

St. Bede's Episcopal Church

2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025



Thank you for considering our call for a rector at St. Bede's Episcopal Church in Menlo Park, California. Our search began just one week before COVID-19 shelter-in-place requirements were put in place, causing a dramatic shift in our personal lives and in our parish community. This global crisis showed us that our values, and who we are as the people of St. Bede's persevere, in spite of distancing; that our faith keeps us together, focused on the goal to call a rector.

Who We Are

St. Bede's Church is an Episcopal parish of passionate believers and energetic seekers. We deeply value our faith, our traditions, and our neighbors. We actively work to bring the love and care of our Christian community to our unhoused neighbors and others in our extended community in need and in precarious living situations. We are quick to form study groups to explore contemporary social issues and spiritual writings. We love our music program, which allows us to express our joy in God's presence. Our appreciation for music supports the concert series we bring to our larger community.



We deeply care for one another. Although our adherence to our Episcopal liturgy and history are strong, our political and social backgrounds and understanding of the secular world sometimes differ. We work to respect one another and to follow "[The St Bede's Way](#)," which we developed to guide our interactions and communal discussions and meetings, particularly on contentious items. We look for the common and work to appreciate and understand the different.

Our Next Rector

We are seeking a rector who will value who we are, our faith and liturgical traditions and will take us to new places as we seek to deepen our faith, expand our congregation, serve our communities, and worship God and God's creation. We have been without a rector during a sabbatical and an interim period, and we are hungry for leadership and guidance, and renewal of our faith. Our parish, joined by Trinity School, seeks a warm and loving presence, who will help us experience the Holy Spirit among us. We enjoy sermons that deepen our understanding of the lessons and that feed us as we leave our sanctuary for our lives in the very secular world in which we live. We seek a priest who will expand our intellects as well as our hearts.

St. Bede's is an inclusive parish, we welcome all congregants and all seekers. We enjoy saying, "Welcome, come join us, who are you?" We seek a rector who sees us all as God's children, who loves all of us, rich and poor, both in goods and faith. We seek a rector who cherishes the children of the parish and the children of Trinity School. We seek someone who is present and available, who listens to our concerns and supports and guides us as we seek understanding and solace. We seek a rector who is deeply supportive of our families and understands the pressures upon them and who helps us alleviate the aloneness of our single and our aging congregants.

Our congregants are seekers—we enjoy spiritual formation. We read, discuss, mull over and question, both Scriptures and contemporary writings and topics. We seek a seeker, a rector who will lead us and join us as we explore the Gospels and our Anglican writings. As we grapple with issues of social justice, our endangered planet and other crises of our time, we want our rector to be with us and to remind us of Jesus in our midst.

We consider St. Bede's to be a treasure, our city on the hill, our Jerusalem. Our rector will lead us as we evangelize within our communities. Our rector will define and reflect our Episcopal faith within the Trinity School community and within our larger mid-Peninsula community. Our rector will represent us in civic organizations in our neighborhoods and communities. Our rector will be a person of deep faith and that faith and the teachings deriving from that faith will feed and sustain us as we grow in faith and service.

*Our rector will find a parish that loves its children and treasures its elders,
and recognizes the importance of engaging with the congregation,
fostering meaningful relationships across generations.*

Our Ministries

The following ministries were those identified by parishioners, through our survey and listening sessions, as our priorities. Other active ministries at St. Bede's include Altar Guild and Flower Team, Worship Volunteers, Hospitality, Pastoral Care, Small Groups (such as Book Club) and Facilities.

[Spiritual Formation](#)

Soulwork is St. Bede's adult formation program. It meets almost every Sunday between the two services, and is usually, but not exclusively, led by the rector. Each program may last several weeks, and subjects covered range widely. Some samples from the past few years: we have met the Presiding Bishop's *Way of Love*; followed the 2018 General Convention; studied the Gospel of Matthew; traced the history of lay liturgical leadership in the Episcopal Church; learned about the Apocrypha; tried out several spiritual practices, including *lectiodivina*, walking the labyrinth, and making and using prayer beads; read several books, including *Being Mortal* and *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*; and have sung our way through Anglican musical history.

[Music](#)

Music has always been a hallmark of what St. Bede's has to offer and is an integral part of our worship. The voices of the choir, along with the beautiful playing of our gifted organist, are what draws many parishioners to the 10:15 service. Under the guidance of our talented music director we enjoy a variety of musical arrangements and genre that are intentionally selected to make Scripture come to life.



Our Von Beckerath pipe organ is exceptional, filling the sanctuary with sound! A number of talented instrumentalists in our community also offer their skills to enhance our worship. In addition to weekly services, the choir offers evensongs and performances that highlight various composers. These events accept free will offerings that are designated to charitable recipients. Our ensemble often joins other local church choirs for collaborative celebrations.

[Arts at St. Bede's](#), coordinated by our music director, offers live concerts throughout the year. These performances include vocal groups, soloists, string and brass ensembles, and other instrumentalists from around the world. Traditionally, a reception follows each performance allowing the artists and audience members a chance to mingle and socialize. More information about our [choir](#) and the [Arts at St. Bede's](#) program can be found on our website.

[Youth and Children's Programs](#)

Children and Youth Ministries are a top priority for St. Bede's parishioners. Our youngest parishioners receive tender care in our well-provisioned Nursery, located close to the sanctuary. Sunday School classes are offered for 3-12 year old children in bright, welcoming classrooms, with plenty of space and supplies to engage in conversation and lessons. The younger children learn Bible stories and traditions through Godly Play, while those of school age follow a curriculum designed by the Episcopal Church.



These lessons lead them through the seasons of the church, supplemented with hands-on activities, theater and music. Parishioners in middle and high school meet in their own Youth Group room, where they worship, have conversation and plan community service projects.

The first Sunday of the month is dedicated to an all-ages service that is specifically designed to incorporate children and youth. Rather than joining mid-way through the service for communion, they are present through its entirety, and often participate in the service. Sunday School participants also present a Christmas pageant each year that is enjoyed by one and all.

Historically, our Children and Youth programs have been led by a part-time director, supported by an enthusiastic team of volunteers. For the past year, we have been without a director. Our volunteers have worked diligently to provide a rich program for our young people, however, we have seen a steady decline in attendance, with several families moving away in search of a more vibrant program. A new director is due to begin July 2020. We have faith that he will bring new energy and enthusiasm to this crucial ministry at St. Bede's.

[Community Outreach](#)

St. Bede's parishioners seek opportunities to serve those in need. Over the years we've provided support to a wide range of organizations, both local and around the world. Outreach projects welcome all participants: younger or older; those with families or those who are single. Whether we are cooking a dinner for a homeless shelter, wrapping presents for families in need at Christmas, or making auction bids at the annual Gala, we collectively join hands to reach out in support of others. All monies raised for Outreach are held in the Seccombe Outreach Fund, named after two beloved parishioners, Jean and Roger Seccombe, who were exemplary models of serving those in need. For more details about specific projects undertaken in the past year, click on this [link](#).



Our rector will find an intellectually curious community of dedicated volunteers and staff, and understands the necessity of continually growing a passionate membership within the parish.

Trinity School



[Trinity School](#), which shares our campus, is the primary mission of our parish. St. Bede's parishioners value Episcopal education with its inclusive message of tolerance and service. As students matriculate to local middle schools, they arrive as kind and caring individuals, possessing outstanding academic skills. These two areas of focus, exceptional academics and values formation, are the core of the school. The academic mission is the work of school staff; the values formation mission is shared by school and church.

Small class sizes combined with a unique campus environment provide an intimate learning experience for students. The school buildings are on split-levels with the upper grades, the administration offices on the courtyard level. The lower campus houses Kindergarten through 2nd Grade classrooms and opens to a vast play area for recess and PE classes, and a vegetable garden with an adjacent greenhouse for the science classes. Students have use of covered tables for meals and outdoor classroom activities.



The students of Trinity School are privileged in that they have loving and committed families who are supportive and caring and who work to provide their children with an exceptional education. We believe that because of ongoing support and encouragement, these students will be in positions of future decision-making, which will affect others. Our goal is that our students develop discerning hearts and Episcopal values as they grow and navigate in the world.

The school is under new leadership, which has expressed a strong commitment to strengthening school/church collaboration and program development. The school welcomes a rector who will build on the existing strong relationship to collaborate in development of a dynamic program of spiritual formation (chapel and classroom) and who will guide the school community in understanding and communicating the value of Episcopal education.

Our rector will find an inviting campus in a stimulating community and embrace the challenges of managing the various needs from those who benefit from its uses.

Parish Resources

The Church

At the heart of the campus, our stunning pyramid shaped structure looms large wherever you may be. Inside the church, the open beam design captivates the eyes. Large, stained glass dormers on each of the four façades illuminate the interior as do clusters of stained windows in each corner. Upon entering, parishioners are greeted by the warmth of a natural wood finish throughout and a ceiling which peaks 50 feet above their heads.



Lehman Hall

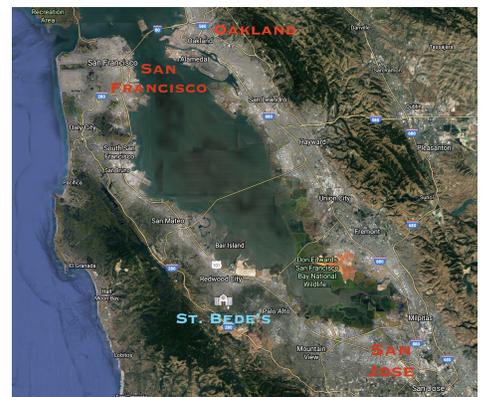


Lehman Hall is a busy place throughout the week. During the school day, it serves as the auditorium for assemblies and plays. There is a full sized stage with a grand piano, while the room can be set for 250 chairs in rows for performances. For banquet type events, the full sized commercial kitchen allows our volunteers to seat and cook for 125+ or prepare meals for community outreach. On Saturday mornings and on weeknights, the room hosts local 12-step groups, while on Sunday mornings, it provides a welcoming space for coffee hour fellowship after services.

Our Community

Menlo Park is a charming community located mid-Peninsula between San Francisco and San Jose. St. Bede's Church sits on a hill in the Sharon Heights neighborhood which allows for spectacular views of Stanford University to the South and the wooded hills to the West.

St. Bede's is uniquely situated along Sand Hill Road, a primary corridor connecting Menlo Park and Palo Alto with Interstate 280. Here, a collection of top research, technology, finance and venture capital firms dominate the landscape. The neighborhoods below the property include public and private schools, grades K-8. Along with two small parks, there are two small but popular commercial centers within a mile of the campus. The merchants here provide for essential needs and many establishments are gathering spots for locals.



Challenges We Face

St. Bede's people are resilient, optimistic and dedicated to their faith and church. We believe that these strengths are securely in place and are what support us when challenges arise. During the past two years, we were faced with a series of challenges. In the fall of 2018, we began to prepare for our rector's five-month sabbatical. With careful planning and preparation, we were able to secure financial support for the sabbatical from a Lilly Grant. The grant-writing process also guided us in creating a plan for the parishioners in her absence. Lay leadership rose to the challenge of providing new avenues for spiritual formation, including a new book group, contemporary bible study, Taizé and outreach projects. The Wardens, Vestry and staff focused on administration and finances, while a part-time priest supported worship and pastoral care. This took a tremendous amount of time and effort on everyone's behalf, yet we successfully met our goals and celebrated how much we had grown as leaders upon her return in June 2019.

It seemed that we had just settled back into our routines that summer, when we learned that our Children and Youth Ministry Director was leaving due to school and commute demands, and our Parish Administrator was moving out of state. This loss of leadership and expertise was felt by all, but we pulled together with the rector to fill those roles. A new administrator was promptly hired while we continued to seek a children's ministry director. (A new Children's and Youth Minister begins this July.)

In early January our rector announced that she had been called to another parish and would be leaving by the end of February. Parishioners were taken by surprise! Losing our rector, with whom we had developed personal relationships during her six years with us, was emotionally challenging. Although we understood that she had grown in her ministry with us, and that this was a wonderful opportunity for her, many felt sad, disappointed and abandoned.

Again, we drew on our strong sense of optimism, resiliency and faith to meet this sudden loss of leadership. Under the able direction of the out-going and incoming Senior Wardens, a transition plan was created, and the search committee formed. We quickly learned that an interim priest was not immediately available to support us, however we would have two supply priests to assist with Sunday services and pastoral needs. It would again be up to lay leadership and staff to keep the church running and maintain programs.

Two weeks after the rector's departure, we found ourselves instructed to shelter-in-place due to the COVID pandemic. The saying that "God will only give you what you can handle," was on some minds, with perhaps some doubts here and there. Currently, our Wardens, staff, lay volunteers and supply priests are working diligently to offer worship services online, continue outreach efforts, maintain fiscal integrity and support one another in love and fellowship. Unfortunately, we have seen a continued decline in parishioners who have moved to other parishes during this period without a rector's presence.

This sequence of challenges in loss of leadership and unforeseen events provided St. Bede's parishioners an opportunity to pull together and display that resilience, perseverance and lay leadership we've shown before. We are confident that our dedicated team is strong and ready to support a new rector from the first day on the campus. We earnestly desire a rector who will provide deep spiritual guidance as well as instill hope and enthusiasm for the future. We pray that we will find that rector so we can continue to grow and flourish in fellowship and Christ's service.

Parish Financial Info

While St. Bede's faces financial challenges as all parishes do, we are fortunate to have stable balance sheets. Below is a summary of our budget over the last two years. For more detailed information on 2019, here is a link to the complete annual report: [AnnualReport2019.pdf](#)

St Bede's Episcopal Church		
Operating Income and Expenditures-- 2019 & prior year		
	2018 Actual	2019 Actual
Income		
Pledge & DAF Income- Current Year	299,084	313,403
Pledge Income- Prior Years	4,173	600
Plate/ Christmas/Easter Income	15,130	10,986
Endowment Fund Inc		30,000
Transfer from/(to) Reserves	13,400	
Other Sources	24	623
Total Income	331,811	355,612
Expense		
Program Expenditures		
Worship	132,711	139,420
Music Program	95,064	99,783
Altar Guild	6,000	6,000
Hospitality	3,413	5,261
Education- All Ages	35,219	28,407
Administration	113,380	99,247
Outreach- Diocese & CDSP	50,014	54,408
Total Program Expenses	435,801	432,526
Maintenance & Repair		
Maintenance & Repair	26,886	10,409
Transfer to Reserve Accounts		
Insurance- Gen'l & Workers Comp	26,945	37,119
Utilities	64,622	63,278
House/Groundskeeping/Misc.	44,646	45,787
Total Maintenance, Insurance & Repair	163,099	156,593
Transfer to Program Reserves		
Total Expenditures	598,900	589,119
Operating Loss (Income - expenses)	(267,090)	(233,507)
Trinity School & Other	267,186	233,935
Expense Credits		
Net Income/ (Deficit)	96	428

date: 1/21/20

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The Way Forward

St. Bede's offers...

- a parish which celebrates and uses its members diversity
- a parish whose members care for each other
- a parish that cares about our community and our world
- a parish that is intellectually curious and open minded
- a tradition of beautiful, profound and inspiring liturgy
- a renewed Children and Youth Ministry program
- association with a highly regarded Episcopal elementary day school
- a reputation for fine liturgical music, both choral and pipe organ
- a respected concert series, *Arts At St. Bede's*.
- a financially sound, well maintained parish
- a beautiful campus
- a church building with a lovely and flexible interior
- an exciting and vibrant cultural and intellectual community in Silicon Valley

St. Bede's seeks a rector who ...

- will lead, develop and support the parish spiritually, organizationally, and materially in partnership with the members of the parish and in collaboration with Trinity School
- will attract and retain new members and families to grow and maintain a welcoming, joyful and inclusive parish life
- will take an active interest in Christian education, children's and adult, and will maintain and nurture the relationship between church and school
- will build on our strengths of music and liturgy, and will preach intellectually honest sermons that helps us discern God's presence and actions in our life beyond church
- knows and respects Anglican traditions while being open to changing cultural understandings
- will make and sustain warm, personal ties to all our members
- will encourage a spirit of caring for each other and acceptance of our differences
- is a "hands on" generalist, engaging broadly in all aspects of parish life
- is confident but not arrogant, curious and hardworking, and listens to the needs of the parish
- will recruit, work with, encourage and inspire staff and volunteers, developing their ministries and putting their talents to use in furthering the Gospel
- is a person of God, of a strong, honest and inquisitive faith, and is able to inspire faith in others
- is a leader in community outreach and will help us, both as a church and as individuals live the Gospel in the world
- is an effective administrator and will maintain good stewardship of our building and grounds