that lies before us. Administrative and leadership skills that motivate congregants to use their gifts and abilities to move the parish mission forward would be valued in the new Rector.



“We need to make sure our new priest is also thoughtful and enthusiastic about planning future services (like Pride Service). I like how we rotate services throughout the year, incorporating different traditions.”



“Guide us waking,
O Lord, and guard
us sleeping; that
awake we may
watch with Christ,
and asleep we may
rest in peace.”

St. Anne's is located about sixteen miles from Myrtle Beach in the historic river town of Conway, South Carolina. We are one of four Episcopal churches within a region known as the Grand Strand, one of the fastest growing regions in America. Conway's population increased from 17,103 in 2010 to 24,849 in 2020, with the fastest growth being those 50 and older.

While Conway is rapidly growing, its roots run deep as one of the oldest towns in South Carolina, first as Kingston, then Conwayborough, then Conway. The town's historic lumber industry survives to this day. Conway provides easy access to the region's history and modern tourist attractions. Within a twenty-minute drive of St. Anne's, you can visit century-old farmlands and the tourist attractions of Myrtle Beach.

Cultural Landscape

Conway is built on the ancestral lands of the Waccamaw tribe, whose name is carried along the river that winds through the city. The city is located within the federally-designated Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, and is surrounded by some of the most prolific historic rice, lumber, and tobacco plantations, which enslaved more than 30,000 Africans. The shared agricultural traditions of this region span across Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, and White populations, with the largest crops being tobacco, cotton, rice, and indigo.

Surrounded by these farmlands and located on the main water transportation highway of the PeeDee, Conway serves as the intellectual and educational capital of the surrounding region. Its historic district dates back to the 1700s, and within the city limits are several historically Black neighborhoods, including the Racepath Community, which leads to Whittemore High School.

Religious Landscape

St. Anne's is one of four Episcopal congregations in the Grand Strand Area. The others are Holy Cross Faith Memorial in Pawleys Island, St. Stephen's in North Myrtle Beach, and the Church of the Messiah in Myrtle Beach.

The City of Conway has a high concentration of Christian churches spanning a wide range of persuasions, from AME to Catholic to non-denominational and including Quaker and Seventh Day Adventist congregations as well as Baha'i and Muslim communities. Looking into the Carolina Forest and Myrtle Beach areas, you will find Eastern Orthodox churches along with Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Jewish synagogues, a Messianic synagogue, Universal Unitarian Church, and a newly-built Hindu temple in the Market Common area of Myrtle Beach. 42.6% of Horry County residents report attending church.

St. Anne's strives to be a consistent collaborator with all institutions of faith and justice in our region.



Schools

Horry County schools rank #2 in the state as the Best Places to Teach, #4 in the state for the Best Teachers, and #11 of Best School Districts overall (Niche). It's also in the top third of most diverse schools. The schools closest to St. Anne's are Conway Elementary (.9 miles away), Conway Middle School (1 mile away), and Conway High School (1.6 miles away).

Conway also hosts the main campuses of Horry Georgetown Technical College and Coastal Carolina University, the county's largest employer. HGTC provides innovative professional and associate degrees in fields like Culinary Arts, Digital Arts, and Criminology. Coastal Carolina University is a premier public regional liberal arts university ranked #5 as Best Value Schools in the South, with innovative programs in Marine Science, Sustainability, and Physical Theatre. A large number of our congregants work at Coastal Carolina University and our own crest reflects a chevron of Chanticleer teal in homage to our formation.



Housing

Housing around Conway ranges from new construction, to early 20th-century homes, to mid-century apartments. Many of the residences from the Waccamaw to St. Anne's are walkable to the downtown district. Median household income is \$51,570, with the average individual income about \$30,000. In Horry County, 14.5% of our population lives at or below the poverty line, but as the county becomes more developed and populous, that number continues to decline.

The beauty of the Grand Strand area is its distinct towns and neighborhoods. St. Anne's is in Conway, but many of our congregants live outside of city limits in neighboring Carolina Forest, Myrtle Beach, and unincorporated parts of Horry County, where house prices tend to be lower. Our congregation is well-connected with local realtor experts to help our new rector find a home that will work for their situation.

Demographics

Conway's population is 60% white and 34% Black or African American, while Horry County as a whole has a population of 365,579 that is 77% white, 13% African American, and 6% Hispanic; the Hispanic population has been steadily increasing over the last five years. Horry County has the highest percentage of foreign-born residents of its region (6.59%), above the state average of 5%.

The Human Rights Campaign ranked Myrtle Beach the third most LGBTQ-friendly city in South Carolina (behind Charleston and Columbia).

Recreation and Cultural Life

The City of Conway and surrounding region is experiencing a growth in restaurants, shopping, and recreational experiences. There is a wide variety of activities happening weekly around the area for all ages and interests. The walkable downtown City of Conway hosts a community theatre, children's theatre, art gallery, historic museum, library, and several murals around historic downtown. Conway Downtown Alive hosts a number of events open to the public including Halloweentown, Celebration of Lights, Waccamaw Sportsmen's Expo, and Gullah Geechee Day. During the Christmas Season, Conway shops stay open on Thursday evenings for candlelight shopping, camel rides, hot cider, and holiday cheer. In warmer months, the Green transforms from Santa's Village to a music venue for weekend concerts. If the timing is right, you might even catch one of the many foodie events such as the Chocolate Walk, Burger Week, or Wine Around. In addition to our downtown, Horry County is home to the Myrtle Beach Pelicans, Long Bay Symphony, and Ripley's Aquarium along with a range of family-friendly tourist attractions.

Below are several links to event calendars for the region.

- Conway Downtown Alive
- Theater of the Republic & Coastal Youth Theater
- CCU Cultural Arts Calendar
- Long Bay Symphony

The area also hosts a number of natural refuges and land and river trails, where one can enjoy one of the last unmitigated Black waterways in the nation.

- Horry County is home to twenty-three of South Carolina's Trails including Conway River Walk, Crabtree Swamp, Myrtle Beach State Park, Cartwheel Bay Heritage Preserve, and Heritage Shores Nature Preserve.
- Waccamaw Riverkeepers of Winyah River Alliance is an Alliance of Riverkeepers protecting our rivers for fishing, swimming and drinking. The mission is to protect, preserve, monitor and revitalize the health of the lands and waters of the greater Winyah Bay watershed with a Vision for clean water and healthy communities.
- South Carolina Seven (SC7) is a partnership between two South Carolina based non-profit organizations, Global Eco Adventures and the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor. The mission of SC7 is to get people in the outdoors so they gain an appreciation for the outdoors, and therefore begin to actively do their part to protect the outdoors. SC7 engages leaders & citizens in the protection and enjoyment of South Carolina's natural resources.
- Brookgreen Gardens, a sculpture garden and wildlife preserve, located just south of Murrells Inlet in Georgetown County. The 9,100-acre property includes several themed gardens featuring American figurative sculptures, botanical gardens, Lowcountry Zoo, and trails through several ecosystems in nature reserves on the property.
- Huntington Beach State Park lies across Highway 17 from Brookgreen Gardens and offers undeveloped beaches, nature trails, and camping.



St. Anne's finances have grown from our days as a mission church. While the expenses of St. Anne's have shifted as we have found a brick-and-mortar home, our congregational support has remained strong and sustains the multiple activities of the church. We had \$179,224 in pledges for 2021, and received 99% of that amount, with an additional \$21,297 in unpledged income. Of the \$188,281 that was pledged for 2022, we have received 90% (as of December 11, 2022), and we have received an additional \$35,000 in unpledged income. In 2023, we have received pledges for \$174,300 in income, and anticipate \$24,000 in unpledged income.

With the absence of a full-time rector for 2022, our personnel expenses have fallen from \$138,725 in 2021 to \$85,868 (as of December 11, 2022). Our 2022 expenses for mortgage payments, utilities, cleaning, yard maintenance, etc. are \$33,260.

In 2022 we donated a total of \$17,510 to local charities (such as the local food bank and the local supper program for those in need), and we have donated \$2,700 to Episcopal Relief and Development.

St. Anne's has been fortunate enough to have annual no-pledge drives in years past; however we are keenly aware of our ongoing obligation to run a capital campaign within the coming years.

“I am proud of the strength of those who began St. Anne's and didn't give up and still work so hard. I'm trying hard to do the same, to create a community of people that is inclusive and supportive.”

Father, son, and holy specter,
help us find a real good rector.

stannesconway.com