



St. Augustine's in-the-Woods Episcopal Church

Freeland, Washington

Church Mini-Profile

Mission Statement

Wherever you are on your journey, you are welcome here!

We believe in a loving, liberating and life-giving God who extends welcome and dignity to all and asks us to tend to the wholeness of the Earth and all people. Jesus is our companion and guide, showing the way toward abundant love.

At St. Augustine's in-the-Woods we cherish faith, family, community, and shared worship.

St. Augustine's in-the-Woods seeks a Priest-in-Charge to journey with us in mutual ministry advancing our mission of living into the abundant love of our life-giving God and sharing it with our world.



Who are we as the community at St. Augustine's in-the-Woods?

We are a vibrant faith community situated in a glorious portion of God's creation on Whidbey Island. We are a hopeful, Christ-centered family extending a warm, genuine welcome to ALL, wherever they are in their journey of faith. We value all who might hope to find "home" here and share our journey with Christ.

This is a joyful, magical place. We acknowledge that we share this land with the indigenous Coast Salish peoples and share responsibility to be good and faithful stewards of it. Our island home affords us the benefits of a rural life as well as the culture of the Puget Sound region. The beauty of this place, with its abundant wildlife, majestic evergreens, and wild shorelines is a precious gift.

We are a congregation with a rich [history](#) established as a mission church 75 years ago and becoming a parish of the Diocese in 1981. We have also had a long connection with the Order of St. Benedict and have a number of oblates. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are committed to inclusivity (age, race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and neurodiversity), identification and use of individual gifts, generosity, and care for one another. We value community, children, our forest



location and campus. Music (including community arts) is an important element of our worship, and we make efforts to share it with our neighbors. We value our Episcopal identity yet are enriched by the presence of many who come to us from varied church backgrounds, or none.

Welcome and community-building occur as we live out the ministries and activities of our church, many of which can be explored on our [website](#). There is a strong sense of community, and rich coffee hour fellowship. Members demonstrate a willingness to volunteer, provide strong leadership, and support one another on our common journey. St. Augustine's in-the-Woods is an open and affirming congregation that partners with our LGBTQ community groups.

Communion with our Creator is the reason for our existence. It drives our actions within our church community and the larger Whidbey Community. As we are transformed by God's abundant love for us, we are called to share that joyful communion with others. This includes honoring our long-time heritage and being open to new opportunities and ways to share God's love.

Being transformed by our relationship with Christ is a lifelong process within our hearts and the heart of our community. As we continue our journey of transformation, we are open to new joy and new opportunities.

What is our practice of transformation and abundance?

We are currently in a time of transition, and we embrace this liminal season as a chance to build on our past as we move deeper into our call as a Christian community. This process will be in collaboration with our new priest whose unique skills and perspectives will help guide us. As a congregation we seek the guidance of the Spirit. We pray that wherever we are led we will be better able to minister to the needs of our congregation, our community, and our world.



For the last two years, the Vestry with our Rector has been asking the question: How can we best be organized to accomplish our mission? As we have grown (40% in the last two years), our goal has been to ensure that our many ministries, committees, and activities stay connected and grounded in our core mission. We are on a journey. We see four redesigned standing committees as the structure of the "ship" that carries us, our new mission as the "rudder" that guides us, and the Holy Spirit as the "wind" that powers our sails.

In August 2025, the Vestry approved moving to a new organizational framework arising from materials brought to us by our former Rector from the [College of Congregational Development](#).

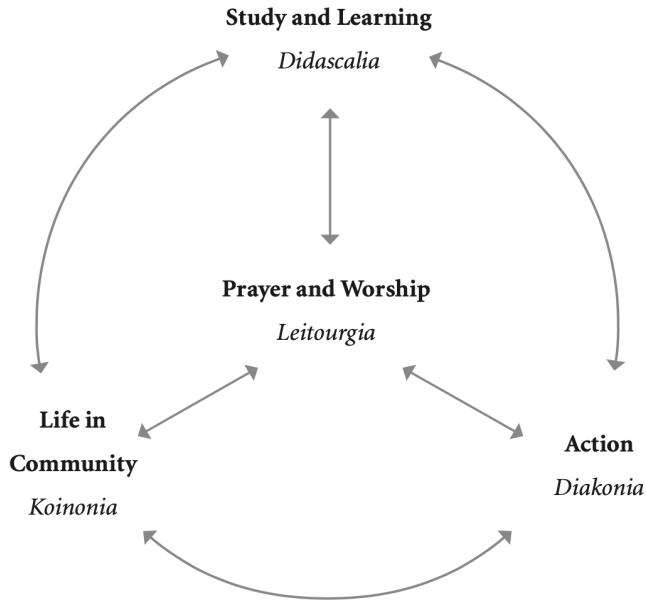


FIGURE A-7: MODEL 2—SOURCES OF TRANSFORMATION

We started over a year ago with the essential work of a congregation through the tripartite purposes of: **Gather–Transform–Send**. We then examined the practices, ministries, and committees of the church through the four sources of transformation outlined in the college curriculum (See Figure A-7).

From this work, four overarching standing committees were proposed: Prayer and Worship, Operations and Resource Management, Community Care and Engagement, and Spirituality and Lifelong Formation. Examples of each area of transformation are

described below—with more details available through our website and other church materials.

Prayer and Worship

[Prayer and worship](#) are at the heart of our communal life. This includes two services on Sunday, periodic Monday Evensong, and a healing Eucharist on Wednesdays. Our worship draws not only from the Book of Common Prayer, but other Anglican sources, Celtic prayers, and contemporary liturgical resources, as we strive to expand our image of God and acknowledge God's care for all creation. All services are prepared for and widely supported by lay leaders, acolytes, and our faithful altar guild.

Our music is led by our Missioner for Music, Henry Lebedinsky, a liturgist, composer, arranger and accomplished musician. A choir accompanies our second service throughout the year with an informal choir in the summer. Music is deeply appreciated by this congregation as a representation of God's creativity, and we are pleased to own the only pipe organ on the Island.



Spirituality and Lifelong Formation

This is a great place to think and worship in the woods. There are many [Lifelong formation opportunities](#). We represent a great variety of prior church backgrounds, or none, and seek to



provide places where everyone can engage according to their own needs and interests.

Christian formation takes many forms at St. Augustine's, in keeping with the diverse backgrounds, interests, and needs of our members. Our congregation is blessed with a number of retired priests, retired seminary professors, and others trained in spiritual direction and various Christian practices who share their gifts regularly.

Community Care and Engagement

We provide enrichment opportunities, especially to our [senior community](#), an active [animal ministry](#), and highly successful [annual sales](#) that directly go to our community non-profit partners. There is a deep congregational commitment to [creation care](#) and [social justice](#) rooted in our faith and robust community activism to bring Christ's love to bear in this turbulent period of our history.

We have a columbarium and spreading ground for persons and pets.



Operations and Resource Management

Operations and Resource Management is an umbrella for all our financial and facilities groups and committees, all of whom act as stewards for the abundance of the church. We have a stunning campus sitting on 2.5 acres overlooking Holmes Harbor. Our dedicated groups that maintain it include a robust building and grounds team, "[Alder Guild](#)," and other volunteers.



After a period of resource challenges, we are financially sound with income exceeding expenses.

This has been supported by a generous congregation, active and effective stewardship campaigns, and a professionally managed substantial endowment. We have a purposeful communications strategy through three weekly communications, our website, printed materials, and announcements. Our communications goals are to be invitational, open, and transparent.



What do we know about the community we serve?

South and Central Whidbey Island are heavily populated by retirees, many of whom have had postsecondary education and professional careers of various sorts, [The median age of our community is 57 years and lacks racial and ethnic diversity](#). Housing is a challenge owing to high prices (the median price being between \$600-\$700K). This has contributed to housing insecurity for too many of our neighbors.



There is a vibrant arts community and a strong commitment to creation care and volunteerism.

Increasingly, tourism plays an important role in our local economy, and the area abounds in outdoor activities and recreation.

Our community partnerships represent the values of our congregation. These include partnerships with senior resources, food banks, resources for the houseless, green partnerships, and common commitments to social justice activities. Many of our partnerships can be explored on our [website](#) and fundraising activities have sent more than a quarter million dollars back into the community.

What do we see as opportunities ahead?

In the past three years, St. Augustine's in-the-Woods has experienced growth and renewed vitality in existing and new ministries. We owe a debt of gratitude to the gifts and energy of our previous rector who ably built connections and helped strengthen the spiritual underpinnings of our shared life. We are eager to build on that good work.

During this liminal season we have committed ourselves to deepening our commitments and to listening closely to what God is calling us to next. What follows are just a few examples of the opportunities we see in front of us:

- ***Extending our welcome:*** This includes integrating new people and welcoming them to use their gifts for the good of all; making the lives of the children among us more visible and integral to our life; and promoting greater outreach to our community and beyond through means such as an upgraded livestream capability.
- ***Deeping our spiritual practices:*** Offering more opportunities to learn the spiritual practices of prayer, meditation, worship, and study. We look for further opportunities for spiritual practice groups that meet regularly, and ways of promoting our Meditation Trail and building a labyrinth on site.
- ***Stewarding our setting:*** What unrealized opportunities might we have to leverage our natural setting, perhaps by creating a visible picnic area? Our fellowship space (Campbell Hall) is one of the largest community spaces on the island and is used by the Whidbey Island Music Festival. We wish to explore ways to further extend our welcome and values in the use of this space.
- ***Developing programs and ministry to more strategically support targeted needs in our community.*** We have a new ministry this year to support those in transitional housing and see further needs to support people in variety of life transitions.

What are our hopes for mutual ministry?

At St. Augustine's in-the-Woods, our parishioners, both individually as well as collectively, have set a strong culture in serving God, our congregation and the wider community. Service is the way we live out our mission, and our priest-in-charge would be welcomed as our spiritual leader to support the myriad ways our parishioners serve.

As a vestry we value honest and open communication, and we welcome all ideas. We actively practice listening, discussing, and reflecting on diverse thoughts and viewpoints that support our mission and mutual ministries. We enjoy strong lay leaders who share a collaborative approach to leadership. To this end, we are committed to incorporating and supporting the vision of our

priest. We embrace our priest as part of the St. Augustine's family and respect their leadership role in the spiritual growth and development of our congregation through our mission statement.



St. Augustine's has an active and involved vestry as well as a wide range of parishioners willing to take leadership roles, chair committees, and volunteer in our ministries. Our new organizational plan has been developed to enhance connections and communications among our various ministries and activities.

Being transformed by our relationship with Christ is a lifelong process within our hearts and the heart of our community. As we continue our journey of transformation, we are open to new joy and new opportunities. We are eager to explore our unfolding call to mutual ministry with our new Priest-in-Charge.

On behalf of the Congregation, The Vestry of St. Augustine's in-the-Woods

Mark Anderson
Bryan Avila, Junior Warden
Ron Costeck
Grant Heiken
Sue Idso
Elaine Ludtke
Maureen Masterson
Patti Muncey
Brad Portin, Senior Warden
Nanette Rosenthal, Treasurer
Frank Shirbroun, Clerk

September 2025