



# ST. AIDAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Portland, Oregon

## PARISH PROFILE

2023



“St. Aidan’s most distinctive characteristics are the culture of appreciation, sincere and enthusiastic gratitude, and attentiveness.

I have never been anywhere else that I can count on engaged and interested thoughts and questions after every sermon.

“It is a place of generosity and genuine concern for other people, for serving those around us. It is also a community with infectious humor, as the Bishop noticed in the meeting she had with us. She said, ‘I never laughed so much at a vestry meeting!’

“Gratitude, attentiveness, generosity, and humor are primary characteristics of the congregation of St. Aidan’s.”

The Rev’d Canon Raggs Ragan  
Interim Rector  
October 2022-June 2023

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## Introduction

St. Aidan's Episcopal Church is nestled on a large campus amid fir trees and flowers reflecting the beauty of the Pacific Northwest. We are adjoined by the twelve acres of the Nadaka Nature Park.

St. Aidan's has a unique and rich history of ministering to the community with a focus on the physical and spiritual needs of the poor and underserved. This ministry has included the creation of the first Alzheimer's



mental health facility in Oregon that was located on our church campus. Prior to its sale, this care center served as a model for other Oregon centers. St. Aidan's leaders along with other local congregations founded the East Multnomah County Loaves and Fishes and Meals on Wheels organizations serving the cities of Portland and Gresham. St. Aidan's was recognized for serving 35,000 meals and providing 11,000 volunteer work hours prior to relocation of these programs.



St. Aidan's is a warm family of traditional Episcopalians who follow the path of Via Media. Central to our worship service is a strong music program featuring an exceptionally talented music director, a dedicated choir, and our Schlicker organ.

Plans for the church began in 1959. St. Aidan's became a full parish in 1967, eventually locating on our four acres of beautiful, wooded greenery. Since inception, St. Aidan's has prevailed through time as a spiritual home for generations of families and individuals from all walks of life. St. Aidan's committed congregation actively serves as



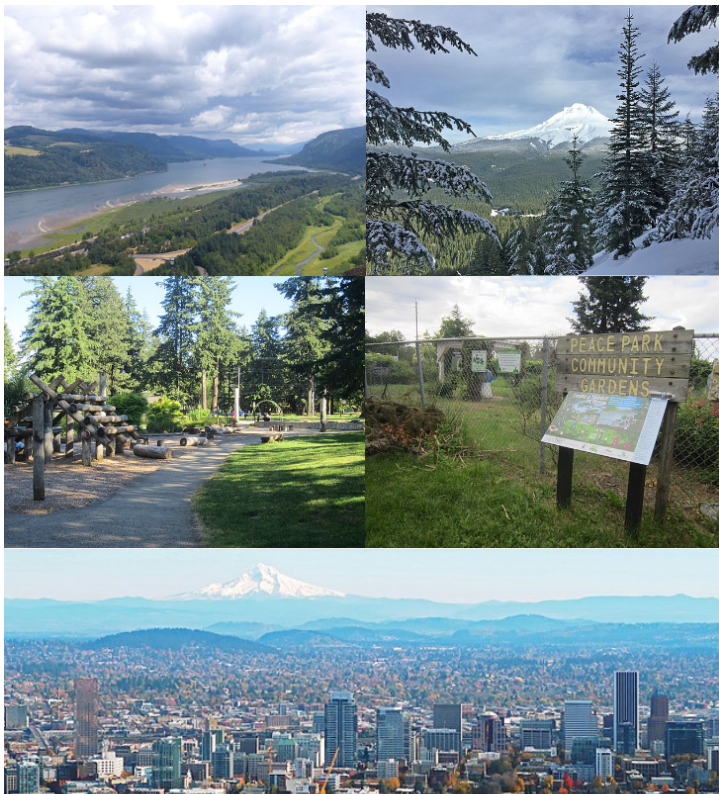
*Mass on the Grass 2022*

lay ministers for worship services and the facilitation of church operations. Our church is also a place of joy with a special appreciation for our natural environment. In this regard each year we commemorate the life of St. Aidan with our "Mass on the Grass." This is a special Holy Communion Service in our outside sacred

worship place next to our labyrinth. St. Aidan's is a welcoming Church open to all who seek a spiritual connection and an Episcopal Church home.

## Where we are Located

St. Aidan's is in the State of Oregon which has been graced with an abundance of natural resources. The State features the amazing Oregon Coast, the agricultural and industrial Willamette Valley, remarkable mountains, and a high plains desert all cleansed by some of the most beautiful rivers in America. St. Aidan's is on the outskirts



*Columbia River Gorge, Mt. Hood, Nadaka Nature Park, Community Garden, City of Portland*

of the City of Portland which is the largest city in the State. Our church is in a residential neighborhood in the outer northeast area of the city away from the city center. With the resources of a major American city, Portland is home to a variety of industries and arts. The Portland Metropolitan area is often referred to as the Silicon Forest due to the region's semiconductor industry. Portland also boasts several universities, and a significant

investment in public schools and libraries, all reflecting the vision of a forward-looking region. Nationally recognized educational assets include Oregon Health and Science University, Reed College, and Portland State University. Although the demographics of the area

consists of a majority of white residents, there are many spoken languages.

The Church also borders the City of Gresham, which is the fourth largest city in the State. The combined Gresham and northeast Portland area is one of the most socially and economically diverse sections of the Portland Metropolitan Area. Gresham is a growing city that boasts a new high school, several grade schools, and is home to Mount Hood Community College, as well as important semiconductor manufacturing operations. In addition to the Multnomah County Courthouse, there are a host of new public and private investments in businesses, libraries, shopping centers, and housing, including the new State of Oregon Human Resources Center. A new Amazon operation is located next door to Gresham in the City of Troutdale. These developments strengthen the traditionally limited economic profile of Gresham. Wood Village and Fairview are two other small cities bordering Gresham. Gresham is known for its parks and greenways but is also located just minutes from the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Multnomah Falls, and the iconic Mount Hood National Forest. Both Portland and Gresham are welcoming communities where tradition and heritage meet innovation and opportunity.

## **Our Mission and Ministry**

Our mission is to spread the promise of Jesus Christ in and beyond our community through worship, education, outreach, and fellowship. St Aidan's embraces Celtic Christianity's appreciation of God in creation and its commitment to the hospitality of the heart. We also include the Benedictine traditions in our services and education programs. Our ministry includes Morning Prayer and Bible study each week, currently led by members of the congregation.

A key feature of our outreach is through partnerships with multiple organizations. During the week our parish hall is home to Eastside Day Care, staffed in part by Russian professionals, which provides services to Ukrainian women and men. On Sunday afternoons our sanctuary is home to Kingdom Harvest, a Liberian Pentecostal congregation. Later in the day the sanctuary hosts a Micronesian church. Several times throughout the week, the sanctuary, parish hall, and our classrooms are utilized by St. Antonious Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church.

We are known as an open and accepting congregation, and all who come through our doors are welcomed without regard to race, color, nationality, sexual orientation, or gender identity. At St. Aidan's we take our Baptismal Covenant seriously, serving Christ in all persons and respecting the dignity of every human being.



During the COVID Pandemic, St. Aidan's partnered with Mercy Connections and the Oregon Health Authority to host COVID Vaccination and Booster Clinics. Presently St. Aidan's is continuing these free clinics, now partnering with Mercy Connections and Providence Health and Services. Our leaders skillfully continued church services and educational programs during the pandemic via Zoom and other electronic technologies. In August, 2020, St. Aidan's sponsored the Episcopal Church's 11-part Sacred Ground series. Although we were in the midst of the pandemic, six members of the parish, along with eight people from outside St. Aidan's, participated in this intense dialogue series on race, via Zoom. In addition, St. Aidan's Basket, our primary food outreach program, provided food and support to the community.

Our goal is to resume all of our pre-pandemic spiritual, educational, and charitable outreach programs. Our efforts at welcoming new



parishioners is already moving to pre-pandemic levels as new faces appear at services and are then invited to our sit-down coffee hour.

## **Gifts and Ministry of the Congregation**



*Coffee hour at St. Aidan's.*

St. Aidan's is an unusually warm and welcoming community. Many in our congregation share stories of how they chose St. Aidan's as their church home. They remark on how genuine and accepting people are in engaging visitors. Our Sunday services are followed by a coffee hour hosted by

individuals and couples. These special times promote positive informal fellowship and provide an opportunity each Sunday for members to meet and communicate with Vestry members.

We are a caring congregation that provides assistance to those among us who are sight- or hearing-impaired, have other physical limitations, or who simply have transportation needs. Our greeting card ministry keeps us in touch with the sick or others who cannot attend church.

Our congregation is flexible and dedicated to worshiping together. During the pandemic, our people learned how to participate in services via Zoom. For those who needed assistance with the technology, members of the congregation stepped up to provide guidance to allow everyone an opportunity to participate in Sunday worship.



*Easter Sunday, 2020 on Zoom*

Lay leaders have also continued to provide weekly services and other regular activities since our previous rector's retirement. We regularly have Rite I Morning Prayer followed by adult Bible study. Vestry meetings and the weekly meetings of the Iona Book Club are conducted via Zoom. Until recently, we also had Rite II Evening Prayer and studied The Rule of St. Benedict via Zoom. Our hope is to resume Rite II Evening Prayer and the study of The Rule of St. Benedict in the future.



Our extensive grounds are trimmed by a professional. Other maintenance including weeding, planting, and garden design is accomplished by our Garden Design Committee. Office computers, our network, and streaming capabilities have all been established and are maintained by volunteers.

Similarly, our security system is coordinated by parishioners and monitored by a professional company. Members skilled in carpentry

and those who can troubleshoot electrical and plumbing systems complete minor repairs. When we purchased a second-hand Schlicker organ last year, the entire move and installation was made by volunteers requiring only one professional consultant. It is worth noting that all parish activities, except for the Director of Music and two part-time Sextons, are contributions of our members.



*Community dinner 2019*

St. Aidan's Basket, our major outreach program, is reviewed periodically. Prior to the pandemic a full, healthy, and appetizing dinner open to all was served personally by members of the congregation every Thursday evening. This meal attracted numerous people

who were without safe housing or who were food insecure.

After a brief time, three young people from our neighborhood joined in helping with food preparation and serving. We were also able to provide family food boxes as well as clothing and household goods for those in need. Although COVID required that we end this outreach, we have continued to provide food in the form of sack lunches on Sundays to visitors in need. We hope to resume a hot meal program soon.



*Sack lunches following our Sunday service.*

Under the leadership of our talented Director of Music, our small choir has developed their gifts and

added immeasurably to our worship services. As a result, congregational singing has significantly increased. Several members of the congregation also play instruments, adding to our musical worship. Other volunteer singers and instrumentalists are recruited externally to share their talents for special services. Plans are currently being developed to provide concerts for the community.

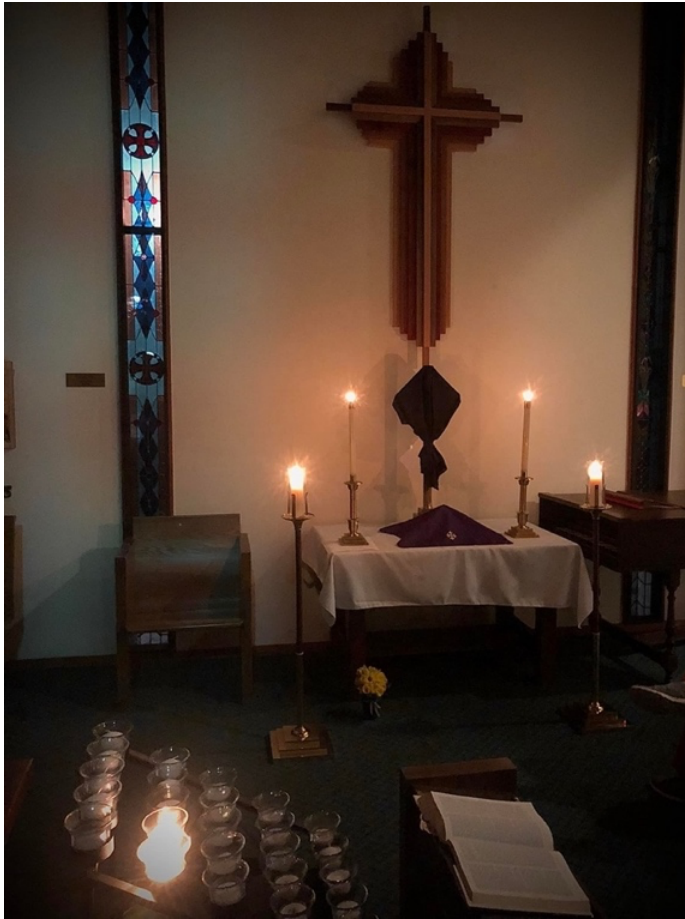


*Choir and musicians 2022 Mass on the Grass.*

Because of the dedication and volunteer leadership of its members, St. Aidan's is an open, accepting, and ecumenical church striving for justice and peace while respecting the dignity of every human being.

## The Clergy Person We Are Seeking

We are looking for a collaborative servant leader. Our new rector will benefit from the dedication and enthusiasm of our congregation, excellent music, our appreciation for inspirational sermons and for the traditions and liturgy of the Episcopal Church.



*Altar of Repose 2022*

A deep spirituality and a dedication to empowering laity in roles encouraged by our Diocese will be hallmarks of our new priest. We want to explore how we might be more involved in all aspects of our worship and fellowship. We are seeking a spiritual leader who will encourage and facilitate our individual lay ministries. We are willing, with guidance, to present education programs and conduct Bible study .

Our hope is to establish ministries that grow our congregation, including new

programs for children; increase our visibility in the community; and enhance our presence in the Diocese.

Our new rector will be energetic and explore ways for us to reach out to those in the community who are in need while helping us develop relationships with organizations that share our goals. Flexibility and an openness to non-traditional partnerships will also be a vital trait of our new leader.

Our Celtic traditions are an important aspect of St. Aidan's character. In this respect we seek a rector who will continue our parish tradition of appreciation for all of God's creation. We also hope to restore a mid-week celebration of the Eucharist and seek a leader who can help us resume insightful study of The Rule of St. Benedict.



The ability to bridge the spectrum of Episcopal philosophies will be a characteristic of our new rector. Although most of us fall somewhere in the ideological middle, among our congregation are those who have expressed a wish for a "conservative but outgoing" priest, and those who are looking for someone who "embraces some of the ideas of John Shelby Spong." We have no desire for left or right politics but a deep desire to hear the Good News and how we can be the Lord's hands in the world today.

Experience in attracting new families and individuals to church is important to our congregation. We do not look to simply fill the pews, but to spread the Gospel to our community, to share God's love

for the creation, and to invite others to develop a love for our way of worship.

Finally, a priest with a good sense of humor – including the ability to see the humor in one’s own foibles – will be most welcome. We are looking for a priest with respect and appreciation for the gifts of each person, a desire to learn from us, and a compassionate heart as we journey together into a shared future.



*The Esme J.R. Culver Garden Labyrinth*

## **Financial Status**

St. Aidan's has a strategic fund that is restricted to church beautification and an endowment. We have utilized monies from the endowment fund to make some improvements to our buildings, such as adding accessible doors to our parish hall, painting the narthex, and the permanent installation of an outdoor church bell.

For many years, we have presented negative-balance budgets to the congregation for approval at our Annual Meeting, using the earnings from these funds to meet ongoing expenses. The recent downturn in the financial markets and the loss of income from building use during the pandemic have resulted in the erosion of both funds. We now find ourselves in the position of considering applying for a loan for much-needed maintenance on our aging buildings. The roofs on all three buildings were last replaced in 1996, and new roofs will soon be necessary.

The commitment of our congregation to St. Aidan's continuing operation is evidenced by the fact that our pledging members have faithfully maintained their contributions, even during the pandemic. Our annual St. Aidan's Day Festival, which is currently in the planning stages and is our major fundraising activity, and our financial agreements with our tenants both add to our bottom line.

We hope to hire a half-time rector who is open and able to take on these challenges with the help of a small, enthusiastic, and involved congregation.

Our financial documents are available upon request.



## The Episcopal Church in Western Oregon



*the*  
**EPISCOPAL**  
**CHURCH** *in*  
WESTERN OREGON

The Episcopal Church in Western Oregon consists of 60+ faith communities. Our diocese originated as part of the Missionary Jurisdiction of the Oregon and Washington Territories in 1853 and became its own diocese in 1889.

The Rt. Rev. Diana D. Akiyama was ordained and consecrated as the eleventh Bishop of Oregon on January 30, 2021. She was the first Japanese-American woman to be ordained to the priesthood and the first Asian-American woman ordained Bishop in The Episcopal Church. Speaking the truth in love expressed through authenticity, trustworthiness, compassion, and clarity of vision are the hallmarks of Bishop Akiyama's spiritual leadership. "I am energized when my leadership helps communities to shift assumptions, restore expectations, and imagine a new way forward. Listening with empathy, courage and openness allows me to walk with individuals and communities to connect their deepest yearnings with God's call," Bishop Akiyama stated.



### How to Apply

Please submit your Cover Letter of Interest, your OTM Profile, and your current Resume to our Canon to the Ordinary, The Rev. Canon Christopher Craun at [ccraun@ecwo.org](mailto:ccraun@ecwo.org). All applications will be held in strict confidence.

## Life at St. Aidan's



*St. Aidan's Day Festival, 2019*



*St. Aidan's Day Festival, 2022  
Baskets for Fundraiser*



*St. Aidan's Day, 2022, Eastside Day Care*



*St. Francis' Day 2019  
Blessing of the Animals*



*St. Francis' Day 2019  
Prayers at Sophia's Garden*



*Bishop's Visitation, 2023  
Confirmation and Reaffirmations*



*The Great Vigil, 2023  
Adult Baptism*



*Easter Sunday, 2023  
Flowering of the Cross*



*Advent IV/Christmas Eve 2022  
Greening of the Church*

