



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Apr 9, 2013)

The Rev. Stephen Thomas Ayres, Massachusetts

Priest, Since Dec 20, 1980

Preferred Contact Information

29 Cross Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02129
United States

oldnorthvicar@yahoo.com
617-242-2284
617-777-3078

I help communities navigate through the future toward God. I value collegiality, compassion, and clarity. A community valuing its history, hopeful for the future, and open to new ways of incarnating God's love, would benefit from my leadership.

Current Compensation	Required for New Position	Negotiable	Healthcare Needed
\$115000	\$125000		Full family
Housing/Rectory	Housing/Rectory Detail	Housing Required for	
Housing Allowance	\$50000	3	

Education

1985-1988 MA, undefined, Tufts University
1977-1980 M.Div., Episcopal Divinity School
1972-1976 BA, Comparative Religion, Hamilton College

2012 Clergy vocational coaching, Clergy Leadership Institute
2010 Appreciative Inquiry, Clergy Leadership Institute
2009 Clergy Wellness, CREDO
2008 Bible,

Position Preferences

Open to Consider New Position
Full time

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Work History and Skills

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	May 1997	Old North Church	Boston, Massachusetts	outreach, preaching, congregational development, long range planning <i>The Old North Church is a national landmark that balances the ministry of a neighborhood congregation while welcoming 500,000 tourists annually. I have helped the congregation triple its stewardship and launch a growing young professionals ministry. I have professionalized our interpretive programs while raising millions of dollars for preservation. Our success as a congregation and as an historic site is due to the cultivation of an excellent staff, a strong vestry, and Foundation board.</i>
Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	May 1991 to Apr 1997	Emmanuel Church	Wakefield, Massachusetts	develop lay leaders, conflict management, Christian education, pastoral care <i>I restored this parish to health after conflicts with their previous rector and interim. Attendance and stewardship grew, a church owned day care was reorganized and much needed renovations were made to the campus.</i>
Interim	Sep 1985 to May 1991	Multiple parishes	Boston area, Massachusetts	interim ministry, conflict resolution, goal setting, worship leader <i>I served as a part time "after pastor" in three congregations that had dismissed their previous priest. Two of the parishes are thriving. One was intentionally closed. During this period I also led a community development consulting practice, helping churches develop affordable housing and homeless shelters.</i>
Consultant	Jan 1985 to Jan 1997	Community Development	Boston area, Massachusetts	
Assistant / Associate / Curate	Jan 1982 to Jan 1985	St. James Church	Oneonta, New York	
Assistant / Associate / Curate	Aug 1980 to Dec 1981	Christ Church	Springfield, Missouri	

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Other Contact Information

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> oldnorth.com

Date of Last Background Check
Tue, 2009-12-01

Company performing check
Oxford

Diocese requesting
Kentucky

Sermons Preached:

> http://www.britcharity.org/sermonremday2_2007.pdf
> <http://northendwaterfront.com/2012/04/lantern-ceremony-entrance-procession-and-invocation/>

Resources Created:

> http://www.episcopalcafe.com/daily/politics/vicar_confesses_sarah_palins_h.php
> <http://www.mecaclergy.org/newsletter.html>

Online References:

oldnorth.com
> <http://stephentayres.com/>

What Others Have Written:

> <http://articles.latimes.com/2003/may/29/nation/na-oldnorth29>
> <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week748/cover.html>

Groups and Associations:

Languages Written

Languages Spoken

Languages in which you are able to Lead Worship

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Describe a moment in your recent ministry that you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

When I served as president of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Massachusetts, I established two new committees to strengthen the governance of the Diocese. Our new Real Estate Advisory Committee is staffed by volunteer real estate professionals, lawyers, architects, developers, and the like. Due to church closures and the redevelopment of excess parochial property, our standing committee faced an explosion of alienation and encumbrance decisions. We recruited a group of professionals to insure that wise decisions were made. Our new Episcopal Mutual Ministry Valuation Committee is designing an evaluation process for our bishops and diocesan leadership. Our goals are: to improve the ministries of our bishops and leadership organizations, connect job descriptions and goals to the diocesan mission strategy, and promote healthy, ministry enhancing, conversations among the diocese's leadership.

Describe your liturgical style and practice.

The primary liturgy at Old North is a Rite II Eucharist, supported by a very strong music program. Given the number of visitors we welcome each Sunday, we stick closely to the prayer book and lectionary. Our special family services around the holidays and baptisms are an exception. In those services, we simplify the language, encourage children to participate, and tolerate a bit of pandemonium. Old North also hosts several major interfaith civic liturgies each year. We craft those liturgies to make members of all faiths feel welcome. My personal liturgical style is dignified with a bit of wit. I have a strong voice and am a stimulating preacher.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

I ask volunteers to do what they love to do and fulfill their sense of purpose. I try to restructure tasks that are less fulfilling, but necessary for the good of the community so they are fun. For example, Old North has a ton of brass (chandeliers, sconces, etc.) that needs to be polished. Our annual brass polishing party is now the biggest social event on the church calendar. We used Tom Sawyer's fence painting strategy to convince the congregation this was a fun task.

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How do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

My spiritual discipline is anchored in the ongoing study of the bible, church history and theology, and comparative religion. I love non fiction works on a variety of religious topics. That study discipline enlivens my preaching. I attend a couple of retreats each year and practice daily private devotional time. My wife and I are raising a teenage son and try to attend most of his school and athletic activities. I go to the gym several times a week and exercise more strenuously during winter (ski) and summer (kayak) vacations.

Describe your involvement in either the wider Church or geographical community.

In the diocese I am past President of the Standing Committee, Dean of the Boston Harbor Deanery, Chair of the SRI Committee of the Trustees of Donations, member of the Real Estate Advisory Committee and a coach to clergy in transition. As vicar of the world famous Old North Church, I regularly interact with local and national political and civic leaders. I have had a major impact on church state public policy issues on both the federal and state level. Old North led a coalition that changed federal historic preservation policy, allowing active religious institutions to receive preservation grants.

How do you engage in pastoral care for others?

I view pastoral care as a ministry of the whole community. I work with a pastoral care committee that closely monitors the pastoral needs of the congregation. They maintain our weekly prayer list and alert me to needs I may be unaware of. Members accompany one of our clergy on home and hospital visits. In pre-marital counseling I ask couples to interview married family and friends on a variety of topics, bringing their communities into the counseling process. I have a passion for counseling and mentoring younger clergy, particularly around vocational discernment. See my blog, Discernment Doctor, <http://stephentayres.com/>, to get a sense of my pastoral care of clergy.

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Tell about a ministry project that exists because of your leadership. What was your role in its creation? Who can be contacted?

Establishing the Old North Foundation, an independent organization to manage educational and preservation activities at Old North Church, is a major accomplishment of my tenure as vicar of the Old North Church. The Foundation has dramatically upgraded the visitor experience at Old North, launched new nationally recognized educational programs, and revised federal historic preservation policy. The Foundation has raised millions of dollars of grants and donations from outside the church and freed up my time as vicar to focus on growing the congregation.

How are you preparing yourself for the Church of the future?

A stronger church of the future should be community focused and entrepreneurial. Early in my career, I obtained a masters in urban policy, with an emphasis on non-profit management, to obtain skills to help lead the church in that direction. My most recent sabbatical was devoted to the study of Appreciate Inquiry and its application to mentoring clergy and lay leadership.

What is your personal practice of stewardship and how do you utilize it to influence your ministry in your worshipping community?

Tithing is a goal for our family, but currently we fall a couple of percent short of that goal. Like many members of our congregation, we balance our desire to tithe with our commitment to provide a good college education for our son and save for a reasonable retirement. In teaching stewardship, I emphasize giving a set percentage of income to church and charity with the tithe being a goal to work toward. We have been among the top five donors in each congregation I have led. Pledging at Old North has tripled during my tenure, thanks in large part to the recruitment and support of good stewardship leaders. The congregation raises additional funds for preservation and outreach through an annual gala. I have also raised millions of grant dollars for capital improvements and educational programs through the Old North Foundation. I personally led the effort to change federal policy to allow landmarked churches to receive preservation grants from the federal government.

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What is your experience of conflict involving the church? And what is your experience in addressing it?

The previous vicar served at Old North for twenty five years and his associate served as interim, so little work had been done to prepare for a new ministry. Within five months of my arrival a major conflict erupted over the future of an all paid choir when I asked that volunteers be allowed to join. The bishop and I brought in an outside consultant to work with our board (a corporation, not a vestry). As a result, a new organist, who is still with us, was hired to lead a predominantly volunteer choir. The corporation agreed to evolve toward becoming a vestry with term limits and wardens. A second conflict erupted when we separated historic sites and religious function into two distinct entities. An outside consultant again helped by establishing communication norms among all the parties involved. Change often generates resistance in churches. I try to manage the conflict by being clear about the rationale for change and by emphasizing the shared values that will be preserved. Working closely with my bishops, wardens, and other lay leaders, I am comfortable bringing in outside help when to help resolve conflict.

What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

I had great success in the early 1990's helping my diocese transition from a failed episcopate to a very successful episcopate by focusing on a few structural changes that enhanced communication among various parties in our community. We established a pastorally oriented deanery system, with deans acting as a pastoral extension of the bishop's office. We enacted a new budget and assessment canon that required the budget to adhere to a mission strategy and gave struggling congregations a non-punitive way to appeal assessments and access diocesan resources to address their mission needs. I have been less successful in efforts to reform the church's transition ministry program, which is perceived by many clergy and search committees as complicated and unclear. I maintain a popular blog on the topic, called Discernment Doctor, and lead occasional workshops to help clergy and search consultants get the most out of the current transition ministry system. I hope eventually to create a critical mass of voices to advocate for an overhaul of the system.

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References

Bishop:

The Rt. Rev. M. Thomas Shaw

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617-482-4826 x407 jdrapeau@diomass.org

Diocesan Transition Minister

The Rev. Canon Libby Berman

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Active Clergy:

The Rev. Gareth Evans
Mentee

Church of the Good Shepherd 164 Newtown Road Acton, MA 01720
978-263-5782

Active Clergy:

The Rev. Anne Fowler
Member of deanery

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Colleague in Church Governance:

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Colleague in Church Governance:

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Colleague in Ministry:

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The Honorable Carol Ball
Former Jr. Warden

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