



**St. Mary's Anglican Church**  
**Ponoka, Alberta**

**Parish Profile 2019**

**Revised 2021**

*St. Mary's Anglican Church, Ponoka is searching for a rector to nurture and guide our parish of all ages towards deeper spiritual growth, community development and outreach.*

*Prayer has guided us to a shared ministry with the Church of Epiphany, Rimbey. We propose a 100% shared position with 75% allocated to St. Mary's and 25% to the Church of Epiphany.*

## **Our Parish**

We are conveniently situated in the heart of Central Alberta with easy access to the major metropolitan areas of Red Deer one half hour South, and Edmonton , an hour's drive North on the Queen Elizabeth II Highway. Ponoka is on Treaty 6 land, and home to 7329 local citizens and 9800 County residents, both in many cases are generational, a stable community. The name of Ponoka is a Blackfoot word for elk. The community' history dates back 128 years. St. Mary's is in the most southern part of the Diocese.

Though growing somewhat slower than national averages, Ponoka's residential and economic growth has been steady, boasting 443 businesses, a hospital and care centre, Provincial Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury, which offers post- secondary onsite psychiatric nursing program. There are several service clubs including the Ponoka Drop- In Centre for seniors. Minutes away in Red Deer is an accredited university and in Lacombe, Burman, University College. In addition to everyday amenities, the educational, recreational and spiritual needs of residents and families are well met in the prairie lifestyle community.

Recreation and sports enthusiasts have a vast choice of seasonal sports, including parks and playgrounds, trout pond, two golf courses, tennis courts, indoor aquaplex with deep and shallow ends and a climbing wall. Eight km trails meander through the scenic Battle River Valley that dissects the town. The Ponoka Stampede is a world famous event and is Canada's largest seven day pro rodeo, which takes place the last week of June each year.

A thriving agriculture industry of grain and quota based production, Ponoka is one of Alberta's lowest utility and tax structures.

Residents and visitors worship in 19 churches in and around Ponoka, including St. Mary's, which has served its congregation for 115 years.

## The History of St. Mary's

While embracing believers from a wide variety of faith perspectives, St. Mary's Church seeks to maintain balance and focus on Jesus Christ, the head of the church.

St. Mary's Anglican Church history started prior to the formation of the parish by the Bishop of Calgary. English immigrants worshipped together in various locations for several years. The CPR Railway building, the Presbyterian Church and a room over the old Co-op store were some of the sites used. On July 07, 1903 Bishop Cyprian of Calgary formed the Parish officially.



In November of 1904 Lot no.11 in the Town of Ponoka was being sold by a NWT farmer for the sum of \$140. To provide the funds to purchase the property a few women raised over \$200 by cooking a chicken dinner for the town. The building that was subsequently erected was the second church building in Ponoka and was called "The English Church." Travelling lay missionaries provided sporadic services and in 1914 Bishop Allen Gray of Edmonton consecrated the church building. In 1921 an addition was made to the church and in 1928 the first Parish Hall was completed as a separate building on the property. To provide sacraments and other services for the parish a Priest came from Wetaskiwin by horse and buggy or sleigh, dependent on the weather.

In 1957 a second Parish Hall was dedicated by Bishop Howard Clark. This building was built with some discarded materials from the Provincial Mental Hospital. The parish was a mission church until 1957 when financial assistance from the diocese was no longer needed. In 1963 the old church building was torn down. A new church was erected, dedicated on May 2, 1965 and consecrated on June 12, 1974 by Bishop Burch. It included in its architecture a free standing altar, a new concept, placed in the center of the sanctuary with the congregation seated on three sides.

In 1985, due to new safety regulations for public buildings, the parish decided to build a new hall connected to the church. On September 22, 1985 Bishop Kent Clarke dedicated the new addition. A mortgage burning took place on April 15, 1999 making St. Mary's debt free.

## About St. Mary's

Today's building and grounds are well maintained. When you enter the narthex through the front doors to the left you will see two sets of stairs. The ascending stairs lead to the "Upper Room" which is used for small meetings and our active prayer shawl group. To the right is a storage room and the church library. To the left is the Administrative office and at the back of the room are two more rooms where office supplies and prayer shawls are kept. The descending stairs from the narthex lead to the women's and men's washrooms as well as another small meeting room, a Sunday school room and a toy storage room. At the end of the hall there is an alternate emergency exit.



When you turn right as you come into the church you will find a wheelchair accessible washroom, coat racks and the congregation's mailboxes. The Rector's office is situated in this area before you enter the sanctuary through double doors. The sanctuary has stained glass windows on each side wall with a cross suspended over the central altar. We have a piano and organ for music and have moved some pews to develop an area for our children to be able to stay through our services. We have called it our "Prayground" and Christian activities and crafts are available. This



allows children and parents to attend the full church service and we are finding it is working well. At the opposite end of the sanctuary there are two rooms, the Sacristy and our small Lucas Chapel.

The entrance to the church hall is directly across from the front door on the main floor. Our hall is used for many community gatherings and also for funeral teas. We have chairs and tables to accommodate 150+ people. Our kitchen is licensed and all supplies and maintenance for it are overseen by the ACW. There is a cleaning supply room next to the kitchen and two exit doors on the far side of the hall. The hall floor is stripped and waxed twice a year and is in good repair. One of our members is a labyrinth instructor and has obtained and developed a portable canvas replica for the church, which covers the whole hall floor. She has provided meaningful occasions for our congregation and others to walk it.



For the last few years we have been upgrading our property. We have taken down a wall surrounding the front and side of the church and are in the process of developing a memorial garden. A smaller labyrinth for all to use is now in place within the garden area. We are nurturing our Reconciliation chokecherry tree as well as our flower garden and planters. Our next project for this area is the replacement of our church sign.

### **St. Mary's Congregation**

St. Mary's could be described as a traditional church; adaptable, open and inclusive. Sunday attendance averages 20 – 25 worshippers who participate fully in the service. Members blessed with musical gifts share from the Anglican liturgical tradition and a variety of other praise and worship musical styles. Guests are welcomed and invited to fellowship following the service.

Parishioners tell us our top four characteristics are:

1. A growing relationship with God as a result of being a member of St. Mary's.
2. Feeling cared for and supported by the members.
3. A volunteer base for Sunday worship services, including 3 Lay Readers and teams of Lectors, Servers and Musicians. These are supplemented by the works of the ACW and Altar Guild.
4. The development of meaningful relationships with others at St. Mary's.

Parishioners have noted that we are challenged in the following areas

- To make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.
- To provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life
- To develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into life of the church.
- To deepen our sense of connection to God and one another through stronger worship services.

### **St. Mary's and the Community**

St. Mary's cultivates a Christian life in the Ponoka community and surrounding area. The Parishioners relate to the wider community and responds to needs in a variety of ways and discipleship. Through prayer ministry and Pastoral care members are able to reach out to the senior lodges, hospitals and personal homes if needed.

St. Mary's welcomes the community into the church, through the labyrinth ministry, Funeral Teas, prayer shawls, Bible Study, Week of prayer for Christian Unity, White Caners Support Group, Friday Night: Rejoice and Vacation Bible School.

An active presence is established and maintained in the community by working with local businesses and organizations, and developing relationships through various means such as Meals on Wheels, Ponoka Ministerial, and Good Friday Walk of the Cross. St. Mary's also partakes in supporting The Salvation Army Van program in Edmonton through making packed lunches , taking warm clothes, and giving prayers and emotional support to the women in need on the streets.



On the grounds of St. Mary's an outdoor 3 loop labyrinth has been laid which is open to everyone to walk day or night.

### **Support from the Deanery and Diocesan Level**

Much of the support for the priests in the diocese comes through deanery meetings, clergy retreats & conferences.

St. Mary's is situated in the Whitemud deanery which is a mixture of rural and city parishes. The priests from each deanery meet on a regular basis to catch up, to study together and to pray for one another and their parishes.

As additional support for the rural parishes, The Rt. Rev. Jane Alexander has appointed Rev. Chelsy Bouwman as Canon for Rural Ministry. She serves as a resource and advocate to rural priests and parishes whose ministry looks quite different from city parish ministry.

The Diocese of Edmonton has a strong and active Lay Reader Program. St. Mary's is fortunate to have 3 licensed Lay Readers in the congregation who offer homilies and worship leadership in the church and community.

St. Mary's is located on Treaty 6 Territory. The Diocese is engaged in conversation & dialogue with their Indigenous Brothers & Sisters. The Diocese has appointed The Ven. Travis Enright as Archdeacon for Indigenous Ministry who is involved in both the diocesan work with the Aboriginal Community in Edmonton and within the Anglican Church of Canada. Fiona Brownlee is our Aboriginal & Rural Community Liaison. Because we are located close to 4 large Indigenous Communities, namely, Louis Bull, Ermineskin, Montana & Samson Bands, it is important to educate ourselves and engage in conversation on reconciliation. This is a new endeavor for us. We pray that we will continue to build up and walk in Truth & Reconciliation with our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

### **Characteristics and Qualities We Desire in a Rector**

Our parishioners desire a priest who would be creative and comfortable in the following areas:

- Being a teacher
- Able to handle conflict resolution
- Theology
- Be Adaptive to change
- Missional minded to support and grow our existing ministries.

**Being centrally located and wheelchair accessible, St. Mary’s Church Hall has accommodated a variety of outreach activities and community organizations and service groups, which are well supported by parishioners.**

**These Include:**

- **Meals on Wheels**
- **Funeral Teas**
- **Meeting place for Alcoholic Anonymous**
- **Salvation Army Van Support**
- **Vacation Bible School**
- **Pancake & Lobster Suppers**
- **Wraps of Love**
- **Prayer Ministry**
- **Labyrinth (Indoor & Outdoor)**
- **White Caner’s Support Group**
- **Family Events**
- **Girl Guides of Canada**
- **Week of Prayer**
- **Services at General Hospital, Seniors’ Centres & Centennial Center**
- **Friday Night: Rejoice**
- **Individual Pastoral Care to sick and shut-ins**



**Appendix B – 2020 St. Mary’s Annual General Meeting with Reports**

**Appendix C – St. Mary’s Financial Statements as of Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2020**

**Appendix D – St. Mary’s Mission Action Plan 2019**

**Appendix E – St. Mary’s Parish Calendar 2019**

**Parish Profile**  
of  
**The Church of the Epiphany – Rimbey**

**July 23, 2019**

**Description of the Community**

Centrally located in rural Alberta, we are privileged to reside in a beautiful part of the province's parkland. The town of Rimbey, approximately 3000 citizens, is a friendly, rural community that has many businesses and services including private and public schools, a library, an active care hospital, fire department, and RCMP detachment to name a few. A number of cultural events and an art show are held annually in the community and there are also a large variety of sport and recreation opportunities for all ages, including a modern rec centre with large auditorium, a weight room, skating rink, and ice curling facilities. Rimbey also has a large indoor riding facility for equine enthusiasts and a track for race car buffs. We have swimming pools, a paved walking path, well-kept ball diamonds, parks, soccer fields, and beautiful Gull Lake with a golf course or water sports and recreation, just a 15 minute drive from town. For all the amenities of city life we are only a short 45 minute trip to the city of Red Deer (population 100,807). We think this is an ideal place to live.

The town of Bentley, approximately 1000 citizens, is a small friendly community, located about 5 minutes from Gull Lake, 20 minutes from Lacombe, Rimbey or Sylvan Lake or 30 minutes from Red Deer. There are a number of local businesses including a grocery stores and a drugstores. Bentley also has a library, fire department, senior housing and a K to 12 school.

**Description of the Parish - Epiphany**

The Church of Epiphany is a small but committed Christian community whose members most often refer to themselves as "our church family." The attitude reflected in this phrase, of care for one another and warmth in welcoming newcomers is a defining characteristic of this congregation. We were part of a two point parish with Grace Lutheran in Bentley (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada). This was a very successful partnership that has helped each congregation learn from one another and grow while sharing heartening Christian fellowship in joint bible study and worship.

**Worship Life of the Church of the Epiphany**

Services of Holy Communion are held each Sunday, the exception being a service of Morning Prayer led by a lay member of the congregation in the absence of the priest. As we consider fellowship time important there is always coffee or lunch before or following each service, (depending on the time of the service).

The Book of Alternative Services is used as well as the supplementary resource, *Seasons of the Spirit*, which aids in bringing a present day focus to our worship. Both traditional and contemporary music provided by talented musicians is enjoyed in the services. For the past number of years we have used a PowerPoint presentation to enhance the flow of the service and facilitate the use of supplementary resources. The fourth Sunday of each month is designated as a family service followed by a pot luck dinner. Although the numbers of youth in our church have declined, we welcome their involvement at every opportunity.

Participation of the congregation in the services includes members who greet, read the scriptures and psalm, lead the prayers of the people, and assist with serving communion.

- ❖ *We are looking for an incumbent who would enjoy a joint Ponoka-Rimbey Anglican ministry. The expectation is that we will continue to share occasional worship services, yet we require an incumbent who is able to conduct worship services in each church so that the unique characteristics of each church's traditions are maintained.*

### **Church Committees at Epiphany**

- Altar Guild
- Worship Committee
- Church Council for Epiphany who meet monthly, except during December and in the summer months
- Joint Parish Council (reps from each congregation) could meet socially approximately three times a year to plan shared events and discuss fiscal or other business that concerns the combined parish.
- ACW group provides support in many of the usual ways such as hosting events and overseeing maintenance of the building. Along with the Church Council, they give generously to a number of outreach projects and actively participate in community ecumenical events such as World Day of Prayer, Bethlehem Walk, Holy Week services and Christmas Community Choir. As well they provide entertainment for a social event at the Long Term Care facility.

### **Strengths and Areas for Development for Epiphany**

The major strength of our parish is the faith we share and a warm and welcoming atmosphere in our church. We are fortunate to have cooperation and support among our members and people who take leadership roles both in worship as well as in managing the business affairs of the church.

As with all congregations, we hope to increase our numbers and share the Christian faith in the wider community. We recognize the need to attract young families and youth although presently we have few identified families in this demographic in our church. Therefore it is important that our rector be a visible presence in the community and one who participates in Christian community events. There are approximately eight churches in the Rimbey area and a supportive Ministerial Association. It is expected that our rector would be a member of this organization and take services on a rotational basis at the hospital and senior's home.

### **Church Facilities - Epiphany**

The church is centrally located in Rimbey across the street from the public schools and a seniors' housing complex. A new Seniors Lodge was completed in 2018 and has a capacity of approximately 80 residents. Our church has been updated and kept in very good repair, easy accessibility is a concern as there are steps to enter the building and the washrooms and parish hall are located in the basement.

In another area of Rimbey we have also purchased a piece of property with a view to perhaps relocating, should the church continue to grow.

The church owns a rectory, built in 1979, located on an adjoining lot to that of the church. It has three bedrooms, one and a half baths, includes five appliances, and also has a deck and detached garage. The house has recently been renovated and it is currently rented for the foreseeable future.

### **Financial - Epiphany**

We have maintained a balanced budget over the years and have been able to donate to a number of outreach projects annually. This parish has been actively involved with the Companion Diocese of the Windward Islands, with members of both churches travelling there to participate in a variety of projects during the past few years. The budget requirements for Epiphany in 2019 are approximately \$50,000.00.

### **Expectations of the Priest-Pastor**

- Lead, nurture, and promote the spiritual growth of this parish.
- Have good communication skills and be willing to visit when needed; he/she should be a sympathetic listener and counsellor to provide encouragement to individuals from within our congregation during times of personal difficulty.
- Present inspiring, scripturally based sermons that are relevant to the modern world.
- Assist with worship planning.
- Be willing to lead or join the joint parish in an annual bible study.
- Assist with confirmation.
- Attend council meetings
- Pastoral care and outreach through community involvement is a priority in considering the growth of the parish and sharing the gospel message.
- Attend Anglican Deanery meetings.

In conclusion, we are looking for a priest who is interested in leading the successful joint Anglican parish. We value leadership that is Christ centered and inspiring as we continue with worship that is a celebration of our Christian faith and in keeping with the traditions on which our individual churches were founded. We warmly welcome responses from interested candidates.