

The Parish Profile

Christ Church - Springfield, Ohio

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1. Foreword

This Parish Profile was prayerfully prepared by a special profile committee, and drew upon numerous formal and informal conversations. The Committee invited all members to several parish forums, including special sessions for the youth. In one forum, middle school and high school-age parishioners presented their ideas to the wider congregation. This profile also draws upon the results of a written Parish Profile Survey, which was completed by 87 people, representing more than half of our active membership.

Visit the Christ Episcopal Church Website: <http://www.christspringfield.org/> or Christ Church's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/christspringfield.org/>)

2. Our Church

In 2009, Christ Church, Springfield joyfully celebrated 175 years of service to God in Springfield, Ohio, with a grateful expectation of carrying this legacy forward far into the future. We started out in 1834 as the Parish of All Souls, which was changed a few years later to Christ Church. A modest building was erected downtown in 1844, but the rapid growth of Springfield and the parish required a larger building, and our spacious neo-gothic building was completed a few blocks away in 1874. By the late nineteenth century, the parish had become the spiritual home of Springfield's industrial and professional leaders. Today, Christ Church stands as the best preserved of Springfield's historic churches.

In the 1880s the vestry appointed rectors who guided the church in a high church direction. A high altar was installed, cassocks and surplices introduced, and a boys' choir formed. This led to a major split, when approximately half of the congregation left to join the Church of the Heavenly Rest, which had recently been established as a mission parish on the south side of the city. The remaining Christ Church membership was an elevated set, to be sure. A local newspaper reported in 1894 that "the church represents more wealth than any other in the city and is attended by the ultra-fashionable." Though this may not be an apt description of us today, we are fortunate to have inherited a modest endowment and beautiful buildings.

In 1907, a new parish hall was completed, bestowed by Ellen Ludlow Bushnell in memory of her husband, the former Ohio governor Asa Bushnell. Ellen Bushnell later endowed the purchase and installation of a state-of-the-art Skinner organ. Ellen Bushnell's legacy of fellowship and music is still very much in evidence today.



By 1939, the parish retained the loyalty of the well-heeled, but shed much of its exclusiveness. In that year, the Church of the Heavenly Rest was closed and merged into Christ Church. In the 1960s, the altar from Heavenly Rest was installed in a newly built chapel in the basement of the church, along with a beautiful new stained-glass window.

Also in 1939, Ellen Hollenbeck, granddaughter of Ellen Bushnell (and in the 1950s our first female vestry member), purchased for the church the house adjacent to the church, now known as Hollenbeck House. For a time it served as the rectory, but now accommodates offices and meeting rooms. In 1989, a new East Entrance, incorporating an elevator and spacious vestibule, greatly improved access to the sanctuary and Sunday school. In 2008, a major renovation of the basement under the parish hall was completed, reclaiming this as designated space for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, our Sunday program for young children. The following year, a new 100-year slate roof was installed on the church and East Entrance, securing our historic building for the future.



Capable and inspiring clergy have served Christ Church well. In the 1980s, Ed Rich helped build our legacy of outreach by helping, along with parishioners, to establish the Teen Mother Project at Springfield South High School, which provided resources to keep young mothers in school. Our deacon in those years, Donna Hart, was similarly instrumental in the founding of Project Woman, a shelter and resource for battered women. In the 1990s, Christ Church called co-rectors Bob and Ruth Partlow. Under their initiative, many members deepened their spiritual lives and theological understanding through a Catechumenate program. For the past fifteen years, Charlotte Collins Reed has built on these strong foundations, finding new paths of outreach in our community, guiding us successfully through turbulent times in the wider church, and helping maintain a open, loving and cohesive community of faith. Charlotte was a particularly strong mentor to many young seminarians who interned in our church.

We are proud of the many lay and clerical leaders that have emerged from the pews of Christ Church. Johnny Morse, Dodi Holmes, Marcia Bethel and Jack Seipel have served as active members of the Society of St. Simeon and St. Anna. Donna Hart and Rick Incorvati have entered the diaconate, and eleven other parishioners have followed their call to the priesthood, five of whom are currently active: Charlotte Collins Reed, Rick McCracken-Bennett, Philip College, Astrid Storm and Jennifer Oldstone-Moore.

3. Our City

The city of Springfield was built on a long history of industrial prowess. With a population of 59,000, it is situated at the center of Clark County (population, 136,000). Springfield is part of a larger conurbation that includes Dayton and its suburbs, about a half-hour's drive away. Columbus, Ohio's largest city, is less than an hour away on Interstate 70.

Springfield is experiencing a gradual renewal after many years of decline. Manufacturing remains an important part of the local economy, but other businesses have risen in prominence, revitalizing the downtown area near the church. In 2011, the new Springfield Medical Center was built near the city center, followed by a number of other medical facilities. Financial and insurance companies have recently relocated downtown as well. Springfield also boasts two institutions of higher learning, Wittenberg University and Clark State Community College.

Springfield enjoys a particularly lively cultural life for a city of its size. The Clark State Performing Arts Center attracts large audiences with a full schedule of touring and locally-produced music, theater and dance, including concerts of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra, Springfield Youth Symphony and Children's Chorus. The Summer Arts Festival in Veterans' Park is a major draw for the entire region. The Springfield Museum of Art exhibits permanent and traveling exhibits, and the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Westcott House is both a museum and home of arts education programs. Find more on culture in Springfield at <http://www.visitgreaterspringfield.com/>

Our city is both a great challenge and opportunity. Like many urban environments, it is economically, ethnically and religiously diverse. Our immediate neighbors are, as a result of long industrial decline, some of the poorest in the state. On the other hand, our downtown area, just a block away, is on the verge of renewed growth. There are many active civic and religious organizations with which Christ Church has partnered, or could partner with in the future. One of the newest is the Urban Church Initiative, which seeks to link foundations, business groups and churches in projects to improve lives and opportunities in our city.

[A Community Demographic Profile of Springfield](#) is provided by The Episcopal Church Center. This document tells "the demographic story" of the area within a three-mile radius from our location. See the [map provided](#). The report integrates narrative analysis with data tables and graphs. It should be noted, however, that Christ Church serves a much larger area than that described in this report. As the only Episcopal Church in [Clark County](#), the population we serve is perhaps three times as large as the report indicates. Some of our members travel from Greene and Champaign counties as well.

4. Diocese of Southern Ohio (www.diosohio.org)

The Episcopal Church is home to more than 25,000 people in Southern Ohio. Our communities of faith can be found in Cincinnati, Columbus and Dayton, and in farm towns and county seats all across the southern half of Ohio. We are led by the Rt. Rev. Thomas E. Breidenthal. As bishop, he offers spiritual leadership in partnership with the clergy and people of this diocese.



Ministry priorities of the diocese are

1. Healthy Congregations: Become vibrant, healthy centers of Christian spirituality, faith, and practice based on the [hallmarks of health](#). *Pray our common prayer.*
2. New Relationships: Discover and nurture relationships with seekers and people in transition using engaging venues and communication to share the Gospel. *Proclaim our common faith.*
3. Formation: Intentional lifelong Christian Formation: Nurture, equip & develop leaders of all ages so that every Episcopal community in this diocese has opportunity for life-long formation. *Know the common story.*
4. Mission: Empower the people of God to be agents of transformation, both in actions and policies consistent with works of mercy and social justice, and informed by the Gospel. *Drink the common cup.*
5. Stewardship of resources: Make finances transparent and use the resources of the diocese to maximize efficient and effective administration and operations. *Serve the common good.*

5. Our Core Values

In the spring of 2010, after a lengthy process of discernment involving a series of “cottage meetings” held in parishioners’ homes, the church identified four core values:

Worship - Offering meaningful, relevant, and welcoming worship in the Episcopal tradition for people of all ages.

Education - Providing people of all ages the rich opportunities to form a strong spiritual relationship with God so they may become good stewards of their faith to themselves and others.

Outreach - Helping to meet the physical, material, social and spiritual needs in Springfield and beyond.

Hospitality - welcoming, nurturing, and supporting all who come through our doors.

Subsequent forums and the recent parish survey confirm these commitments, with respondents ranking preaching, music, liturgy, youth education, and service to our local community as the most important aspects of our parish life.

6. Our Ministry

Our core values are strongly represented in our parish meetings and survey. When asked in the Parish Profile Survey to identify from a list five aspects of church life most important to them, our parishioners selected these most often:

1. Worship—sermons
2. Worship—liturgy
3. Outreach (IHN, Food Pantry, etc.)
4. Worship—music
5. Youth education and ministry

The intent of dividing worship into its constituent elements was to be as precise as possible about what mattered to our membership. With their responses, members indicated strongly that worship in all its aspects stands solidly at the core of our life as a church. These responses also indicate we are strongly committed to our youth, and to engaging with our local community. The remainder of this section on ministry will discuss how these, and other priorities, find expression at Christ Church.

a. Worship

Our recent discussions and survey clearly show that for our members, worship stands at the center of our life as a parish. The Parish Profile Survey indicates strong agreement with the statement that “we have uplifting and meaningful worship.” In 2015, our average weekly attendance was 122. The Eucharist at 8:00 a.m. is Rite I, while the 10 a.m. Eucharist is Rite II. We also celebrate a great number of special services: the Christmas Pageant, Alleluia Sunday (the Sunday before Lent), Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday meal, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, Christmas in July, and “Procter Sunday,” when the counselors of Procter Summer Camp offer us their words and music.



A great many use their various gifts for worship and praise, including

- Altar Guild
- Greeters
- Tellers
- Ushers
- Acolytes
- Choir
- Instrumentalists
- Readers
- Chalice bearers
- Lay Eucharistic visitors

We make a joyful noise to God through music. We invite outside musicians to add to our own forces, including strings at Christmastime, brass at Easter, and regular visits of the Wittenberg University Concert Choir.

In recent years we have also celebrated “Flash Compline” one Thursday a month, held outdoors at the city plaza, followed by refreshments and conversation (Pub Theology 2.0).

b. Outreach Ministries

Our survey confirmed the parish's strong interest in living, as well as learning, the Word of God. Our outreach ministries have a similar importance to worship in our life as a parish. One respondent wrote that "on



our first visit what brought us back was evidence of outreach." Our history of commitment is central to our identity, and an important focus of our concerns for the future.

Social Service Volunteers: Church members are involved in a wide range of social service, including tutoring, after-school programs, the [Springfield Peace Center](#), job services, dependence therapy, assistance to abused women and children. The parish supports many of these organizations through its outreach budget.

Interfaith Hospitality Network: As a church, we are an integral part of the [Interfaith Hospitality Network](#), which provides housing and meals for the homeless. For many years, homeless guests rotated among churches in the Network. Now the Network has established permanent facilities, and parishioners provide home cooked meals on a rotating basis.

Food Pantry: Christ Church also hosts a Food Pantry which, with the help of our Covenant Presbyterian friends, procures and distributes a generous provision of groceries each month to approximately 120-160 families, representing more than 500 people.

Neighborhood Fair: For fourteen years Christ Church has held a Neighborhood Fair on a Saturday afternoon in late August in its parking lot. This event welcomes neighbors and pantry customers to food and fun sponsored by our parish. It requires many volunteers to do setup, run the booths, have a successful event, and tear down. It has been well supported in the past by church members and area high school students. Prior to the event, parishioners are asked to donate clothing and usable items similar to those for a rummage sale which then are donated to those attending the fair. Fliers advertising the event are passed out in the neighborhood and at the food pantry. Many are repeat attenders and they look forward to the event. The Fair was not held this past year because of leadership changes and reconsideration of its implementation. Discussions of a renewed Neighborhood Fair are ongoing.

Rainbow Table: In cooperation with St. John’s Lutheran Church and other churches, Christ Church parishioner help staff a weekly meal for hundreds of hungry citizens in downtown Springfield.

Shawnee Place Apartments: Springfield is home to an affordable senior living facility managed by Episcopal Retirement Services. This past Christmas, Christ Church organized a Christmas party and gifts for residents. One of our deacons has led regular Bible study there, and parishioners organize birthday parties throughout the year.

Reading Camp: One of our most ambitious projects was Reading Camp, which provided a week-long, full-day camp for rising third graders who were falling behind in reading. This project, involving many dozens of devoted volunteers, was a great success. It became redundant, when, thankfully, the public schools implemented a similar summer program for all kids in the city.

c. Education

In our conversations and survey, Christ Church parishioners identified education, alongside worship and outreach, as very important in our church life. We sometimes informally refer to ourselves as an “education church” because of an unusually large number of educators in our membership, our extensive involvement in education-related outreach, and our commitment to Christian education.



During our 10 o’clock service kindergarten through third graders participate in Children’s Chapel, learning the Bible lesson of the day. After service they proceed to the Atrium, well-appointed rooms for instruction in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. We have several trained instructors in this engrossing hands-on curriculum. We also have lively middle grades and high school classes. We are fortunate to have many dynamic and capable young people. In addition to regular classes, one of our deacons and the rector offer monthly pub theology meetings involving pizza and Bible Study and conversation.

Also after our 10 o’clock service, we hold regular adult forums on a wide range of subjects. We hear from community leaders, discuss church affairs, study Bible and theology, and

explore poetry, art and history. For many years we have also held a special Sunday evening Lenten series of Bible study, and soup supper.

d. Hospitality

Christ Church strongly values the ministry of hospitality. We are an open and affirming congregation. Our survey showed firm agreement with the statements that we are warm and welcoming of all people, and we cultivate a



Neighborhood Fair

strong sense of community. We were the first church in Springfield to host concerts of the Dayton Gay Men’s Chorus, and last year put up a table at the Equality Springfield festival. Much of our outreach relates to this openness toward our neighbors, including the Food Pantry, Interfaith Hospitality Network and Neighborhood Fair.

Many volunteers are involved in pastoral care for our homebound and ill parishioners. This includes both visitors and lay Eucharistic ministers. There are also a number of social and service organizations active in the church, including Lunch Bunch, Peace and Patches Quilters, Prayer Shawl Knitters, and Prayer Chain.

An important piece of our ministry of hospitality is our after-service Coffee Hour. Many volunteers gladly prepare food and run the dishwasher. We are striving to be eco-friendly by composting and limiting landfill.

The most raucous time of year comes when the church doors open for our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and Talent Show. The men of the church provide the meal, and everyone provides the talent, such as it is. It is a joyful time together before embarking on a journey of Lenten reflections.

e. Assessing our ministries

Our recent survey and conversations asked members to consider where we stand with our ministries. It asked respondents to evaluate statements about our parish by circling 1 through 5, with 1 indicating that they entirely agreed, and 5 indicating that they entirely disagreed. Average values for each statement are presented below in descending order.

We have uplifting and meaningful worship.	1.58
We are warm and welcoming to all people.	1.78
We cultivate a strong sense of community.	1.92
We have strong lay leadership/involvement.	1.99
We are doing a good job serving the needs of our community	2.04
There is a range of activities to meet the needs of all parishioners.	2.21
We have a strong Sunday School program	2.37
Our church has an active social life	2.47

These results suggest those things about which we are more confident, or somewhat less confident. Worship is a very satisfying feature of our life together, as is the warmth and unity of our congregation. Although we also agree that our social activities, education and outreach are generally good, there is less unanimity and confidence on these matters. These are areas that many believe deserve future attention, as discussed below in the “Moving Forward” section below.

7. Finances

As the figures below reveal, Christ Church's budget has remained steady for many years. Recent years show a dip in pledges and pledging units (103) that have been offset by a growing endowment. At this point we fund two full-time positions: our rector and parish administrator/program director. Our staff also includes a part-time director of music, a facility manager and bookkeeper. The Vestry line consists mostly of our diocesan assessment.

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH					
FINANCIAL RESULTS – Feb 2017					
	2013 Actual	2014 Actual	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Budget
WORSHIP	4,202	6,883	4,537	6,913	6,500
EDUCATION	3,429	5,439	4,587	3,087	3,870
PASTORAL CARE	18	51	268	633	400
FELLOWSHIP	283	704	430	375	350
STEWARDSHIP	59,978	59,106	58,642	63,445	64,934
NEW MEMBER MINISTRY	932	1,375	573	424	1,000
ADMINISTRATION	12,884	12,666	14,504	16,551	14,450
VESTRY	34,350	34,762	35,665	39,803	34,388
COMMUNICATION	555	1,134	557	551	1,500
PEOPLE					
CLERGY	89,410	88,803	91,679	46,594†	61,673†
STAFF	69,646	67,729	75,169	90,942	92,064
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	<u>276,041</u>	<u>278,652</u>	<u>286,612</u>	<u>270,991</u>	<u>280,679</u>
RECEIPTS					
Pledges	213,688	203,530	211,538	192,703	182,926
Special Offerings	0	0	0	0	0
Plate Offerings	4,049	3,812	9,677	2,604	2,800
Episcopal Retirement Homes	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Endowment Transfer – Restricted (Category I)	2,144	1,946	2,314	2,356	2,400
Endowment Transfers – Designated by Vestry	24,500	45,095	37,455	27,059	47,054
Endowment Transfers - Staff	11,004	9,170	13,500	31,500	31,499
Miscellaneous Income	15,800	9,769	9,813	9,769	9,000
Restricted Income	195	330	0	0	0
TOTAL RECEIPTS	<u>276,379</u>	<u>278,652</u>	<u>289,604</u>	<u>270,991</u>	<u>280,679</u>
NET INCOME (LOSS)	338	0	0	2,992	0

† The Clergy figures for 2016 and 2017 are lower since our previous Rector left in April 2016 and our current interim Priest is $\frac{3}{4}$ time.

8. Our Parish Moving Forward

Recent parish discussions and the Parish Profile Survey helped us develop a picture of our hopes moving forward. When asked in the Parish Profile Survey to identify the top five aspects of church life in need of improvement or development, these were the results:

1. Expanding membership
2. Youth groups/programs
3. Programs for college students
4. Opportunities for personal spiritual growth
5. Fellowship activities

As these aspects of church life indicate, there is a strong belief in our need and capacity to grow, particularly with respect to young people. There is also a clear desire to support our youth with new opportunities. At a recent forum our high schoolers presented their ideas for the future, including forming a youth group in connection with other churches, developing more contemporary and informal worship, and creating new opportunities for youth engagement in the community.

The survey also reveals a sense that, as part of a college town, we have an opportunity to reach out to students. We have a large number of Wittenberg University faculty members in our congregation. This offers an opportunity for reaching students. On the other hand, recent financial retrenchments at Wittenberg have adversely affected our growth, as hiring there has slowed, and some Wittenberg-related members have departed.

There is also in this list an indication of interest in social and spiritual activities beyond Sunday morning. “Flash Compline” and “Pub Theology” are recent efforts in this regard.

Survey respondents were also presented with a series of statements about our future, and asked to circle 1 through 5, with 1 indicating that they entirely agreed, and 5 indicating that they entirely disagreed. Average values for each statement are presented below in descending order.

We need to establish/strengthen youth groups:	1.75
We should cooperate more with other Springfield churches:	2.08
We should be more involved in community leadership:	2.26
We should be more involved in community service:	2.29
We need more opportunities for Bible Study/Book Groups:	2.31
We should host more concerts and/or dinners for the wider community:	2.33
We should offer Vacation Bible School:	2.57
We need to organize more social groups and activities:	2.64
We need to build more space for church outreach:	3.19
We should create a third contemporary-style service:	3.62

These numbers indicate general agreement with all these propositions except the last two. Again, our concern for our youth rose to the top, as did our eagerness to raise our profile and activism in the community.

Christ Church has a long history of community leadership and service, but some of our activities, like Reading Camp, and projects with the public schools, have come to a natural end. Also the Neighborhood Fair was suspended this past year to allow time to evaluate its purpose, and its value to our neighbors. We are in a time of general reflection about our outreach and hospitality. There is a perception, reflected in these responses, that our church has tremendous energy and talent that is seeking new outlets. As one parishioner wrote in the comment section of the survey, we are a “highly educated and capable congregation, capable of a great deal.”

9. What We Seek in Our Rector

Our Parish Profile Survey asked members to select from a list of fifteen options the five most important qualities they believe are most important in a rector. These were the top five choices:

1. Inspiring preacher
2. Committed to church growth
3. Trusted counselor
4. Strategic leader capable of guiding the parish in its mission
5. Skilled administrator and organizer

In several respects, this list serves as a fitting summary of this Profile. Our survey has indicated in other sections the importance of preaching for our church. We see this as a key piece of building our faith upon the triad of scripture, reason and tradition. Church growth has also appeared throughout as a theme, reflecting concern that our congregation is aging, and not growing at present. Finally, this list reflects the general interest in discerning new paths forward both in terms of attracting members, and also in reaching out in love to our community. We do not suffer from division or acrimony on these matters, but we are not yet united in a clear and certain vision about how to move forward. We are seeking help to develop new approaches and programs, as well as developing lay leadership.

The congregation was asked to rate a number of statements about what we hope for in a new rector on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating that they entirely agreed, and 5 indicating that they entirely disagreed. Of the eight statements, seven scored between 1 and 2. These results indicate that we wish to see many good qualities in our rector, but the priority is illuminating:

Be inclusive and affirming of all people	1.08
Be warm and approachable	1.19
Be enthusiastic	1.31
Be committed to church growth	1.49
Be good at empowering lay leadership	1.60
Have strong administrative skills.	1.82

Have a deep spiritual/prayer life	1.89
Have experience in urban settings	2.25

This list strongly demonstrates that we are an inclusive and affirming church that is eager to grow in spirit and in numbers, and a desire to find guidance for building on these strengths.

10. What We Can Offer Our Rector

In the Parish Profile Survey, we asked how our rector can serve us, but we also asked *how we can serve and support our rector*. In many respects he/she will be a minister among ministers. This question generated extensive and enthusiastic comments in discussions and in the survey.

The following are a representative sample of statements taken from the Parish Profile Survey that express our sense of ourselves, and our prayers for the future.

- [We should] Be welcoming, friendly, accepting of change. Don't be critical.
- Understanding that learning, or more importantly, EVERYTHING takes time, patience and conscious non-judgmental effort!!!
- We are an affirming, accepting, committed congregation. We step up when things need to happen. We are small but mighty. Our youth want to be involved and want someone who values their opinions and perspectives.
- We are stable with no divisive issues. We have a long history + tradition. We are open to new ideas and energy.
- Willing workers. We are willing to think outside the box – and are already thinking progressively. Very interested in outreach.
- We are friendly, supportive of members in their lives and concerns, dedicated to community service, and faithful worship. A rector could feel both challenged and cherished.
- A multitude of willing hands; a strong intellectual base; gifted lay leaders; good financial base and compensation; great outreach to the community; a beautiful building; a hard-working church secretary
- Springfield is a wonderful community with many opportunities. I believe our Parish would be welcoming to someone who embraces everyone
- A warm, welcoming, trusting and supportive congregation

11. Information for Applicants:

Qualified candidates must apply through the [diocesan application form](#). Due to the confidential nature of the search process, we ask that all questions about the position or search process should be directed to the Rev. Canon Lynn Carter-Edmands, Canon for Transitions at Lcarter-edmands@diosohio.org . Parishioners and friends of Christ Church may nominate clergy for consideration by sending names Canon Carter-Edmands, who will contact them directly.

Christ Church Springfield website: <http://christspringfield.org/>

Parish Profile Committee 2016-17

Dodi Holmes
Christopher Oldstone-Moore: co-chair
Susie Petersen
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March 18, 2017