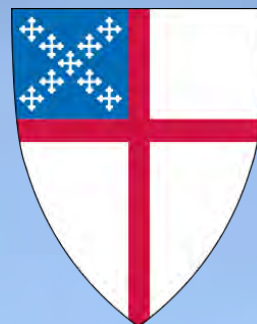


ST. PETER'S

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Rockport, Texas



PARISH PROFILE

2026



We, the people of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Rockport, Texas, being empowered by the Holy Spirit, dedicate ourselves to serve God by proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to our community through prayer, study, worship and action, using our time, talent and resources.



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You're not just welcome, you belong!

A Church Home for All

Our parish has been serving the community of Rockport since 1871 as a place of worship in the Episcopal tradition. St. Peter's is known for its welcoming and inclusive spirit. We share our love of Jesus as we celebrate the joys of Christian life, and as we provide hope and relief in times of difficulty. Our faith has kept us strong and resilient as we've faced many challenges over the years, allowing us to adapt to the needs of the season. Our congregation has a core group of year-round communicants joined by many seasonal attendees. Winter Texans join our St. Peter's family every year from October through March, participate in worship and fellowship, and assist us in our missions and volunteer work. Many of our transient families stay in touch throughout the year through our online services. We are blessed to have such support beyond the local area.



Pam & Larry Heidt are long-time members turned Winter Texans. They return each year to re-join our congregation.

Winter Texan-5 years coming to St. Peter's Rockport

"As we travel, we visit 10 or more congregations annually. St. Peter's is one of the strongest. Number of congregants, financial support and leadership are apparent at St. Peter's."

The History of St' Peter's Episcopal Church, Rockport, Texas

By the St. Peter's Living History Group

The history of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Rockport, Texas tells the story of its enduring role in the Rockport and Aransas County communities. Rockport, the county seat of Aransas County, is on the Live Oak Peninsula, thirty miles northeast of Corpus Christi. In 1867, when Richard H. Wood and J. M. Doughty had built a wharf on Rocky Point and founded the town of Rockport, it was in Refugio County. John M. Mathis, Thomas H. Mathis, and James M. Doughty platted the southern part of Rockport and set aside land for six churches. The Episcopal Church was on the northeast corner of Live Oak and North Streets. In September 1871, Aransas County was created from Refugio County by the Texas legislature, with Rockport as the County Seat. On November 30 of that same year, Bishop Alexander Gregg dedicated St. Peter's as a mission.

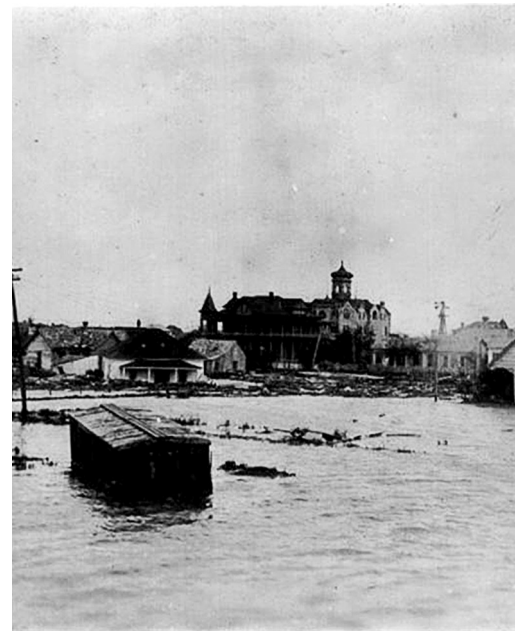
The beginnings of the Episcopal Church in Rockport were in the town of St. Mary's of Aransas, across Copano Bay from Rockport. Before the Civil War, St. Mary's was a significant Texas port. An 1869 listing of businesses in St. Mary's includes the following statement: "The Episcopalians had no church edifice and no resident rector. Colonel John H. Allen and Captain F. Bailey were lay readers." After the Civil War, many citizens of St. Mary's had moved to Rockport to take advantage of the cattle pens, wharf, and shipping. Frederick A. Bailey made that move. When Bishop Alexander Gregg visited the church in Rockport in 1870, he performed baptisms and confirmations at Mr. Bailey's home.

By the time Bishop Gregg visited again in 1871, a "very comfortable chapel" had been built. He promised a monthly service when a rector was found for Corpus Christi. By 1872, Frederick A. Bailey had been licensed as a lay reader. It is possible that, during this early period, the church was called the "Church of the Messiah."

St. Peter's was located on the northeast corner of Live Oak and North Streets for 50 years. The September 16, 1875, hurricane destroyed the church. It was rebuilt on the same spot. When the San Antonio & Aransas Pass Railroad reached Rockport in 1888-1889, the little church was very near the tracks and the depot. The noise and black coal smoke made services difficult. The August 16, 1916, hurricane heavily damaged the building and destroyed the church records. Again, the church was rebuilt on the



Above—Pre 1916 at the Liveoak-North Street location; Below— the hurricane of 1919 wiped out the church.



same spot.

The September 14, 1919, storm destroyed the building once again. After that storm, the Bishop, the Diocese of West Texas, and the St. Peter's Vestry made the decision to move the little building to higher ground. This time the site was moved to the corner of Liberty and Live Oak Streets in North Rockport. When Liberty Street became Texas Highway 35 (also called the "Hug the Coast Highway"), the traffic noise once again made it hard to hold services. In 1954, the building was relocated to the northeast corner of Live Oak and Mimosa Streets. It remained at that location until the congregation moved to the beautiful new church at 555 Enterprise Boulevard.

St. Peter's was a mission. It depended on the bishop, clergy from nearby communities, visiting retired Episcopal clergy, and lay readers for worship. In 1952 Harry Carter came to Rockport. He served as lay reader in charge for 12 years until the Diocese of West Texas admitted St. Peter's as a parish in 1964. Bishop Jones referred to Mr. Carter as a "layman extraordinary" who had demonstrated the possibilities of the lay ministry in the Episcopal Church.

On a very cold March 15, 2015, ground was broken at 555 Enterprise for a new and more architecturally modern church. On July 13, 2016, the new church was dedicated. Then on August 25, 2017, life at St. Peter's was once again interrupted by a hurricane.

Hurricane Harvey left the Rockport-Fulton community facing unbelievable devastation. St. Peter's immediately



Above—Easter altar in Liveoak -Mimosa location; Below—Ground breaking for current location.



In 1991 a longtime member described St. Peter's history with the following statement: "This is the story of a small church's life. This is the story of zeal, suffering, hardship, discouragement and love. This is the story of men and women, generation after generation who refused to abandon the cause when it seemed hopeless, it was God's grace that kept us going in the past; its promise is our future now and beckons us to follow him."

became a beacon of resilience, working alongside the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas and international organizations to provide manpower and inspiration. Initial recovery efforts focused on the safety of the congregation; while the sanctuary underwent extensive repairs for water damage, the parish remained undeterred. Services were held in the parking lot and parish hall, maintaining a spiritual anchor for members as they navigated the daunting task of rebuilding their lives and community.

As the healing process began, St. Peter's coordinated with the Diocesan Disaster Relief office to bring aid directly to neighborhoods where residents struggled to access services. The church grounds transformed into a hub for relief, hosting food trucks, a community wellness fair, and even a temporary "shoe store" for those in need. Beyond physical supplies, the parish provided vital emotional and spiritual support, hosting therapy groups and "living history" recordings for survivors. By mid-December, the sanctuary was fully restored, allowing the congregation to return to their sacred space with grateful and hopeful hearts.

Fr. Jim Friedel was here for St. Peter's from 2008 until his retirement at the end of 2025. He was at St. Peter's through the search for an ideal site for a new St. Peter's church building, the planning, design, construction, and finally the move to the beautiful new Church in July 2016. He was also here a little more than a year later as the entire county suffered through almost unimaginable damage from Hurricane Harvey. He was here as we suffered through the Covid 19 Pandemic. He was here as we joyously celebrated our 150th Anniversary in 2021.



Finishing the bell tower



Dedication of our current church home



Decorating the Christmas Altar



St. Peter's Episcopal Church from 1871 to 2026



1869 – Episcopal Church at St. Mary's

- ◆ No building or resident rector
- ◆ Two Lay readers: Colonel John H. Allen & Captain F. Bailey

1870 – Baptisms and confirmations in Captain Frederick Bailey's home.

1871 – St. Peter's Church established as a mission.

- ◆ November 30, 1871 Church dedicated by Bishop Alexander Gregg
- ◆ Frederick A. Bailey lay-reader.

1875 – St. Peter's was blown down by a hurricane.

- ◆ Rebuilt at the same location.

1888 – The San Antonio & Aransas Pass Railroad arrived in Rockport.

1916 – St. Peter's was heavily damaged by a hurricane

- ◆ Church records were destroyed; Rebuilt at same location

1919 – St. Peter's was destroyed by a hurricane

- ◆ Decision made to move it to higher ground. Church moved to Liberty and Live Oak.

- ◆ 1952 to 1964—Harry Carter lay reader in charge

1954 – Building moved to the corner of Live Oak and Mimosa.

1964 – St. Peter's became a Parish.

- ◆ 1965 to 1967—Rev. Harold W. Edmonson
- ◆ 1968 to 1974—Rev. Glenn Hill
- ◆ 1975 to 1996—Rev. Walter Daniel Clark
- ◆ 1997 to 2002—Rev. Maurice Lane "Reese" Friedman
- ◆ 2004 to 2007—Rev. G.M. (Mac) Keeble
- ◆ 2008 – 2025—Rev. James Friedel

- ◆ March 15, 2015 Ground broken for a new church building at 555 Enterprise Blvd.

2016 – July 13 New church dedicated at current location

2017 – Hurricane Harvey

2021 – November 30 – 150th Anniversary

- ◆ February 2026 to present—Reverend Fred H. Tinsley, Jr., Interim Rector



St. Peter's Today

St. Peter's has blossomed since it's humble beginnings. Here are some numbers that describe us today.

- The average Sunday attendance in person in 2025 was 91.4
- The Sunday attendance via streaming is 2 to 3 live viewings, and later views average 22 per week.
- The total number of communicants in good standing at this time is 199.
- This April, we welcomed 7 new members with the Bishop's visit, six confirmations and one received.
- In 2025, there were 4 baptisms.
- In 2025, there were 11 funerals.
- The number of pledges for 2025 were 53
- Plate, pledge and other contributions to the general operating fund for 2025 were \$173,120
- Castaways income for 2025 was \$215,757 from the sale of donated items.
- We also raised \$215,680 in 2025 in our capital campaign to pay down some of our building debt.
- Our Military Ministry includes monthly breakfasts for 45 to 90 veterans and first responders.
- We host an annual Military Christmas dinner for 50 veterans.
- Care Portal helped 4 families in 2025, assisting 10 children with an economic impact of \$1765
- Our Prayer Chain responded to more than 180 prayer requests in 2025.

Above: our Easter Altar

Right: wildflowers from our grounds.



Who We Are



Mary Catherine Pugh



Amy Goode



Meredith Carter



Choir practice in the choir room before the 10 am service

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10a (NIV): "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up..."

Our People

Our rector is supported by a kind and caring group of parishioners. Our office staff consists of two very capable ladies, Mary Catherine Pugh and Amy Goode.

The 2026 St. Peter's vestry has six members who are elected to work alongside the Rector in the management of the church. They are Senior Warden Martha Berkebile, Junior Warden Jim Hendrex, Clerk Betty Williams, Becky Warren and Glen Baker and Steve Clarkson

Our Ministries and Worship

Meredith Carter is our longtime Music Director and Choir Director. She works with the rector to select worship music and guides the choir as they participate in worship during the service. Our choir sings at the 10am service. We welcome all who are willing to share their voices



Altar Guild members at work on the altar and in the sacristy. Sherri Collins (center) oversees the men and women of group.

to make a joyful noise unto the Lord.

Ten women and men of the Altar Guild diligently maintain and care for the consecrated items used in our worship. Sherri Collins has led the Altar Guild for more than twenty years.

Our team of Hosts and Greeters are friendly and welcoming to all who enter our worship space. We become a Church Home away from home to our many visitors each year.

Our Fellowship team is an amazing group of people who share their cooking talents and hospitality with the congregation each week following both Sunday services. The fellowship time is well attended and provides a wonderful environment to strengthen our St. Peter's family bonds.

We have several active Community of Hope members who are trained as lay-chaplains using the Community of Hope International curriculum. All are trained to 'listen with



the ear of the heart,' to assist with visitations and to help with the prayer needs of our congregation. Our St. Peter's Prayer Chain is under the umbrella of the Community of Hope and currently has 57 faithful prayer angels praying for the needs of the congregation.

The order of the Daughters of the King—Julian of Norwich Chapter pray privately for individuals and for the needs of the church. The daughters host 'Quiet Day' retreats in our church and around the grounds. The retreats are open to all who are interested and provide a calm environment for spiritual focus.

St. Peter's also raises funds for world missions through the United Thank Offering campaign.

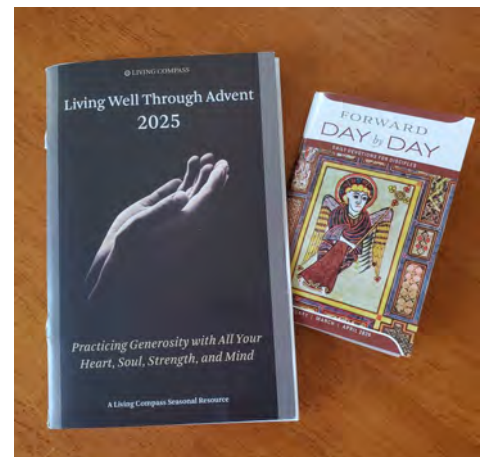
Christian Formation

There are several studies offered each year to provide for the congregation's Christian formation. These are lead by the rector or by other individuals who offer their time. During the seasons of Advent and Lent, The Living Compass resources are provided to the congregation for daily devotionals or group study. The daily devotional *Forward Day by Day* is available year-round for those who are interested.

In addition to the devotional studies, topical Bible studies are offered. We also offer an inquirer's class and confirmation class for those interested in becoming baptized, confirmed, or for finding out more about the Episcopal Church.



The Order of the Daughters of the King—Julian of Norwich Chapter.



Outreach

Care Portal

CarePortal is a technology platform that links government and non-profit agencies with local churches to provide needs for local families in crisis. In Aransas County, the main agencies that participate in the CarePortal network are CPS and the Pregnancy Center. These agencies refer families who have needs to the platform. The area churches are notified and respond to the needs as they are able. St Peter's has been involved with CarePortal since it began in our community in 2018.

Ruth Douglas, our Care Portal liaison, works with the Rector to provide for these needs such as food, gas, clothing, household items or financial assistance. She coordinates assistance where possible, working in conjunction with local organizations like Castaways and Good Samaritans. In 2025, St. Peter's responded to four CarePortal requests, which provided assistance to ten children with an economic impact of \$1765. St. Peter's has provided beds and bedding, clothes, household items, groceries and rent/utility assistance.

Good Samaritans

Good Samaritans is a local charity organization formed by six local churches to provide for those in need of assistance. The goal of the organization is to provide "a hand up, not a handout." Good Samaritans has a food pantry and offers assistance with utilities, medical bills and rent. They also provide vouchers for clothing through Castaways (page 13) , a thrift shop operated by six local churches. St. Peter's collects food and other pantry items for Good Samaritans.

Military Appreciation Breakfast

In 2023 St. Peter's identified a need to provide a safe space for veterans to get together and talk with other veterans and first responders. The Military Appreciation Breakfast is served on the first Saturday of each month providing a hot breakfast and good conversation to many local veterans and first responders. In addition to breakfast, speakers are invited to share their experiences with the attendees. We regularly host more



A group picture from one of our Military Appreciation Breakfasts



than 80 local veterans in our Parish Hall.

Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Group

Monthly, St. Peter's offers space in our Parish Hall for the Alzheimer's and Dementia support group to meet. This is an anonymous group from the surrounding community who are caring for a loved one with cognitive difficulties. It is a place for spiritual healing and support. If you would like to know more about this group, Becky Warren is our Parish contact person for the group.

More than Knitting Group

St. Peter's also offers the lounge area as a comfortable space for gathering and fellowship. On Thursday afternoons you may find a gathering of needleworkers who get together to create together. What began as a knitters' group has expanded to invite all people who just want a place to enjoy the company of other creative individuals.

Castaways

Castaways Thrift Shop is a community resale shop with six member churches. The organization distributed over \$1.47 million to it's member churches in 2025, of which, \$216,915 came to St. Peter's. In addition to monetary returns, Castaways helps provide needed items to those in difficult situations. Castaways works with other community organizations such as Good Samaritans, Children's Coalition, Communities In Schools and Care Portal, to provide clothing, furniture or



St. Peter's storage and sorting building for Castaways, also known as Roy's House in honor of Roy Allen, a St. Peter's parishioner and decades long Castaway's volunteer.



Bags of donated clothing are sorted and screened by a group of dedicated volunteers. Hundreds of pieces of clothing are evaluated for quality and boxed for future pricing.





household items when needed. Castaways is one of our primary outreach projects. In our Castaway's building (Roy's House) a group of dedicated volunteers sort donated clothing by season and type and pack it into boxes. Larger items are stored and evaluated here too. Sorted items are taken to the Castaways shop on Market Street to be priced and put out for sale. Proceeds from the sales help fund our missions at St. Peter's and in the Rockport community.



Our Church Home

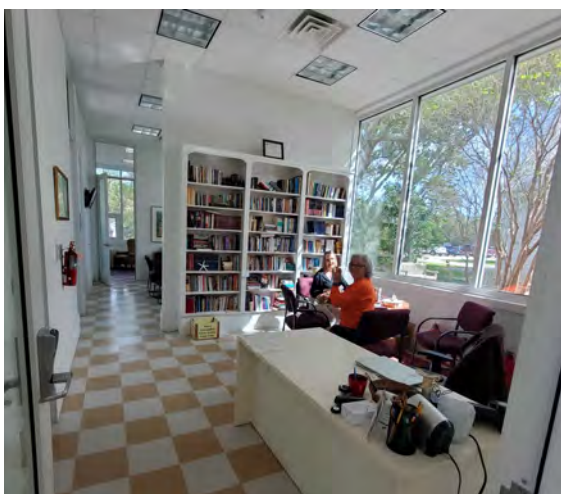
When we outgrew our old facility in the early 2000's, we decided to design our new building to accommodate growth, flexibility and potential new ministries. This planning has allowed us to do more outreach for the community of Rockport-Fulton. Our sanctuary can accommodate 250 worshipers and can be reconfigured for special occasions as needed.

The test of that planning came soon after we moved in, and opened our eyes to a greater potential. After the devastating hurricane Harvey in 2017, St. Peter's Parish became a distribution center for relief supplies and clothing for the community. We also hosted a mobile kitchen which provided many meals until the local utilities were restored.

Faith formation and Spiritual health are part of our commitment to our church family. Rooms off of the parish hall provide flexible spaces to meet for bible study, and faith groups. Our chapel is designed to be a space for small groups or children's worship and occupies one of these rooms.



The Altar, Chancel and Sanctuary can be reconfigured as needed.



Church office reception area



The chapel off of the Parish Hall can be used for meetings and study



Good food and fellowship are big part of St. Peter’s hospitality. Our Parish Hall and commercial kitchen are flexible enough to allow us to hold fellowship after both Sunday morning services, and to accommodate a monthly Military Appreciation Breakfast for up to 140 veterans and first responders. We also hold well attended parish potlucks and a competitive Chili Cookoff every Fall. For several years, we hosted the Fishin’ for Mission fishing tournament and in the Spring, we hold a Castaways Style Show where folks model their favorite finds from thrifting at Castaways.



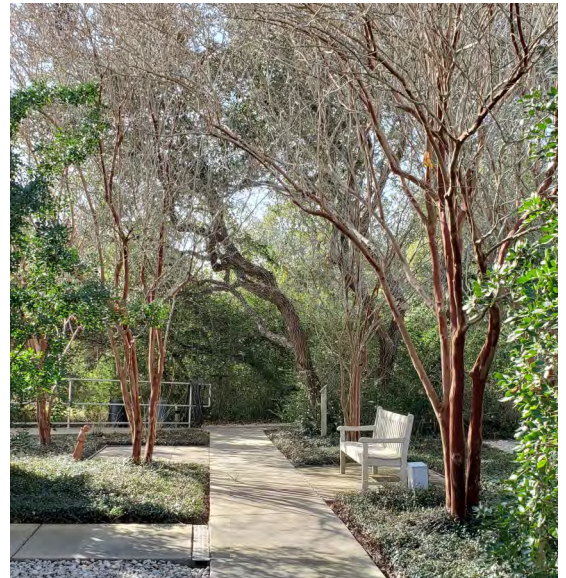
Top— Parish Hall during morning fellowship; Above—Military appreciation breakfast; Upper right—Castaways Style Show. Lower Right— Fishin’ for Mission weigh in under the Portico at the west entrance. Below—Emergency Kitchen set up in the parking lot post-Harvey





Our Grounds

St. Peter's was built on a heavily wooded, eight acre lot. The building was designed to leave as many trees as possible untouched. There are several meditation gardens around the building that make ideal spaces for our Quiet Day retreats. Stations of the Cross are placed in the gardens around the building. Our columbarium rests among the trees, at the end of a wooded path. Our undeveloped woodland has a nature walk that has become part of Aransas Pathways, a series of natural pathways in Aransas County that encourage outdoor activity. We have plans to create a meditation Labyrinth in the future.





Our Strengths, Challenges, Hopes and Dreams

Our Strengths

At St. Peter's, we are considered a transitional size church. We have a core group of consistent and reliable Ministry Leaders who make our people our strongest asset. Our perceived strengths, according to our parish survey are *"Warm and open people/welcoming/non-judgmental/caring parishioners and priest."* St. Peter's is located in a vibrant vacation, retirement and "Winter Texan" destination, and we have a loving, welcoming group of consistent parishioners who respond to whatever the call is. For example, when our newly built church was damaged by Hurricane Harvey within a few years of being built, not only did our attendance numbers initially dwindle along with their pledges and contributions, but our repair costs were considerable and our expenses and debt remained. Last summer, our congregation led the challenge to pay off some of our debt (a \$216k Rachal note) within a one-year deadline of June 2026. Instead of taking a year, with focused and intentional leadership and communication, our people were able to pay off this note in full within six months.

Our Challenges

While our people are our strongest asset, our aging population and noticeable absence of young families with children is a challenge. The traditions, customs, rituals and sacraments of the Episcopal Eucharistic services are solace and comfort for many raised in the Episcopal Church as well as those who have recently discovered St. Peter's. Yet our community is also home to an abundance of alternative or more contemporary services and denominations that many within our community are drawn to. The number one



Above— Our annual chili cook-off

Below—Celebrating 150 years at St. Peter's.





response to our question about our challenges was “*the absence of young families with children,*” closely followed by “*an aging congregation.*” St. Peter’s would welcome having a more contemporary type of service on occasion that continues to celebrate the current traditions and rituals of our Eucharist services, while embracing changing times.

Our Hopes and Dreams

Our hopes and dreams for the future of our parish are to expand our ministries and spread the Good News to our community. To reach these goals, we need to continue growing our numbers and increase congregational participation in our ministries. The hopes and dreams for St. Peter’s depend in part on the attributes that our next rector exemplifies. The number one priority our congregation identified in their survey response to the question of what attributes do we look for in a priest, was “*strong, energetic preaching that relates the gospel to our daily lives.*” Other attributes include effective, purposeful and timely communication and action in performing pastoral duties. Pastoral care for the bereaved, sick or homebound is also an important part of our ministry. We

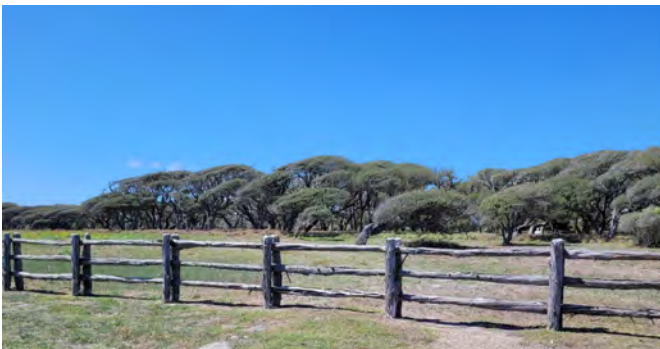
are certain that providing opportunities for spiritual growth through faith formation activities and preaching the gospel will not only invite others to join us but will also welcome others to experience their own personal relationships and connectedness with Jesus Christ.

Finally, while the *people* are St. Peter’s, the beauty of our church building and grounds cannot go unmentioned. With a lot of prayer and discernment, we took a leap of faith in 2015 to break ground for a new church building, and we are about to celebrate our 10th anniversary in our new home. We are excited and blessed to have a beautiful church building and a wonderful congregation and search committee who are prayerful, confident and committed to finding and connecting with the next priest God has called to lead this beautiful parish.



The Rockport-Fulton Community

Rockport and Fulton are side-by-side communities on the Gulf Coast in Aransas County, Texas. Rockport-Fulton have a combined population of just over 12,600, with an estimated county wide population of 26,146 as of July 2025. The area also welcomes thousands of Winter Texans every year who become valued members of the community while they're here. The population age breakdown, according to the census data, is 29.8% over 65 and 17.3% under 18. The median household income is \$69,466, with 14.3% of the population living in poverty.



The median value of an owner occupied house is \$265,400 as of 2024, according to census data.

Locals and visitors alike enjoy the natural beauty of our beach, and nature trails. Live-oak trees are the symbol of the Rockport Coast and are protected, as this is one of the few areas of the Texas coast where the oaks still grow to the shore. The prevailing winds sculpt the trees into our iconic wind swept oaks. St. Peter's grounds are connected to Aransas Pathways, which is a network of hike and bike pathways and parks designed to encourage outdoor activity and an appreciation of the nature that surrounds us.

There are several festivals and events held at





the Fairgrounds each year, including a monthly ‘Market Days’.

According to the City’s website, Rockport ‘s economy is primarily supported by education, county and local government, commercial fishing, and tourist related businesses. Recreational opportunities include sport fishing, sailing and other water sports. Both Rockport and Fulton have active harbors and host commercial fishing and shrimping boats as well as recreational boats.

Local museums, such as the Maritime Museum and the Fulton Mansion tell the history of Rockport’s maritime and ranching past.

Rockport has a vibrant art community with over 200 artists living and working in the area. Downtown Rockport boasts many art galleries, a local theater group housed at Rockport Little Theater, and a newly rebuilt Rockport Center for the Arts. Both Fulton and Rockport have a wide range of dining venues to enjoy.

The Rockport-Fulton ISD serves a large part Aransas County’s population. In 2024-25, there were approximately 3000 students enrolled in grades K through 12. The Rockport-Fulton teams are known as the Pirates. Go Pirates!





EPISCOPAL DIOCESE *of West Texas*



The Right Reverend David Read, Bishop of the Diocese of West Texas, was consecrated as the 11th Diocesan Bishop in July, 2023. Prior to his consecration, Bishop Read served as rector of four congregations in the Diocese, most recently at St. Helena's in Boerne. Bishop Read brings a strong vision for church planting, discipleship, and congregational development. He reminds us that the Diocesan Staff exists solely to serve as a resource for the 87 congregations in the Diocese of West Texas.

Bishop Read has been married to his wife Jacqui since 1991; they have two children (Amy and Aiden) and three grandchildren (Kaydence, Makenna and Jameson David).



The Right Reverend Angela Cortinas, Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of West Texas, was consecrated as the 7th Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese on March 15th, 2025. Prior to her consecration, Bishop Cortinas served congregations in Florida and Texas. She brings her many gifts and skills to the work and ministry of the Diocese, and oversees lay ministry development, Christian formation, and discipleship.

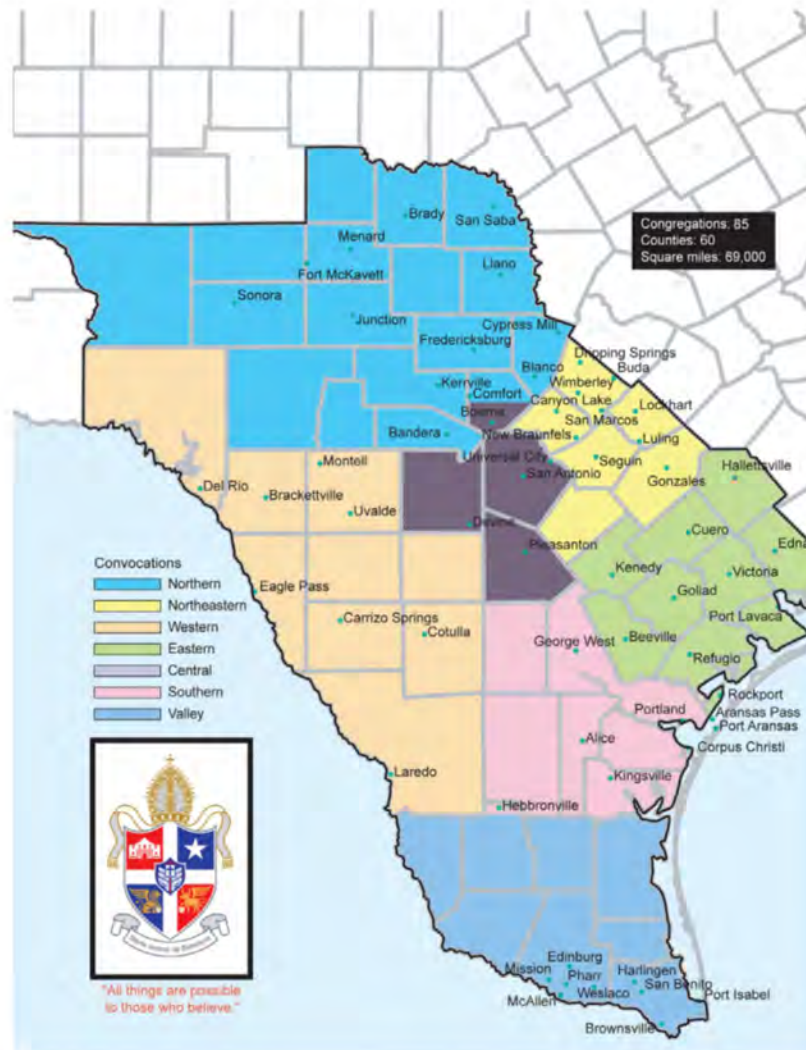
Bishop Cortinas has one daughter, Victoria Fletcher.



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EPISCOPAL DIOCESE *of West Texas*



We are a part of the Diocese of West Texas, which is made up of **87** congregations spread out over almost 70,000 square miles. From Brady and San Saba to the north, the Texas Hill Country, to the coastal bend, to the Rio Grande Valley, you will find faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ doing the work that God calls us to do!