

Customer Spotlight: **Saint Barnabas's Episcopal Church, Falmouth**

Since being called to serve as rector at Saint Barnabas's Episcopal Church in 2018, Reverend Will H. Mebane, Jr., has made a concerted effort to align his church with local initiatives. "One of the reasons I was called to the parish is because of their interest in connecting Saint Barnabas's with the community," says Mebane. "We want to be partners and collaborators on a whole range of issues and programs that directly and indirectly affect Falmouth and the Upper Cape."

This preference to be part of neighborhood programs led Mebane to choose OpenCape as the church's new Internet provider. "I became interested in OpenCape when I first read about it and our motivation really was to be supportive of a local initiative like this," says Mebane, referring to OpenCape's Falmouth Business Gigabit project, which has affordably connected over forty downtown businesses and institutions to OpenCape's 100% fiber network.

Having reliable, high speed internet connectivity took on major importance over the past year, as the church transitioned to online worship. "We began streaming in April 2020 and we subsequently upgraded our live streaming capabilities," says Mebane, who previously had an extensive career in radio and television production that has now become quite useful. "We have grown from using an iPad, to a laptop to a single camera

and now we have a three-camera system with enhanced audio and graphic capabilities. We have a bit of a mini-control room here," he says.

The parish has between 300-350 regular parishioners, many of whom leave the area seasonally and have embraced online worship. "The church in general has been saying for several years that we need to find a different way of reaching people, so that is one of the reasons we made the investment," says Mebane.

Mebane believes that live streaming of Saint Barnabas's services will continue forever, as a significant number of his flock enjoy attending church at home. But he also realizes that people are desperate for in-person community, and he suspects that parishioners will come back to Saint Barnabas's when the pandemic is over.

For now the church is abiding by guidelines, protocols and restrictions issued by both the Commonwealth and The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. "We formed a committee here at the church to help us make decisions as to when and how we can safely resume in-person worship," says Mebane. "We discovered that we are unable to currently meet the guidelines, especially in terms of ventilation, so we have decided not to do in person worship until there is a significant decline in the number of infections, hospitalizations and deaths from Covid-19."

Instead, the reverend is using his skills and passions in both media production and community service to continue offering high-quality online worship through a local high-speed connection.

“It has worked very well, with no issues at all ,” says Mebane who notes that the parish administrator Becky Vaus did most of the leg work to secure the OpenCape connection for the church. “We have noticed no interruption in services, and it has been a seamless transition.”

Connection to OpenCape also serves one of his biggest goals as a church leader. “ Any time there is a chance to be more involved and connected with the Upper Cape Cod community we want to exploit those opportunities.”