

*St. Sebastian's by-the-Sea*  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



St. Sebastian's gathers to grow spiritually, make known the love of God and provide comfort through our outreach.

## *Who We Are*

The parish of Saint Sebastian's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church has served Melbourne Beach, Florida, and the surrounding communities for more than fifty years. Saint Sebastian's is set in a suburban residential beachside community located blocks from the Atlantic Ocean and we are blessed to enjoy God's creation and its beauty in a unique way. Our congregation is especially known for its warmth and welcoming spirit, faithful church attendance and love for one another. While we currently have more retired people than young families, we strive to provide a welcoming atmosphere for all.

The church community of St. Sebastian's came into being in 1963 as a parochial mission sponsored by Holy Trinity Church in Melbourne, Florida. Our first home was in the Melbourne Beach Community Center. The diocese purchased three acres on Oak Street in Melbourne Beach on July 18, 1965. Groundbreaking ceremonies took place with Fr. Hayes digging the first shovelful of earth. Our services in the new building began on December 19, 1965, and Bishop Loutitt blessed the new church on March 20, 1966. We became a parish in April 1969. In 1990, a new parish hall and office complex were built to accommodate the growing needs and expanding ministries of the church.

## *Building and Grounds*

St. Sebastian's complex consists of our 250-seat nave, altar guild sacristy, priest's sacristy, two parish halls, offices and conference room, two newly updated Sunday School rooms, a nursery, a children's chapel, choir practice room, and robing rooms for the choir, the acolytes and lay Eucharistic Ministers. We have a beautifully landscaped memorial garden lovingly cared for by our gardening angels. We have a paved driveway and parking lot and if you look carefully, there is usually an osprey perched on our steeple cross.

Our smaller parish hall is used by outside groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, for their weekly meetings.

Our larger meeting room, Smodell Hall, was renovated in 2005 thanks to Hurricanes Charley, Frances and Jeanne and holds 120 people comfortably for dinner. Our large kitchen and pantry allow us to host many events including dinners, memorial receptions, Sunday coffee hours, Soup Suppers during Lent, Seder Supper, selected social events and our annual Lobster Dinner which is quite an occasion!



We have two services on Sunday mornings:

8:00 AM – Rite I Eucharist with no music

10:00 AM – Rite II Eucharist with music



A laying-on-of-hands is available after each service for those seeking personal prayer and we host a social coffee hour following each of the services. A Wednesday morning service at 9:30 AM is also offered. It is a **Rite I Healing Service** with the laying-on-of-hands and Holy Unction.



There is a **Taize' Service** (Temporarily on hold.) on the second Monday of every month from September to May beginning at 7:15 PM. sponsored by the St. Francis Center for Restoration. Taize' prayer is a meditative service, combining the chant of the Taize' Community in France with candlelight, incense, and readings, popular around the world.

Every October, St. Sebastian's offers The **Blessing of the Animals** to our parishioners' most important friends. In honor of the patron saint of animals, St. Francis of Assisi, we have blessed dogs, cats, mice, hamsters, roosters, chickens, birds and even a goat!



For the last 15 years, St. Sebastian's has held a **Butterfly Liturgy on Holy Saturday** along with an Easter egg hunt and a luncheon. The children parade into the church with butterfly and angel wings and hear about the resurrection of our Lord along with uplifting music. We entomb larvae on Palm Sunday and a week later we have butterflies. It is a wonderful sight to see the butterflies winging their way to the sky as the children let the butterflies go after the service.

Additional services are held during the year such as **Maundy Thursday service, Stations of the Cross, the Easter Vigil** and our **Easter Sunrise Beach Service** during Holy Week, our **Christmas Eve** services and special services as desired or needed.



St. Sebastian's parishioners are dedicated members who are active and supportive in the everyday ministries in the church.

**The Vestry** meets monthly, and every member is assigned a particular ministry in the church that they oversee and report back at the vestry meetings.

### **Vestry Members and Treasurer**

Rob Perers, Sr. Warden  
Dave Rector, Jr. Warden  
DR Babcock  
Kelley Hunt  
Joe Libasci  
Pete Peterson  
Doreen Yandell, Treasurer

**The Altar Guild** is comprised of church members who prepare our worship space for the services.

The **Lay Eucharistic Ministers**, **Lay Readers**, and **Acolytes** prayerfully participate in our services and ushers are there to welcome our guests and members

Our **Lay Eucharistic Ministers** regularly take communion to shut-ins and those in the hospital to keep our link with them strong.

**Organist and Canter:** We have a wonderful organist who provides music for the 10:00 service and a talented cantor who is devoted to music for both children and adults.

**The Shop of the Gulls** is our off-site thrift shop that has actively supported our community for many years. As well as providing financially to the church, the shop is a great presence in our community and provides outreach support to many other organizations such as Daily Bread, the South Sharing Center, and the animal shelters. Many people come into the shop weekly just to talk and find a friend. It is truly a rewarding ministry.

OUTREACH || MUSIC || COMMUNITY || SERVICE

**The St. Francis Center for Restoration** is a nonprofit organization that resides in St. Sebastian's church since 1999. The center's purpose is to offer the community an opportunity for Christian education and at the same time promotes St. Sebastian's growth. The center offers individual ministries in spiritual direction, professional counseling, soaking prayer and healing of memories. In some cases, CEU credit are offered for our programs. SFCR is under the professional leadership of Fr. Robert Bruckart, Ph.D. and Renee Koenig, director. All in ministry are qualified by education and/or licensing. The staff are all volunteers. The rector serves on the board and is welcome to be as involved as he/she wishes. The center is a welcome addition to our campus, and we enjoy its many fine seminars and engaging guest speakers.

Our active **Daughters of the King** promotes prayer, service, and evangelism. They meet once a month for prayer and study. They provide support to our clergy and the parish as requested.

Our **Episcopal Church Women (ECW)** is a committed group of women Who meet for fellowship, spiritual growth, in-reach help to parishioners and outreach to the community. They offer social outings, bible studies twice a year, and are very dedicated to providing communication with our shut ins with monthly cards and helping with meals, transportation or just a visit with those who are temporarily in need.



They are also the catalyst for getting the parish involved in ringing the bell for the Salvation Army at Christmas, angel tree for seniors and other community projects. Their annual card and game party that has been a tradition almost as long as the church has been around provides them with the funds to help in many projects around the church and the community. An offshoot from the ECW is a women's book club that meets monthly and is still going strong four years later!



Many of our parishioners also give their time and talent to **over 40 outreach opportunities** in our community including Meals on Wheels, Daily Bread, Hospice, volunteer at Holmes Regional Medical Center such as their NICU Cuddler program, The Salvation Army, Kairos, Anchor House, United Way, the local schools, domestic abuse shelters, Nana's House and the Turtle Preservation Society just to name a few. We have built two Habitat Houses in Brevard County and one in Jordan. We provide lodging each year during Spring Break for college students to stay at our facilities while they help build a Habitat House.

## *Friendraisers and Fundraisers*

As Episcopalians, we certainly like to eat! The XYZ Group (Extra Years of Zest) meets once a month for lunch at a local restaurant, the social committee usually goes for a glass of wine and appetizers after their meeting and the book club always meets during lunch.



In the past we have hosted a Pumpkin Patch for many years, and it was both a fundraiser and an outreach to the community. We had story time for the local schoolchildren and pre-schools and the kids all got to buy a pumpkin.



Our annual Lobster Dinner is always a hit – the tickets are sold out quickly and we always have a wait list. We sell raffles for all kinds of prizes donated by our parishioners as well as the local merchants and people wait in anticipation for their raffle ticket to be pulled.



## Staff

Our staff for St. Sebastian's includes a part-time secretary, a part-time sexton, and a paid organist who works with the choir director.

## Community

Melbourne Beach is located on the 33-mile barrier island between the Indian River and the Atlantic Ocean in southern Brevard County and is connected to the mainland by three causeways. Although Melbourne Beach itself is a small town of only about 3,300 people, it is surrounded by many other beachside communities with a combined population of about 22,600 people and the city of Melbourne and West Melbourne on the mainland which has a population of about 100,000 residents.

With over 300 days of sunshine and the average daily temperature of 72 degrees (although July and August come in at 91), the area offers a wonderful climate. In Melbourne Beach, you will find clean, sandy shores, grassy dunes and beachside parks that offer recreation for the entire family. Choose from swimming, surfing, snorkeling, diving, and sailing.

There are twelve local golf courses – one less than a thousand yards from the church - and many tennis courts. Brevard County's lakes offer great freshwater fishing and the saltwater fishing is some of the best around the country. It is quite a sight to watch a sea turtle coming out of the ocean to lay its eggs on the beach or a manatee swimming in the Indian River Lagoon.



## Schools

Right next door to St. Sebastian's is Gemini Elementary School and across the street from the school is Flutie Field, a huge complex of baseball, soccer fields, tennis courts and a playground. The Brevard County School District is the 10th largest in the state and the 47th largest in the country. There are 28 public elementary schools, 6 middle schools and 7 high schools. There are 14 private schools and many post-secondary colleges including The Florida Institute of Technology, Eastern Florida State College and the University of Central Florida-Brevard.



## Business

Brevard County has a highly-skilled, well-educated and diverse labor pool. Because of the diversity of local industry and business, the county enjoys a high economic stability. High-tech industries flourish in Brevard and some of the major companies are Harris Corporation, Embraer Air, Rockwell Collins, Lockheed Martin, GE, Patrick Airforce Base and Northrop Grumman. Publix Supermarkets is a major employer in Southern Brevard and the Brevard County Public School District is the biggest employer with over 8,500 employees in Brevard County.

Health First/Holmes Regional Medical Center is another significant employer throughout the county. It is a 515 bed acute care hospital with a state-of-the-art Heart Center, a state accredited Level II trauma center with 24/7 trauma care and rapid transport via the First Flight aero medical helicopter. They also provide a Birth Suites Mother/Baby Unit which offers Brevard's first Level II NICU for infants.

## Cultural

Melbourne offers much in the way of culture and the arts. We have the Maxwell C. King Center for the Performing Arts which hosts the Brevard Symphony Orchestra as well as famous performers from all over the country. Local theaters include the Henegar Center, The Cocoa Playhouse, Melbourne Civic Theater, and the Surfside Playhouse. The local high schools all offer school plays and concerts during the school year and there are many art and music festivals all year long. Other places of interest include the Brevard Zoo, and the Archie Carr Wildlife Refuge. Downtown Melbourne is an historic district with several blocks of antique shops, cafes, pubs, restaurants, and gift shops in turn-of-the-century buildings. We also enjoy the Eau Gallie Arts district, which boasts the Rosseter House Museum & Gardens, the Brevard Museum of Art and Science, the Eau Gallie Civic center, fine art galleries, shops, restaurants and more.

Just a short drive north we have The Kennedy Space Center and the Astronaut Hall of Fame for those interested in the space program. Visitors can see a rocket launch up close, or you can watch a launch from just about anywhere on our coast!

