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Chapel of Saint James the Fisherman in Wellfleet: A Summer Chapel Making a Meaningful Impact

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– Reverend Lind

This year, the Very Reverend Tracey Lind, an Episcopal priest, is celebrating her 10th year as the Priest-in-Charge of the Chapel of Saint James the Fisherman in Wellfleet.

Tracey grew up in Columbus, Ohio, and now lives during the offseason in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Her first trip to the Cape was when she was in college after her father died from cancer. "I was upset and angry when my dad died," she says. "I got in my Chevy Vega with $30 cash, a Gulf credit card and a sleeping bag, intent on driving to lands' end." Tracey wasn't sure what she would find, but when she made it to Provincetown, she says she immediately felt at home. She has returned every summer since – first for vacations and later to lead worship at Saint James.

Tracey was introduced to the Chapel of Saint James the Fisherman through Mac Gatch, the Dean of her seminary, who was then Priest-in-Charge of the Chapel. Given her long history as a part-time resident, Tracey was a natural successor when he retired.

Founded in 1950 and located in Wellfleet just off Route 6 (above the Post Office), the Chapel stands on a hilltop among a grove of trees, offering a peaceful retreat to year-round and seasonal residents, vacationers and day-trippers, seekers and searchers, Episcopalians, and those of other faith traditions. The Chapel provides "inclusive and participatory liturgy" and "values preaching that connects scripture to contemporary issues, from various voices proclaiming both the social gospel and personal faith."

This summer, the Chapel is open from June 9 through September 22. Every Sunday, starting at 8:30 AM, the Chapel hosts Patio Conversations before Worship with Holy



The Very Reverend Tracey Lind

A graduate of the Union Theological Seminary in NYC, Tracey spent over thirty-five years in ordained ministry working for interfaith relations, social and environmental justice, sustainable urban development, arts and culture, and progressive theology. In Cleveland, she was Dean of Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland, Ohio's oldest church. She also served as Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Paterson, NJ, and Associate Rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Ridgewood, NJ.

Tracey has spoken in various national pulpits, including the Chautauqua Institution in New York. In 2014, she presented a widely viewed TEDx Talk entitled "How I Met God in a McDonald's." Most recently, her ministry extended to include the spiritual insights and lessons she has gained from a life complicated by early-onset frontotemporal dementia (FTD). In 2018, she and her spouse, Emily Ingalls, were featured in a 60 Minutes episode on FTD.

Eucharist, music, and sermon, which begins at 9:30 AM. Patio Conversations are eclectic, local topics of interest led by guest preachers and residents and have ranged from the environment and politics to the spirituality of the arts, oystering, and concerts.



The St. James Chapel was built in the modern movement style by the famed architect and furniture designer Olav Hammarstrom, a leader of what has come to be known as the Cape Modern Movement. In many ways, the Chapel is an icon of modern Cape architecture.

Tracey says the congregation is an exciting mix of year-round residents primarily from Lower and Outer Cape towns, summer residents, and vacationers from Massachusetts, New York, the Northeast Corridor, and from as far away as California. Most parishioners are older since younger year-round residents work multiple jobs and often don't have time to attend church and visiting families with children would rather go to the beach than church on their vacation.

The Chapel is deeply committed to giving back to the local community and strives to contribute half or more of the offerings it receives each year to Outer Cape human service and environmental organizations that support the quality of life of year-round residents and seasonal workers. The CDP has been a beneficiary of the Chapel's generosity since 2012.

A city planner by training, Tracey's career has bridged the worlds of city planner and prieSaint Serving as Rector of Saint Paul's Episcopal Church in Paterson, NJ, she founded one of the nation's first faith-based CDCs. While Dean of Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland, she was the Chair of another CDC and on the board of Neighborhood Progress, Inc., an intermediary for all the CDCs in Cleveland.

"I love the work the CDP is doing. When I read about its work, I know it to be best practice," says Tracey. "The issues facing the Outer Cape, while small town and rural issues, share similarities with issues found in our cities." She cites issues like gentrification, racial inequities, public school financing, and the struggles of entrepreneurs and local small businesses competing with big box stores. "But here, the cyclical population further complicates the issues," says Tracey. "Strengthening the housing market for those who make the tourism industry and local economy work is vital."

On July 14, the CDP will be a featured speaker during the Chapel's Patio Conversations. On August 18, they will host an outreach fair featuring nonprofits from the Outer Cape. All are welcome.

Visit The Chapel of St. James the Fisherman in Person and Online
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