

Christ Church Episcopal
Schenectady, New York



Our prayer in creating this profile is that it will reflect our parish accurately and that we will discern the Lord's direction for our parish through this profile. We now offer prayers for those who read this profile.

"Lord, bless this profile and those reading it. Please speak to their hearts through these words so they will see, reflected here, a true picture of your people at Christ Church, our strengths, our weaknesses, and our desire to follow you. In Jesus name, Amen"

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Introduction

Christ Church is a family of believers in Jesus Christ who experience the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. We seek to share the Father's love with one another, our neighbors, our community, and the world. We believe in the authority of God's words as proclaimed in the old and new testaments and believe them to be unchangeable.

We seek to worship in spirit and truth through the sacraments, prayer, music, praise and to bring the Light of Christ into our world. We believe Jesus is exalted in our worship and the Spirit will draw people into the presence of the living God.

"Our investment in the church isn't just about personal growth or social connection; it is about joining God's ongoing work of transformation in the world" (Bible In A Year: A 52-Week Journey Through God's Word).

We welcome all who acknowledge that all are sinners and fall short of the Glory of God. It is our desire to preach the good news, heal the broken hearted, proclaim freedom for the captives, recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

History of Christ Church: Rectors and Key Events

The roots of Christ Church Episcopal can be traced back more than 160 years. It started as a Sunday school class in the home of Miss Abbie Vought on Lafayette Street in Schenectady, New York, in 1864. There was significant growth in attendance which necessitated a move to larger quarters located in a nearby school. In October 1867 the Church was incorporated and land was purchased to erect the first Christ Church building in downtown Schenectady, which was completed in 1868. This church was eventually closed due to decreased attendance and financial instability which resulted in a default on the mortgage in 1874. The following year a warden of the Church was able to satisfy the judgment, and Christ Church was again worshipping in the house of the Lord for the next fifteen years.

Again, due to tremendous growth of both the city and the congregation, a larger building was necessary. The Church then purchased a plot of land on the corner of State and Swan streets, and the undercroft was completed in 1910 where services were held for the next five years. The construction of the second Christ Church building was completed and dedicated in 1915. Having survived two fires (in 1936 and 1964) Christ Church still stands as a testament to resilience and God's provision for His people. After the fire of 1964, a new more modern addition was constructed which included Sunday school rooms, offices and additional restrooms. In 1994 the addition of an atrium was completed. The last Christ Church rectory over the years required significant upgrading and repairs and was ultimately sold. The proceeds are available for future housing needs.



Christ Church 1994 New Atrium, offices and Sunday school classrooms

Christ Church has been fortunate to have had a series of dedicated leaders, each of whom built upon the solid groundwork laid by those before them. Our Lord brought a rich Anglo-Catholic style of worship through our earliest priests.

1868-1869	Rev. F. C. Wainwright
1871-1875	Rev. L. N. Voight
1875-1880	Rev. J. N. Rogers
1880-1883	Rev. Dr. J. L. Parks
1883-1891	Rev. Dr. E. L. Toy
1891-1893	Rev. W. C. Prout
1893-1897	Rev. J. F. Olmstead
1897-1904	Rev. McD. Bleecker
1905-1907	Rev. A. Harper
1907-1916	Rev. David H. Clarkson
1916-1918	Rev. Frank H. Hallock
1918-1919	Rev. David H. Clarkson
1919-1924	Rev. George A. Perry
1924-1930	Rev. Donald H. Morse
1930-1953	Rev. Dr. William H. Smith

He brought healing through Father Earnest Pugh (1953-1969).

He brought charismatic renewal and steady focus on Jesus through Father William Hio (1969-1993), which is the style of worship still practiced today.

He brought help to the hungry, the elderly, and the families in our neighborhood through Father Danial Herzog (1995-1997), (who went on to become the 8th Bishop of the Diocese of Albany).

He brought renewed energy to our worship, proof of His healing power, and a commitment to the truth of His word and sacraments through Father Nelson Bradly Jones (1998-2025).

Father David Gillette faithfully served as our interim priest during the years between Father Hio and Father Herzog as well as between Father Herzog and Father Jones.

Deacon Huyland Bryant was the first deacon at Christ Church and served alongside Father Pugh and Father Hio from 1964 until his death in 1988.

Father Peter Schofield came in 1968 as a parishioner, ordained as deacon in 1980 and ordained to the priesthood in 2004. He still serves faithfully as our Priest Associate.

Deacon David Carlson came in 1994 as a parishioner and was ordained deacon in 2021 and still faithfully serves today.

Deacon Larry Hubert came as a parishioner and was ordained deacon in 2009. Larry faithfully served until his death in 2022.

Deacon Howard Smith came as a parishioner in 1995 and was ordained deacon in 2008. Howard served faithfully until 2021.

Deacon Margaret Teetz did her internship at Christ Church, was ordained deacon in 2013 and stayed to serve until her retirement in 2018.

Over the years, Christ Church has welcomed to our family many deacons in training and then sent them out to places where the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few (Luke 10:2).

Community

Christ Church is an inner-city church located in the heart of Schenectady, New York, in the Hamilton Hill neighborhood. Schenectady is one of the oldest cities in the United States, established in 1661 by Arendt Van Corlear. The Capital Region affords many opportunities for recreational activities including hunting, fishing, golfing, skiing, camping, picnicking, snowmobiling, boating, harness and thoroughbred racing and hiking the peaks of the Adirondack and Catskill mountains. At Proctors theater is downtown Schenectady you can enjoy plays, musicals and Broadway shows as well as many other entertainment options.

Being an inner-city Church, we are not unique in the challenges we face such as poverty, housing insecurity, mental illness and drug addiction. Over the years Christ Church has faithfully ministered to the community in many ways.

A not-for-profit daycare was established by Father Hio in 1970 to provide support and care to neighborhood children ages 3-5 years and was later renamed and moved due to its growth and need for additional space. We have continued to serve our community through our partnerships with Alpha Pregnancy Care Center, which has a satellite office in our church building that includes a baby boutique and ultrasound room. They provide free and confidential services to women facing a wide range of pregnancy and family decisions.

We also support Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous who meet regularly at the church. We partner with City Mission of Schenectady through volunteerism, financial support and pastoral care. A former member of Christ Church engages people of all ages with classes in Taekwondo held in our undercroft. We also have a small food pantry which serves those in our congregation and community who are in immediate need.

Iglesia Cristiana La Sinagoga is a Spanish speaking congregation who hold their services in our undercroft on Sunday afternoons. Their beliefs align with those of Christ Church and the foundation that the Bible is the true and final authority. They celebrate with such joy and rock the house in worship and praise!

Since 1996 Christ Church has hosted public Stations of the Cross on Good Friday. Our congregation, neighboring churches of all denominations, and the community follow the cross, stopping for stations at various locations throughout Hamilton Hill including churches, the jail and City Mission of Schenectady. This celebration has been suspended but, it is our hope that our next rector will resume it in the future.



Worship

Christ Church currently has one Holy Eucharist, Rite Two service which is held Sundays at 10:30 a.m. and is enriched by organ music and our worship group Banner. Banner is a spirit-filled group of talented parishioners who lead us in joyful worship with singing, accompanied by piano, guitar, and drum music. Our corporate worship is centered on the Eucharist, with an equally strong emphasis on Biblical preaching. Our 10:30 service is live-streamed and is available on our Facebook page. Our 8:00 a.m. Eucharist, Rite One is currently suspended pending a new rector. A coffee hour follows our regular service.



Holy week service



Worship group banner



Holy Eucharist is a central part of all our services.

Ministries'

Small Groups

Currently Christ Church has a small group that meets Monday nights at the home of one of our parishioners for praise, study, prayer and fellowship. There is a Sunday morning bible study that meets in the church at 9:30 a.m. Throughout the year we hold group studies hosted at parishioner's homes and at the church.

Christ Church has a women's group called Assembly which meets once a month for praise, study, prayer and fellowship. Assembly is open to all women of faith.

Women's Assembly
and Operation
Christmas Child



Healing and Prayer Ministries

Since 1961 the ministry of healing has been a central element in our understanding of Christ's redemptive work in His Church. We have a small but powerful healing team that offers prayer and lays hands on individuals for physical, emotional, relational, financial, and spiritual needs. Prayer is available at all celebrations of the Eucharist. We currently have more than 50 past and present parishioners who participate in an email prayer chain. We also have an emergency text prayer chain. Christ Church was the first church in the Albany Diocese to establish a prayer table. Over twenty-five years ago a simple card table was set up on the sidewalk in front of our church, and a couple of prayer warriors offered prayer to all who passed by on foot or in a vehicle. This ministry has spread to other churches and continues to transform lives throughout our community and beyond.



Christ Church prayer table. Neither snow, rain, cold nor heat stops these prayer warriors from touching lives in the City of Schenectady

Vision for the Future

Our vision for Christ Church’s future is that we will continue to be a prayerful and spirit-led congregation, with pews filled with youth and new life that spills over into every aspect of who we are as a parish. As Paul says in Romans 8:25 “But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.” We look for a future where we are more financially stable and able to support additional ministry opportunities and to meet the ever-increasing needs of an aging facility. We strive to have a larger presence in our community and to be able to expand our partnerships with local churches and organizations.

Portrait of Our Next Rector

Among parishioners there is a sense that as God has provided for us in the past, He will continue to provide for us in the future. We believe that He has already chosen our new rector, and that our job in the interim is to remain faithful and obedient, listen to the Lord and seek His face. We have confidence that through prayer and the Lord's leading, our search committee will discern who that person is. At the same time, we believe the Lord will prepare the person He has chosen, so that he or she will hear His call to come and be a shepherd to this flock.

We realize that no priest is perfect, and that in the person of our new rector, God may have some surprises for us for our mutual benefit. We have identified the characteristics and abilities that we feel are most important in our next leader. **The specialties of ministry that parishioners ranked highest in importance are:**

1. Preaching- Speaks from biblically accurate theology, under the power, authority and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The ability to make the Gospel relevant in people's lives without compromising the truth of God's word.
2. Equipping- leads, guides, and inspires everyone to understand and live the Christian faith, including the development of a deeper spiritual life. Train and lead people to evangelize by proclaiming the word and action the Gospel of Jesus Christ and inviting others into Christian fellowship.
3. Pastoral Care- Compassion all God's people so that they are nurtured and equipped for growth within the community of faith and the community in which they live. Respond to parishioners and community members at significant or crisis points of their lives including birth, death, and the moments in between: sickness, trauma, addiction, homelessness and trauma.
4. Administration- in partnership with church staff and volunteers to manage the affairs of the Church.

The parishioners and vestry of Christ Church will support and encourage growth and development of our new rector as together we prayerfully seek God's direction for the future.

Conclusion

Christ Church has always and will continue to rely on God to direct our path. We pray for wisdom and discernment for our Church and our future rector.

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Church Information:

Christ Church Episcopal

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Web Page: christchurchschenectady.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/share/18Kpq8Bzz6/>