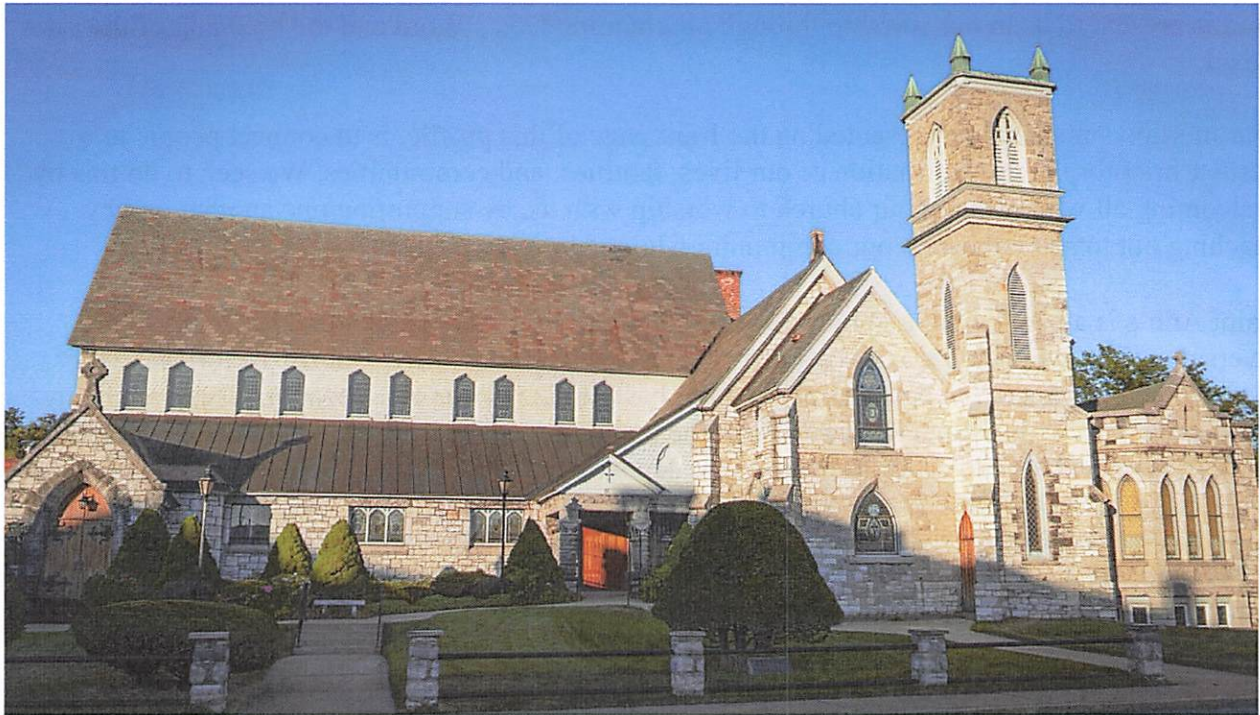


St. Ann's Episcopal Church

37 Division St., Amsterdam, NY 12010



Connecting people to Jesus Christ for the transformation of our lives, families, and communities.

Who We Are

St. Ann's is a prayerful community seeking to make present the Kingdom of God, revealed through Christ and Scripture, through prayer and worship, healing and teaching, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Holy Scriptures, the books of the Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God and contain all things necessary for salvation.

We are committed to prayer. Our worship is centered around the Holy Eucharist, where Baptized Christians partake of the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We believe that God is present to us in our worship through proclaiming God's Word and the breaking of the bread.

Our mission statement, as presented on the front page of this profile, is to connect people to Jesus Christ for the transformation of our lives, families, and communities. We seek to do this by welcoming all who come to our church to worship with us, by supporting one another and by reaching out to serve those in our community who are in need.

Saint Ann's is a parish with a long history stretching back to the colonial era. It's located in a riverside mill-town which was once a center for carpet manufacturing, but the factories have closed, and the population has declined. So too has the size of our congregation. There are many factors that have contributed to this decline: the population loss, the overall decline in religious participation, and a trend away from mainline denominations to non-denominational churches. More recently, disagreements around the issue of same sex marriage and the Covid pandemic have diminished our ranks. We are today a smaller group of Christians dedicated to our faith and our church. We have been fortunate to welcome new members, but we've also had to say goodbye to members of our aging group who have passed on.

We now find ourselves in this time of transition. Our Rector of over thirteen years has moved on to new challenges. We are grateful for his leadership and saddened by his leaving, but happy for him and proud that his talents have been recognized by our diocese.

Now we are seeking a new Rector, someone who is in accord with our mission statement and the values of openness, caring and service that we believe are the means to achieve our mission; someone who can lead us into the future and help us to grow spiritually and to thrive as a parish.

Our History

St. Ann's Episcopal Church traces its roots to Queen Anne's Chapel, founded in 1712 at Fort Hunter where the Schoharie Creek meets the Mohawk River. The chapel was built after Mohawk leaders appealed to Queen Anne for missionaries, leading to the first organized Anglican mission

in the region. Queen Anne funded the chapel and liturgical furnishings, and the Bible and Book of Common Prayer were translated into the Mohawk's language.

By the eve of the American Revolution, much of the area was evangelized, with many of the Mohawk Christians worshiping alongside settlers. Loyalist clergy and parishioners, including the Rev. John Stuart, were later forced north into Canada, where they became founders of the Anglican Church in Ontario.

Episcopal presence in the Mohawk Valley revived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The growth of the Erie Canal and the incorporation of Amsterdam spurred new development, and in 1835 St. Ann's Amsterdam and Port Jackson was formally established. Its first church building was consecrated in 1837.

The congregation moved to its present site in 1851, with a larger building dedicated in 1888 to meet the needs of a growing community. Through centuries of change, St. Ann's has remained a steadfast presence, connecting people to Jesus Christ and carrying forward a legacy of faith, resilience, and service in the Mohawk Valley.

Where We Are

St. Ann's is located in downtown Amsterdam, NY, a small town with a population of about 18,200 people that sits astride the Mohawk River about 40 miles west of Albany, the state capital of New York. Once a major manufacturing hub for carpets and textiles, the city now has a mixed economy centered on healthcare, education, small industry, and retail, with strong transportation links by rail, highway, and bus to the Capital Region. Its population is diverse, with a large and growing Hispanic/Latino community, a median age of about 40, and household incomes averaging \$50,000. Housing prices tend to be well below the national median. The Greater Amsterdam School District serves roughly 3,700 students across several schools, and there is a parochial grade school. Residents benefit from a full range of municipal services, including public safety, parks, a historic Carnegie library, and new amenities such as downtown electric vehicle charging stations, making Amsterdam a small but well-connected community serving both city residents and the surrounding area. The area's climate is typical of the northeastern US with four distinct seasons: colder, often snowy winters, warm and often humid summers, while spring and fall bring dramatic shifts in weather, from late frosts in Spring to clear days and brilliant autumn foliage in Fall.

Our parish is in the Albany Episcopal Diocese. Our Bishop is the Rt. Rev. Jeremiah Williamson. The diocese covers 19 counties in the northeastern part of New York State, an area of about 19,600 square miles. It encompasses a variety of settings, from larger urban/suburban centers to small, rural and remote areas. It is bounded by two mountain ranges, the Adirondacks on the north and the Catskills on the south. We are part of the Western Mohawk Deanery which includes 10 parishes in the western part of the diocese.

Saint Ann's Today



Our church building was built in the mid 1800's, with an addition in the late 1800's and a bell tower completed in 1912. It is constructed of gray stone, with a tiled roof and cooper flashing. It is built in the Gothic Revival style, inspired by the medieval stone churches of England, popular in the nineteenth century. Its pointed, stained-glass windows, tall rooflines, and graceful tower give it a timeless beauty. The nave seats 325. The first floor houses the sacristy, a parish hall with kitchen, rector and secretary's offices, a small chapel accommodating about 20, bathrooms, and a room used for housing clergy vestments, the treasurer's office and cabinets for church records. A basement area has 5 rooms that are currently rented out, plus a meeting room. A second floor, previously used as a nursery, currently houses a music library, bathroom and storage area used to store clothing, personal care products and food items for our food pantry.

The congregation consists of about 65 active members. We are an aging group with an average age in the 60's. We have two services on Sundays, at 8 and 9:30am, with average attendance of 15 to 20 people at each. Both are Rite II masses. The earlier is without music. The second service is with music. This service is live-streamed. Several years ago, we were able to install a new audio/visual system thanks to a generous bequest. The cameras and sound system have greatly enhanced the quality of our live-stream and the sound quality of voice and music. Presently, we are using a digital music player as our music director, who is

the spouse of our former rector, is also no longer with us. We are currently advertising for a music director.

During Sunday services members take part through their participation in one or more ministries as greeters, acolytes, lectors, intercessors, chalice bearers or as healing prayer team members, counters or members of the altar guild. We are blessed with the services of two deacons who assist the celebrant during the Eucharistic services and are available to perform a Deacon's Mass when we are without a priest.

Church staff consists of a part-time administrative assistant and a part-time sextant. The church treasurer is a volunteer. Our Vestry consists of a Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Secretary and five other members. All members serve staggered, three-year terms. They meet monthly, except for December, July and August. The Stewardship Committee is made up of the two wardens and the treasurer.

St. Ann's is committed to service to the community. We have an ongoing food pantry and used-clothing distribution program where donated food, personal care products, clothing and other items are made available to anyone in need. A free, community meal is served on the last Sunday of each month by church volunteers who provide and prepare the food. At the beginning of the school year, we sponsor a program to provide children in need with new sneakers. At Christmas time we have an Angel Tree hung with tags with names and ages of children in the community and their gift wishes. Members chose a tag and purchase that gift for the child.

We sponsor boy scout and cub scout troops that meet in our parish hall. They assist with decorating the church at Christmas, volunteer for a community meal rotation and attend a service as a group once a year, acting as greeter, lectors, and elements bearers. The church also hosts Al-Anon and AA groups that meet regularly in our parish hall. A common theme of our recent parish survey and a discussion session with the congregation was that members want to do more but can't without more members.



Parish Hall

We engage in an active Stewardship campaign early in the new year. There are currently 45 members who have made annual pledges. We receive plate contributions from another 20 or so congregants. Despite year over year increases in individual pledges our income has not been sufficient to cover our increasing expenses and so we have had to draw from the church's endowment which is currently \$208,881.70 (08/31/2025). This year's finances to date appear in good shape. Our annual budgeted income for 2025 is \$204,743.61. So far our actual income has exceeded the budgeted amount through 8/2025. This will reduce, and perhaps even eliminate, the amount we will need to draw from the endowment this year. However, the trend is for our expenses to exceed income, requiring reliance on the endowment to balance income and expenses.

In July 2025 a Parish Survey was distributed to the congregation. 31 respondents completed the survey. This is a fairly strong response rate for our small group, and thus the results can be viewed as reasonably reliable. The parish survey highlights both the strengths and challenges of the congregation as it moves forward. Parishioners overwhelmingly value the church as a welcoming, caring, and service-oriented community. Many described it as friendly, helpful, and inclusive, with active outreach programs, dedicated deacons, and uplifting worship that includes both music and online streaming. The long history of the parish in the Mohawk Valley, the endowment, and the beauty of the church building were also noted assets.

Looking to the future, members expressed hope for growth—especially the inclusion of more young families and an increase in parishioners overall. Greater participation in ministries, a more unified Sunday worship service, and more involvement in fellowship activities such as attendance at coffee hour were also viewed as important for growth. Some called for longer sermons that connect scripture to daily life, and a few mentioned the desire for a choir.

At the same time, concerns were voiced about the ongoing decline in membership and the difficulty of attracting new members, particularly younger people. Financial stability was also noted as a concern, tied closely to the congregation's size and participation. A number of respondents worried that there may be too few members to support all existing ministries. Some expressed anxiety about the current leadership transition, asking for transparency and support from the diocese. Finally, one respondent noted that the physical maintenance of the church building should not be overlooked.

Overall, the survey results point to a parish with a strong sense of community and identity, but also one facing the pressing challenges of declining membership and financial sustainability. Growth, renewal, and careful leadership during the transition will be essential in shaping the church's future, but more important will be the character and talents of our next rector.

On 8/24/25 we held a "Listening Session" to which all members of the congregation were invited. 20 members attended and engaged in a lively discussion of our wants and needs as a church community, particularly as they relate to a new rector. What the parishioners are looking for in a rector is someone who is both warm and approachable, personable, friendly, and genuinely attentive to the needs of others. They hope for a pastor who will greet members by name, introduce guests, and be relatable to people of all ages and backgrounds. Strong skills in pastoral care are highly valued, including counseling, home visits, healing services, and

awareness of parishioners' personal needs, coupled with the ability to clearly explain Christian teachings and connect faith to everyday life.

In worship, the congregation seeks sermons rooted in scripture but relevant and applicable to daily living. They hope is for a rector who is passionate about worship, willing to undertake special services during holidays and able to make preaching accessible and meaningful.

The parish also desires a leader committed to growth and renewal. This includes working to attract younger people with families and developing a Sunday school or nursery program for children. Also important is fostering outreach to the wider community, strengthening ties with other ministers, and planning for the long-term vitality of the church. Strong organizational leadership is expected, with the rector working well alongside the vestry and committees, supporting parish functions, and contributing to effective fundraising.

We are, nevertheless, realistic in the knowledge that no one person can be expected to possess all the personal characteristics and talents on our wish list. Therefore, we pray:

Holy Spirit, we turn our hearts and minds to you in this trying time of transition. We reverently ask that you show us the path that you would have us take as we as a church family attempt to seek and find the person you deem best suited to guide our church and our community in our efforts to draw St. Ann's and all our Amsterdam neighbors closer to Christ Jesus, our Lord. -- AMEN

