

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



2025 CHURCH PROFILE

6 Sylvester Street, Kinderhook, NY 12106

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<https://www.saintpaulskinderhook.org/>

Mission Statement

The mission of St. Paul's Kinderhook is to spread the good news of the Gospel, welcome the stranger, and deepen our faith through worship and prayer. Mirroring the acts of our Lord Jesus Christ, we strive to provide a warm spiritual home to all, regardless of race, gender, age, socio-economic status, or sexual orientation, acknowledging that all people are entitled to participate fully in the life and sacraments of the Church. At St. Paul's Kinderhook all are welcome!

Who We Are Now

We are a small but dedicated group of congregants working to manifest our love of God and Christ in the community. We encourage others to join us.

All that we do at St. Paul's—worship, service, love for one another, hospitality, forgiveness—reflects our relationship with God and His people.

Most of our parishioners are over the age of 60 and attend church regularly. We are blessed to have two three-generational families in our parish who attend church regularly. These two families provide us with the laughter of seven children. The older children participate in our church services.

St. Paul's observes many of the ancient traditions of the church with a modern outlook.

What we are looking for in a Priest

St. Paul's is searching and praying for someone who is willing to take on the challenges of helping us reach out to the wider community, make ourselves known as a place of love, peace and inspiration. We seek someone who is open to new ideas and willing to take risks. We would like our new priest to take an active interest in Parish Life activities and be willing to be seen at as many events as possible. The priest should be willing to talk to people who come to our events and make them feel welcome.

We believe sermons should be scripture focused and given in an easy to understand format and tied to things we encounter in everyday life. We believe this would nurture the spiritual growth of our parishioners.

The Town of Kinderhook

Kinderhook is in Columbia County, an area originally settled by the Dutch in the 1640s. It is said that the name "Kinderhook," which means "children's corner" in Dutch, was given to the area by Henry Hudson in 1609, because he frequently saw native children playing at a bend or corner in the banks of the Hudson river.

Kinderhook has a long and interesting history from colonial times to the Revolutionary War and the birth of the new nation. The eighth president of the United States, Martin Van Buren, was born in Kinderhook in 1782. Born into a Dutch family, it is said that Van Buren didn't start to speak English until he started school. After his presidency, Van Buren retired to Kinderhook and purchased a home that he named Lindenwald. The home is now a national historic site and is open for tours.

The Kinderhook village green still serves as a gathering place, with the weekly farmer's market and evening band concerts in the spring, summer and early fall. A statue of Martin Van Buren sits on a bench as if giving a friendly welcome to visitors.

According to the 2020 census, the current population of the Town of Kinderhook, which includes the villages of Kinderhook, Valatie, and the hamlet of Niverville, is about 8,330. Kinderhook is a popular destination for people interested in history, culture, and a quiet weekend in the country. Quite a few people from New York City have second homes in the area.

The Ichabod Crane Central School District campus is located on Route 9 in the Town of Kinderhook. The high school has approximately 530 students. The middle school houses grades 4-8 and has approximately 680 students. The primary school serves approximately 520 students. Ichabod Crane has a strong athletic program and a high graduation rate. It is considered above average in ratings for schools.

History of St. Paul's Episcopal Church

St. Paul's Episcopal Church began in 1850 with a small group of Episcopalians attending services held in the Dutch Reformed Church and other borrowed spaces. On January 18, 1851, the parish was incorporated as "The Rector, Church Wardens, and Vestrymen of St. Paul's Church in the town of Kinderhook in the County of Columbia." The congregation comprised a diverse group of about 40 people of Dutch, English, and French Huguenot ancestry.

The new congregation made plans for a church building on a small lot of land on Chatham Street, (present U.S. Route 9) just north of the current Village Hall. They selected Richard Upjohn as the architect. He was the leading church architect of his day and designer of Trinity Church, Wall Street. The new church was consecrated on June 22, 1852, and designated as a mission of the Diocese of New York. In 1857, the church purchased land and a house on Sylvester Street for \$3,000. Then in 1868, when expensive foundation work became necessary, parishioners decided to dismantle the church and reconstruct it on the land purchased on Sylvester Street. At that time, the bell tower was relocated to be the center entryway to the church, rather than at the side, and the wood paneling and wainscoting were added. The house became the rectory.

In 1904, the church bought property on the north side for a sexton's house. The land south of the rectory, purchased in 1961, has a parking area and a columbarium. The sexton's house was sold to a private party in 2017. The present McNary Center, built in 1989, serves as a meeting place for the parish and the community. St. Benedict's Chapel in the McNary Center is used for worship and as a quiet place for private prayer and meditation.

Over the years, the interior of St. Paul's Church has served as an inspiration to parishioners and visitors alike. The warmth of the dark wood paneling in the nave, reminiscent of an inverted boat, embraces and inspires those who enter. In the Tiffany window behind the altar, the stunning beauty of the iris symbolizes faith, hope, and wisdom. The Celtic cross symbolizes Christ's sacrifice and his love for all humanity.

Worship

St. Paul's celebrates the Eucharist at 8:00 and 10:00 each Sunday. We currently alternate between Rite I and Rite II services. The 8 o'clock service is without music. At 10 o'clock, the music director plays the service music and hymns. The congregation sings. At one time, St. Paul's had a substantial choir, but does not at this time.

Lay men, women, and children participate in services as lectors, acolytes, and eucharistic ministers.

Other services throughout the year follow the Church calendar. We have special annual traditions at Christmas and during Holy Week.

Expanding Community, Faith, and Knowledge

(Activities within the church community)

Classes and Bible studies - Currently, St. Paul's has no classes or Bible studies planned. Our Sunday School program is on hold because we have no age-appropriate children to attend.

Sisters of Serenity - A group of women gather each month for fellowship, prayer, Bible study, and spiritual growth. Our gatherings are usually on the first Saturday of the month at 9:30 a.m.

Brotherhood of Bacon - A group of men meet on the last Saturday of the month at 8:00 a.m. for fellowship, prayer, Bible study, and BACON! We have been on hiatus but plan to rebuild once we get a new rector.

Garden of Resurrection - In 1964, the Reverend Hohly established a columbarium at the rear of the Parish property. The intention was that the columbarium would be available to meet the needs of the parishioners of St. Paul's Church. There is a committee, appointed by the Vestry, that oversees the managing and operating of the columbarium, which is financially self-sufficient.

Altar Guild - A small group of men and women make up the St. Paul's Altar Guild. The duty of the altar guild is to prepare the elements necessary for the celebration of the Eucharist and all other services conducted in the parish.

Music program - In the 1990's and early 2000's, St. Paul's had a choir of 10-12 members that held a weekday and early Sunday morning practice. They sang an anthem every week and led the congregation in the service music and hymns. Over the years, the choir and practice has faded. We currently have a music director who plays the music for our services. Occasionally, we have a soloist. The Vestry and the congregation would like to see a revival of the choir to enhance the worship of God.

Parish Life Committee - Throughout the year, the Parish Life ministry at St. Paul's hosts a variety of events—some just for fun and others that help raise funds for our church. Favorites include our spring “Lucky Bucket” raffle, our popular fall tribute artist concert and Falling Leaves Shop and Eat Vendor Fair. We also take pride in preparing delicious homemade treats—like strawberry shortcake, blueberry cobbler, and apple crisp—for sale at the Kinderhook Farmers’ Market. It is truly a team effort that brings joy to both our volunteers and the community.

Parish Life also supports our weekly coffee hour, offering refreshments and a time for fellowship after Sunday services. In moments of sorrow, we stand by families with care and compassion, offering comfort and assistance during times of grief. Whether it's through laughter, food, or quiet support, Parish Life is here to help make St. Paul's a place where everyone feels at home. These events create meaningful opportunities to build friendships, strengthen bonds, and celebrate life together.

Outreach: the Church in the Larger Community

Open House - From May to early October, St. Paul's opens its doors on Saturdays to the community for self-guided tours.

Ecumenical Partnership - St. Paul's assists with the summer lunch program at the Presbyterian Church and provides a community dinner at St. Luke's Lutheran Church each year.

Women's Shelter - Under the auspices of Healing A Woman's Soul (HAWS), St. Paul's Church supports a local shelter for women who have experienced domestic violence. We provide gifts at Christmas, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and school supplies in September. We also provide other supporting material when requested.

Local Food Pantry - St. Paul's has a long tradition of donating non-perishable goods to our local food pantry. Donations are encouraged to be brought to weekly services.

Pancake Breakfast - This year St. Paul's received a grant from the diocese to offer a free pancake breakfast to the community each month.

Ichabod Crane Ecumenical Clergy - Our priests have participated in this group that fosters cooperation among the Churches in this area.

Our Physical Property

Because of the small congregation at St. Paul's, we face some challenges in finances, in maintaining facilities, and in staffing activities.

St. Paul's property consists of the church, the rectory, the McNary Center, the columbarium, a barn, and a large parking lot.

The Church can seat about 150 people in the nave. The white marble altar is raised and surrounded by Tiffany windows. The side windows around the altar represent the four seasons of the year. The nave has stained glass windows and the stations of the Cross. The sacristy and the organ chamber form the crossbeam of the Cross. The two-manual pipe organ was installed in the 1970's. The organ and the choir stalls are in front of the congregation. The steeple and bell are over the narthex.

The McNary Center is the parish hall and contains the Rector's office, a conference room, and the main office in a separate wing. In the main building is St. Benedict's Chapel, the Great Room, a commercial kitchen, and bathrooms. The back wing has a Sunday School superintendent's office, a choir room, and four classrooms. Currently, one of the classrooms is rented to the Kinderhook Library for used book storage.

The rectory is a large two-story four-bedroom house. The first floor has a living room, dining room, kitchen, half-bath and study. All bedrooms and a full-bath are upstairs. The house is partially furnished at this time. The laundry and a chest freezer are in the cellar.

Summary of Survey Results

The survey was sent to 52 current and former parishioners of St. Paul's. The search committee received 25 responses. The responses revealed that 65% of the responders are of retirement age and they attend Sunday services regularly. They are split on whether to use the prayer book or a service handout for worship. Most have some participation in church activities.

Most parishioners want a rector who will inspire and incorporate youth into the ministry program as well as offering some religious education for adults. St. Paul's is looking for a rector who will develop long-range plans with the Vestry, is committed to lay participation in the worship services, and empowers lay leadership in all aspects of parish life. Under pastoral care, the responders strongly want a rector who will personally minister to the sick, dying, and bereaved. They suggest an effective pastoral care team be established. The rector should be willing to provide counsel to people with personal problems and those making life decisions.

Our parishioners indicate the need for a leader who will bring new ideas, and is also open to new ideas from others. They want someone who will work well with the Vestry and staff as well as someone who is able to delegate responsibilities.

The survey revealed that there is a major concern about parish growth. The parishioners are looking for an effective leader who communicates clearly with the parish and interacts in a compassionate and caring manner.

Contact Information

Search Committee

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