

## **The Chilmark Community Church Profile for Search and Call**

Church name: Chilmark Community Church, Inc.

Street address: 9 Menemsha Crossroad, Chilmark MA 02535 on the island of Martha's Vineyard

email: [chilmarkchurch@gmail.com](mailto:chilmarkchurch@gmail.com)

Web site: [chilmarkchurch.org](http://chilmarkchurch.org)

### **JOB DESCRIPTION**

Pastor

Halftime (20 hours)

Parsonage

Contract negotiable

We are praying for an inspired and experienced Preacher and Teacher to act as our pastor halftime, as we embark on our new and exciting future as an inclusive, independent, community church. We believe we need a pastor who will be one of us and one *with* us, who will be a spiritually and emotionally grounded person who can effectively preach a Christian message, and who will take part in an energetic partnership with the church's lay leadership and the congregation. Our priorities are worship and teaching/preaching, encouraging the lay leadership, welcoming seekers and new attendees, and visiting when there are emergencies or illness. Involvement with the Island's wide interests and its groups is to be encouraged.

### **THE CHURCH**

As described in the Bylaws in Article IV: Church Faith and Mission:

Our Faith:

The Chilmark Community Church proclaims our faith through our actions. Our theological stance affirms free inquiry on matters of spirituality; our faith is guided by Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason. We are an independent, community church, open to all, celebrating diversity.

Mission:

We will aspire to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God and with each other to be a community of love. We will gather to worship, pray, study, and celebrate the sacraments. We will encourage and pray for each other to bring love to all whom we encounter.

### **Our Welcome**

We welcome you to the Chilmark Community Church. We seek to be the loving light of Christ in our community. We gather as the people of God from a variety of religious backgrounds and educational levels, with a wide range of political views and theological perspectives. We value this diversity. We welcome and celebrate the gifts God has given to all without regard to gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, mental capacity,

physical ability, nationality, age and economic or family status. We know God loves everyone unconditionally!

### **Worship services**

The Chilmark Community Church is the only house of worship in the town. Attendance is about 20 in the winter, higher in the summer months, with 50 or 80 on holidays. Recent publicity from newspaper reports of our disaffiliation from the UMC have brought new worshippers, mostly younger, committed to finding a place to worship God and encouragement in their Christian journey. We sense that there are great possibilities to reach others in the community who are seeking and missing a church home.

Currently, our worship is traditional and informal with sermons following the Lectionary and our music is a blend of original, traditional, and contemporary. Sunday School meets during worship for 5-10 children. Sean McMahon is the part-time music minister. We use the Methodist hymnal, the supplement **Our Faith We Sing**, and other hymnal inserts, including original hymns written by Sean. The sanctuary has a piano and a pipe organ.

### **Government and Finances**

Our recently written bylaws outline the congregational structure that governs the work and decision-making of our church. Most decisions are made at open meetings attended by all interested and are held quarterly or when needed.

We are supported mainly by pledges, plate offerings, generous gifts, and by our two summer fundraisers: Chilmark Flea Market held twice a week off premises and Lobster Roll sales held once a week. The church has an annual balanced budget, no debt or mortgage, a small endowment, and is financially healthy. (see budget attached)

### **Local and Global Outreach Mission**

Locally, we have weekly community meals on Tuesday nights October-May that are drop-in and free to the community. The summer fundraisers, especially the Chilmark Flea Market, serve the community by offering artisans and entrepreneurs a reasonably-priced location to sell their products. The free Children's Fair takes place in June with activities including pony rides, games, face painting, and crafts. On the first Sunday evenings in January through March, we host "Offerings of Music and Light" with performances by local musicians and poets followed by a reception. Memorial Day weekend we move our Sunday worship service to Menemsha Harbor, to hold a "Blessing of the Fleet" for commercial, leisure, and Coastguard boats and crew.

Our global mission is focused on the MV CROP hunger walk, raising money for local food resources and the wider Church World Services and we fund a teacher's salary for an afternoon school in Haiti educating those who cannot afford tuition or are working during the morning classes.

### **LOCATION**

The church is in the up-island town of Chilmark on the island of Martha's Vineyard.

## **The Island of Martha's Vineyard**

Martha's Vineyard is an island of outstanding beauty and a wealthy summer resort. The summer population of the Island is roughly ten times the winter population, which is roughly twenty thousand. The Island is made up of six towns, three up-island and three down-island. There is a rich cultural life year-round, a beautiful YMCA with a pool, tennis and skating facilities to name a few, and with Land Bank Trails and conservation lands, plenty of opportunity to enjoy nature through hiking, beaches, and fishing. Mass General operates the Martha's Vineyard hospital.

Down-Island: The Steamship Authority car ferry lands in **Vineyard Haven** year-round and in **Oak Bluffs** in the summer. In **Edgartown**, you can take the ferry to Chappaquiddick Island, and the Dukes County Court House and the jail are located here. Most commercial activity takes place down-island, with year-round grocery stores, restaurants, shops, and entertainment. There is a county airport located in the center of the Island that has year-round air service. During the summer months there are passenger ferries connecting to Nantucket, Cape Cod, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Manhattan.

Up-Island is mostly rural, with farm fields and pastoral vistas visible from the road: **West Tisbury** has a church, library, galleries, restaurants, drug store, and grocery store. **Chilmark** is a fishing as well as farming community with the fishing port of Menemsha being the center of commercial fishing activity with a US Coastguard station, a public beach, fish markets, and summer restaurants. Chilmark center has a library, school, fire and EMT station, town hall, and a seasonal general store and summer restaurant. **Aquinnah** is the furthest west and least populated, famous for its Gay Head Cliffs and lighthouse with public beaches, summer shops and restaurants, and home to the Wampanoag tribe of Gay Head.

## **Our Town**

Chilmark's year-round population is 1,561 with a median age of 53.8. The winter population is retired or employed in the public sector, real estate, construction, caretaking, landscaping, fishing, and small farming. In the summer there are tourism, retail, and hospitality-related jobs.

Chilmark has a preschool and elementary school. The Island schools are very good, and School Choice makes the other four elementary schools and a public charter K-12 school available. Middle-schoolers join other up-island towns in West Tisbury and there is one regional high school with an excellent curriculum including sports and the arts.

The cost of housing on Martha's Vineyard is some of the highest in the country and affordable housing is a pressing issue as it is elsewhere in the region. Fortunately, the church has a parsonage. Built in the late 1800's and located next to the church separated by a large "lawn", it has a kitchen, dining room, living room, bathroom with laundry and a study or 5th bedroom on the first floor; 4 bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor; and an outdoor shower for warm days after the beach. It is free of lead paint and in a safe neighborhood within walking distance to the school, library,

town hall and public transportation. The current pastor reports that there are no “boundary issues” with the house’s proximity to the church building.

## **CHURCH HISTORY**

The Chilmark Community Church is a church with a long history and rich past, starting a new chapter in its story as an **Independent Community Church**.

Methodism was first introduced to Chilmark in 1797-8 by an itinerant preacher stationed in what is now Vineyard Haven, who organized what was known as a “small class”. People met in homes until 1827 when Edgartown sold their meetinghouse to Chilmark, and it was moved to the Middle Road. The congregation grew and a new Meetinghouse was built in 1843. That building, the present church building, was moved to the Menemsha Crossroad in 1915.

Over seven years, beginning in 1982, our longest-serving pastor, Reverend Arlene Bodge, led us to change our name to the Chilmark Community Church in order to appeal to all people. On her return to Chilmark 18 years later, she worked to build an addition to the building, providing Sunday School and meeting rooms, a kitchen, bathrooms, and a Pastor’s Study.

There were many pastors over the years who were usually shared with one or more of the other five Methodist churches on the Island. For many decades Chilmark and Edgartown shared a “circuit” preacher. In some years it had no pastor appointed by the conference. In 2006, Chilmark shared two pastors with the other three remaining Methodist churches on the Island as part of a “Cooperative Ministry”. In 2009, Chilmark chose to leave the co-operative sensing that our up-island church, the only house of worship in the town, might be closed. (complete history and resources on the website)

In December 2023, after failed negotiations with the Methodist Conference to disaffiliate “for reasons of conscience about the Book of Discipline’s stand on sexuality” and after successful legal proceedings, the Chilmark Community Church officially left the United Methodist Church denomination retaining their property, building, and financial assets. Our legal team and interim pastor were invaluable in this process and our interim pastor continues to assist us with this search and call process as a new non-denominational, independent, community church.

So, this is our new beginning, full of promise to be a spiritual home to our diverse community and full of hope for a pastor who will make a home with us.