St. Augustine’s Parish Profile 2021

St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church
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PO Box 220
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Hawaiian Islands

Mission Statement: A place to *be* the love of God and to *feel* the love of God.
WELCOME

St. Augustine’s has transitioned many times over the years trying to honor our past, be faithful to the word of God and remain committed to finding new ways to serve the community. Our services marry traditional Episcopal liturgy with our diverse local cultures which nourish our mind and soul. Our music is led by an accomplished guitarist which ties us to local culture. Robust fellowship follows the service each Sunday to nourish our bodies and nurture relationships. We celebrate birthdays and anniversaries while remembering those who are sick through an active card ministry. Our youth are passionate ukulele musicians, adding to their repertoire during lessons each Wednesday, enjoy pizza zoom parties and parking lot movies. Our wider community visits regularly for community meals, Boy Scout meetings, shopping at our Thrift Shop, a weekly Fruit Sharing in the parking lot and once yearly for our very popular bazaar.

Several of our current church leaders have deep roots in Kohala and follow in the footsteps of their parents who had left their mark on St. Augustine’s. They and the other members of the Bishop’s Committee provide very capable leadership for the day to day operations of the church.

To further characterize our worshiping community the following is a quote from a supply priest who recently spent three weeks at St. Augustine’s. “The St. Augustine’s congregation turns outward to the community not only in mission but also in spirit…..The result is a rare type of openness. I would call it Divine Love…….What St. Augustine’s offers is an invitation to “come as you are,” with no demands, no need to be someone or something else to fit in.”

What we seek in a new priest would be a person inspired by this profile, who will bring fresh energy and joy to our worship community. Comments from the congregation reflect a desire for someone who is community oriented, ecumenically engaged, who reflects the world outside in sermons, excited by diversity, a lover of all kinds of music, and is comfortable engaging with youth and young adults. With regard to the Church of the future, someone who could reimagine with us our liturgy, our music and our worship space to better speak to the larger community. Perhaps someone who would push us bywidening our horizons, expanding our personal spiritual disciplines and seeking new ways to experience God in our midst. While we nurture ourselves within the church we look to a future beyond our Red Doors.

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LITURGY AND WORSHIP

In normal times the worship of St. Augustine’s revolves around Holy Eucharist Rite II as the principal service. In the absence of a priest, Morning Prayer becomes the principal service. Many parts of our service are sung or chanted by the choir and musicians. In recent years we have transitioned from the organ to the guitar. The organ remains in place which gives us flexibility for the future.

Our Director of Music Mila Polevia is an accomplished guitarist and vocalist who composes much of our service music and adjusts many hymns from the 1982 Hymnal to his instrument. When composing for the congregation Mila’s goal is to make the music easy to sing and memorable, without taking away from the power of the words. He often incorporates the Hawaiian language which speaks to our history. A regular part of our service is the singing of “The Queen’s Prayer” in Hawaiian. This prayer of forgiveness was written by Queen Liliuokalani in 1895 while under house arrest in Iolani Palace. For the past two years Mila has added Vesper services during Lent and Advent.

The passing of the Peace is more vigorous than the rubrics would allow but important to the congregation, as well as the joining of hands while singing the Lord’s prayer.

St. Augustine’s is blessed to have a Deacon committed to outreach and liturgical presence. Her involvement in the Kohala community helps bring into focus how best we can share our Aloha and be of service to our neighbors.

Because we follow the mandates of the diocese, we have altered the nature of our services to conform to the requirements of the pandemic. The church's technology has been updated to facilitate online streaming of our services. Currently we are streaming as well as offering in house services with communion to a limited number of worshipers with overflow capacity in Walker Hall. We will all welcome the advent of the vaccine and rejoice when we can return to normal church services and fellowship once again.

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YOUTH

The youth of St. Augustine’s are very important to our congregation because they are the future leaders of our church. They serve as a reminder that we are called by Christ to be a community of faith that is honest, curious and true to what we believe in. St. Augustine’s provides many opportunities for children to learn and become closer to God by attending Sunday School, becoming an acolyte, playing ukulele for the youth choir and participating in Bible Camp during the summer.

Kathy Matsuda is the Youth Director of St. Augustine’s. She plans and coordinates all of the events for the youth. Every Sunday, youth ages 18 years or younger are invited to attend Sunday School during the 9:00 a.m. service. They are given an opportunity to learn about the Sunday Gospel reading through the children’s Worship Bulletin and Lesson Plans That Work. The bulletin is filled with puzzles and coloring pages. The youth also do crafts, sing songs and pray.

The acolyte program involves a large, active group of children who rotate serving as acolytes during the 9:00 a.m. service. Acolytes can start in third grade and continue through to the end of high school. Some acolytes can also train to become Eucharistic Ministers.

Every Wednesday at 5:00 p.m., the youth meet with our Music Director, Mila Polevia to play the ukulele. Before the pandemic required liturgical adjustments, the youth would perform once a month during Youth Sundays in front of the congregation. St. Augustine’s recognizes the importance of youth participation through its enthusiastic team of acolytes. The youth also performs at our Annual Bazaar.

Every summer, St. Augustine’s holds a Vacation Bible Camp that is filled with music, dance, crafts and Bible verse activity. The youth from St. Augustine’s are also invited to attend Bible Camp on Oahu at Camp Mokuleia. They must be at least 6 years old to attend. Youth from other Episcopal Churches across the state are invited to join as well. Every four years several of our High School youth attend the National Episcopal Youth Event. During this event, time is spent in worship, large group presentations, small group discussions on a variety of topics and a lot of time hanging out and meeting people from around the world.

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Pictures of the Youth

Jazelle Ariola serving as acolyte

The youth playing ukulele during youth Sunday

Scholarship Recipients and their parents

The youth at Camp Mokuleia on Oahu

OUR MINISTRIES

St. Augustine’s parishioners are ambitious and committed to serving God and the community through the church’s many ministries. Here is a brief overview of a few.

1.) Community Meal: We have an on-going community meal ministry that began as a monthly event, but has continued for over 17 years. In the Spring of 2020 it became a bi-weekly event. We’re now serving 500 meals with a drive-through delivery. This has now become a larger community partnership.

2.) B.S.A.: St. Augustine’s is the chartered organization for Pack and Troop 56. We also financially support our Aloha Council. This is a very fulfilling partnership for all of us.

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3.) Music: We have an active music ministry with a very qualified music director. He oversees our choir, the youth ukulele program and writes new worship music weekly. We also have special music at our Lenten slack-key vessels which is great for renewing the spirit & calming the mind. Our music director uses the guitar as his instrument.

4.) Annual Church Bazaar: Our annual church bazaar is held in September and is a huge success as a fundraiser and as an outreach ministry. We aim to attract people to our campus with various food booths, ethnic food, silent auction, music, hula and lots of boutique and white elephant items. The annual church bazaar is a fun day for all.

5.) Thrift Shop: St. Augustine’s is so proud of our small-sized thrift shop ministry. We accept donated goods and clothes and we sort and resell at low prices to help out our community and help us with needed income.

6.) Fruit Sharing is fairly new. We have community members bringing fruit to give away and people bring what they have extra to give away.

Pictures of our ministries

Boy Scouts Pack & Troop 56

Community Meal Volunteers preparing the food to be served

Cars line up for the Community Meal Drive Through

The youth redeem their Christmas Voucher at the Thrift Shop

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BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

OUR SANCTUARY

Our church, affectionately known as the ‘little church on the hill,’ was completed in 1884. The red door is traditional among many Episcopal churches and welcomes the stranger as well as regular attendees. Beside the Red Door is a plaque which reads “E Komo Mai.” This means Welcome in Hawaii. The warm accepting spirit at St. Augustine’s sees the return each year of many part time congregants.

Inside the sanctuary, light streams through eight beautiful stained glass windows which not only remind us of our history but also reflect the present. St. Augustine our patron saint is the subject of the first window in front. Further back you see Jesus and the children. The children pictured represent the ethnic diversity of our congregation. A third window shows the cross with a poi pounder below. The exquisitely carved altar reminds us of our English ancestors. A carving on the side of the altar reads: “This altar table is made from an oak grown on the Loxley Estate Staffordshire, presented to the Church at Puehuehue in 1883.” The sanctuary can seat 70 plus 8 chairs for the choir. A bell tolls the call to service each Sunday.

The lych gate in the foreground of the picture leads the way to the church and the historic graveyard to the left. Hawaiian funerals are often day long events. Friends congregate before a service to pay their respects to the family, and gather afterwards for festive buffets where memories are shared. Their cards and gifts for the family are received by friends sitting in the lych gate.

Also pictured in the foreground are recently constructed tiered gardens, an addition to the cemetery for those whose tradition honors cremation.

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Walker Hall serves many needs in the life of this church. It was appropriately named for James Walker, an Archdeacon who served St. Augustine’s for thirty years beginning in 1919. He was remembered for his love of and involvement in the Kohala community.

An important tradition at St. Augustine’s is fellowship after church services every Sunday morning. Held in Walker Hall, many dishes are brought and shared and conversation is plentiful. All visitors are welcome. Boy Scout Troop 56 meets weekly, ukulele lessons for our youth are held every Wednesday, a popular summer Bible camp for the community takes place each year- to name only a few of the activities the hall supports. The certified kitchen has been vital to our outreach to the community because of Covid 19. Adjoining the hall, the second red door on our campus, is entry to the priest’s office. Below the hall is a large Sunday school room.

Because of the efforts of technologically astute church members the campus is now wired for high speed internet and wifi which has enabled us to live stream our services from the church.

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to the community at large. This also accommodates church members in Walker Hall if the church is filled to capacity. In the future this will enable, for example, funeral services to be seen when space in the sanctuary is not adequate for friends and family. St. Augustine’s continues to be forward-looking.

James Walker Hall

THRIFT STORE

No-one seems to know when the Thrift Store first began. It has remained St. Augustine’s principal outreach to the community for as long as people can remember. It not only serves the community but is a principal revenue stream in support of the mission of St. Augustine’s. Under dedicated lay leadership and guidance, several volunteers from the church and the community at large make the thrift store the place to be on a Wednesday or Thursday afternoon. Its many loyal supporters come not only to find reasonably priced clothing and household goods but also community. Several adjustments have been made to satisfy Covid-19 protocol which has allowed the store (with the exception of a few short weeks) to remain open.

Hatsue Hayashi collects customer’s payments
Deacon Lani Bowan sanitizes customer’s hands
Inside the Thrift Shop

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VICARAGE

The Vicarage, home to many priests over the years, is an attractive 1,450 square feet home with attached carport. A sizable master suite and dining room have been added to the original house which had two bedrooms (or now a bedroom and office), full bath, a large living room with louvered windows and adjoining kitchen. It is located behind the Thrift store, separated by a privacy fence. Residents enjoy the benefits of both lemons and avocados grown in the front yard.

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HISTORY

St. Augustines’s was founded as an Anglican mission by English families who immigrated to Kohala to manage the numerous sugar plantations. Today the church reflects the lifestyle, ethnic diversity and religious life of the region’s past and present.

Dedicated in February, 1884 the original St. Augustine’s church was a small rectangular building. Undergoing an expansion in 1913, the layout of the church became a cross adding space for the altar, sacristy and the choir. The first baptism was performed at Easter in 1884. The first marriage was celebrated on Christmas Day 1885.

A part of Kohala history rests in the adjoining cemetery where many of the founders are buried. Begun during the reign of King Kalakaua, our church saw the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, years of Territorial government and finally statehood. Founded as an Anglican Mission of the mother Church of England, she easily made the transition to become part of the American church. The American prayer book was first used in 1904.

St. Augustine’s sits serenely on the small hill at Puehuehu, blessed with the devotion of a hundred twenty-five years and counting of faithful worshipers.

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LOCATION (Kapa`au)

The island of Hawaii (also called the Big Island) is the southeasternmost and largest of the Hawaiian Islands. The island is a total of 4,030 square miles (10,438 square km) which continues to grow as Kilauea, the world’s most active volcano, continues to pour lava into the ocean. It has five volcanoes called Hualalai, Kilauea, Kohala, Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa.

St. Augustine’s is located in the relatively rural and isolated district of North Kohala. Within this district there are two towns, Hawi and Kapa`au. The church is built on a small hill in Kapa`au. From warm sunny beach parks to breath-taking valley scenery, the town is surrounded by history and beautiful views. It is home to the original King Kamehameha I statue, which is not far from where Hawaii’s greatest king was born.

A large proportion of Hawaii’s population is Asian. Many are descendants of immigrants brought to work on the sugar plantations in the 1850s. North Kohala’s residents are particularly reflective of those early immigrants. Hawaii has the highest percentage of Asian Americans in the U.S., mainly Filipino Americans and Japanese Americans. In addition, there are Caucasians, Chinese Americans and Korean Americans. Indigenous Hawaiians number 70,000 (or 5.5% of the population). There are also a small but growing number of Latino-Americans particularly from Mexico, Puerto Rico and Venezuela who make Hawaii their home.

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