



# Christ Church Parish Profile

Christ Church, the only Episcopal church in Clark County, Ohio, continues as an important religious community and our building is one of the best preserved of Springfield's historic churches.

The Christ Episcopal Church website is located at:  
<http://christspringfield.org>.

## 1. Foreword

This Parish Profile was prayerfully prepared by the Rector Search Committee and draws upon numerous formal and informal conversations. This profile also draws upon the results of the Holy Cow Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT), which was completed by 77 members, or 44% of our parishioners, late in 2021.

A link to the complete Holy Cow CAT survey can be found at our website. More information, as well as streaming services, can be found on Christ Church's Facebook page.

## 2. Our Church

In 2009, Christ Church, Springfield, joyfully celebrated 175 years of service to God. 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 19th century, the parish had become one of the leading houses of worship in Springfield. In 1907 a large parish hall was added. Later additions include the Hollenbeck House for offices and an accessible East Entrance with elevator. Today, Christ Church, the only Episcopal church in Clark County, continues as an important religious community and our building is one of the best preserved of Springfield's historic churches. We are committed to our established record of promoting social justice in partnership with other

► Skyline view of downtown Springfield showing the EF Hutton Tower, Clark County Heritage Center, Tecumseh Building, and the greater area.



Springfield faith communities. Social justice activism is an important dynamic in the Springfield area.

Throughout our history talented and inspiring clergy have served Christ Church well. Our church is now in a transition phase. We enjoyed the long tenure (2001-2016) of the Reverend Charlotte Collins Reed. Charlotte left the parish to lead another church in a neighboring diocese that was in need of healing. The Reverend Maggie Leidheiser-Stoddard served as our rector from 2018-2020. She left Christ Church to pursue her interest in youth ministry and is now chaplain at St. Mary's Episcopal School in Raleigh, North Carolina. Since her leaving our parish has been ably served by supply priests and priest-in-charge the Reverend Canon Dr. Lee Anne Reat from 2020-2022. During that time we also benefited from the many talents of our Deacon, Rick Incorvati, who recently relocated to another city. Deacon Incorvati was deeply involved with social justice activism in Springfield. Our current supply priest is the Reverend Larry Crowell.

### 3. Our City

The city of Springfield was built on a long history of industrial prowess. With a current population of 59,000, it is situated at the center of Clark County (population, 136,000). Springfield is part of a larger region that includes Dayton and its suburbs, about a half-hour's drive away. Columbus, Ohio's largest city, is less than an hour away. For more information, go to: <https://www.visitgreaterspringfield.com/>

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 in the city center, followed by a number of other medical facilities. Springfield also boasts two institutions of higher learning, Wittenberg University and Clark State College. In recent years, Wittenberg has experienced financial challenges and this has led to the loss of several active Wittenberg families in the parish due to their relocation.

► The Springfield Symphony



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 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 hosts permanent and traveling exhibits, and the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Westcott House is both a museum and the home of arts education programs. As the pandemic wanes, more and more of these cultural activities are resuming. For more information, go to: <https://www.springfieldartscouncil.org/about-sac/arts-culture-directory/>

Our city is both a great challenge and an opportunity. Like many urban environments, it is economically, ethnically and religiously diverse. Its diversity has increased recently due to the arrival of immigrants from Haiti and Mexico. As a result of long industrial decline, the neighborhood surrounding Christ Church is an area of need. On the other hand, our downtown area, just a block away, is experiencing some renewal. There are many active civic and religious organizations with which Christ Church partners, or could partner, in the future, especially in the area of social justice. And even though Springfield is currently in a population decline, the surrounding area of Clark County is growing. This is an important positive indicator as our recent Holy Cow CAT survey showed that 31% of our church membership comes from outside Springfield. We are both an urban church and a destination for parishioners from several neighboring counties.

Residents of Springfield and the surrounding community enjoy a lower cost of living, especially in housing costs, than many other comparable areas of the Midwest and United States. More detailed demographic information and other key indices about Springfield and Clark County can be found at <https://www.wittenberg.edu/hagen-center/engage-springfield-community-dashboard>

## 4. Diocese of Southern Ohio [www.diosohio.org](http://www.diosohio.org)

The Episcopal Church is home to more than 18,000 people in Southern Ohio. Our communities of faith can be found in Cincinnati, Columbus and Dayton, and in farm towns and county seats across 40 counties. The Diocesan Offices and Christ Church Cathedral are located in Cincinnati.

The vision of the Diocese is: “A church focused outside our doors, loving and serving Jesus Christ in our beloved communities in relevant ways, both new and traditional.”

The mission of the Diocese is: “Christ is calling us into meaningful connections with each other that transcend all boundaries and to act on those connections for the benefit of all. By these connections we are made whole.”

The umbrella theology for the Diocese is: Becoming Beloved Community: Relationship; Justice; Dignity; and Community: For All and with All.

The strategic commitments for the Diocese are: Relationships (mission and relationships with all community members), Discipleship (foster formation and discipleship), and Transformation (missional engagement for growth and transformation).

## 5. Our Core Priorities

After a lengthy discernment, Christ Church has identified four core priorities and these remain in place today:

- † **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 CAT survey confirm these commitments, with respondents ranking preaching, music, liturgy, education, and service to our local community as the most important aspects of our parish life.

## 6. Our Ministry

### Worship

Worship/Music are primary indicators of congregational vitality and our parish positivity scores on the CAT survey are generally high in this area, especially in the area of music quality and style.

However, the survey also noted that some aspects of worship could be reexamined and revitalized, including presiding, preaching, pace of the liturgy, ease of participation, and panache (aesthetics).

These CAT survey results offer us an opportunity to talk about our worship experiences and how to improve them.

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► Sunday Worship



In 2017, our average weekly attendance was 122. Today, because of the pandemic, average weekly attendance is 40, plus 85 streaming. We have an open table communion. Before the pandemic we celebrated (and are now starting to return to) 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 visit.

Many parishioners use their various gifts for worship and praise, including Altar Guild, greeters, tellers, ushers, acolytes, choir, instrumentalists, readers, chalice bearers, and lay eucharistic ministers.

We make a joyful noise to God through our choir and musicians, aided by our famous Skinner organ. Our music director and choirmaster is Dr. Christopher Durrenberger, Professor of Music at Wittenberg University.

In the past we explored non-traditional, off-site worship, such as a monthly “flash compline” held outdoors at the city plaza, followed by refreshments and conversation.

## Education

Results of the CAT survey demonstrate that members are motivated to learn, and that education and formation are important priorities of our church.

As we transition out of the pandemic, our program quality and flexibility are areas that will require further attention.

In our conversations and survey, Christ Church parishioners identified education, alongside worship and outreach, as very important in our church life. We have an unusually large number of educators in our membership, with extensive involvement in education-related outreach, and this is reflected in our commitment to Christian education. In the recent CAT survey, 51% of the respondents held graduate degrees.

Before the pandemic and before a number of parish families moved out of our area, our church conducted a robust educational program

► The jewel of our outreach ministry is the Christ Church Food Pantry.



and youth activities for K-12 children during our 10 o'clock service. These programs included a nursery for babies and toddlers. In addition to regular classes, our deacon and rector offered monthly pub theology meetings involving pizza and Bible Study and conversation. If more families with children once again come to Christ Church, these programs can be activated.

Also after our 10 o'clock service, we hold regular adult forums on wide range of subjects. We hear from community leaders, discuss church affairs, study the 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 suppers.

## Outreach

Our CAT 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. Our history of commitment is central to our identity, and an important focus of our concerns for the future.

**Food Pantry:** The jewel of our outreach ministry is the Christ Church Food Pantry which, with the help of our Covenant Presbyterian friends, procures and distributes a generous provision of groceries each month. Due to the dedication of our volunteers, the Pantry was able to serve 567 households comprising 2026 individuals during the height of the pandemic in 2020. In 2021, that number increased to 841 households and 2875 individuals.

**Social Service Volunteers:** Church members are involved in a wide range of social services, including, tutoring, after-school programs, job services, dependence therapy, and assistance to abused women and children. While some of these volunteer activities diminished or were suspended during the pandemic, it is expected that many will resume in the near future. The parish also supports many of these organizations through its outreach budget:

► Getting ready for the food pantry



Due to the dedication of our volunteers, the Pantry was able to serve 567 households comprising 2,026 individuals during the height of the pandemic in 2020. In 2021, that number increased to 841 households and 2,875 individuals.

**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.

**Neighborhood Fair:** For many years we hosted a Neighborhood Fair, for our local neighbors, which provides games, fun and food for people of all ages. This activity was suspended during the pandemic.

**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.

**Other local and regional ministries that are supported by our Church, either monetarily or with volunteers include:** Children's Rescue Center/The Ark, Habitat for Humanity, Safe Harbor House, Clark County Literacy Coalition, Episcopal Community Ministries, Second Harvest Food Bank, Springfield Farmer's Market, Project Woman, Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools, the YMCA, Jefferson St. Oasis Garden, Springfield Promise Neighborhood, Springfield Peace Center, Equality Springfield, and Partners in Ministry in Liberia.

## Hospitality

Based on the CAT survey, parishioners do perceive that our congregation is engaged in warm hospitality. In fact, it is a strong attribute of ours.

We reported that we are a welcoming community, enriched by those from many different walks of life.

We feel that our congregation has brought meaning to our lives, that a friendly atmosphere prevails and we show genuine concern and care for others.

The survey did show that we were not as emphatically enthusiastic about our hospitality as some other congregations, and that may be because we traditionally have approached hospitality in a more "laid back" and informal manner.

► In the Sanctuary



We were the first church in Springfield to host concerts of the Dayton Gay Men's Chorus, and regularly host a table at the Equality Springfield festival. Much of our outreach relates to 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. 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.

As with the case of our outreach activities, some of our hospitality activities diminished or were suspended during the pandemic, but it is expected that many will resume in the near future

## 7. Finances

As the figures below reveal, Christ Church's budget has remained steady for many years. Recent trends show a dip in pledges and pledging units 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 part-time staff includes a director of music, a facility manager and bookkeeper. The Vestry line consists mostly of our diocesan assessment.

The recent CAT survey pointed to a potential area of growth for our finances. The national giving average for Episcopalians is 2.4-2.5% of

## Financial Results – May 2022

Actual Dollars for 2013-2021 • Budget for 2022 • Ken Bladh, Treasurer

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>EXPENSES</b>										
Worship	4,202	6,883	4,537	6,913	4,561	6,112	4,940	6,657	12,260	6,200
Education	3,429	5,439	4,587	3,087	2,923	3,271	4,424	871	629	2,470
Pastoral Care	18	51	268	633	87	681	109	406	0	350
Fellowship	283	704	430	375	795	493	746	335	826	1,250
Stewardship (utilities)	59,978	59,106	58,642	63,445	67,429	65,809	75,686	69,126	71,599	90,385
New Member Ministry	932	1,375	573	424	156	323	193	0	0	300
Administration	12,884	12,666	14,504	16,551	15,825	15,983	17,372	16,229	17,429	18,340
Vestry (Mission Share)	34,350	34,762	35,665	39,803	29,907	30,629	41,569	35,542	34,841	38,208
Communication	555	1,134	557	551	1,624	1,419	1,388	1,083	1,259	1,700
Clergy	89,410	88,803	91,679	46,594	43,470	100,260	105,857	85,596	55,716	100,492
Staff	69,646	67,729	75,169	90,942	88,942	91,790	91,753	95,767	101,269	113,414
<b>TOTAL SPENDING</b>	<b>276,041</b>	<b>278,652</b>	<b>286,612</b>	<b>270,991</b>	<b>255,719</b>	<b>320,772</b>	<b>344,037</b>	<b>311,658</b>	<b>295,828</b>	<b>373,109</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>										
Pledges	213,688	203,530	211,538	192,703	180,234	188,562	199,171	173,945	156,069	125,425
Special Offerings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plate Offerings	4,049	3,812	9,677	2,604	2,397	2,404	2,767	349	686	750
Episc. Retire. Homes	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	1,250	0	0	0	0
Endowment Transfer Restricted (Cat. I)	2,144	1,946	2,314	2,356	2,246	2,740	2,735	3,450	2,820	2,820
Endowment Transfer by Vestry for Ops	24,500	45,095	37,455	27,059	23,714	79,493	93,534	87,038	98,121	187,961
Endowment Transfer by Vestry for Staff	11,004	9,170	13,500	31,500	31,499	31,500	31,500	31,499	33,750	47,153
Miscellaneous Income	15,800	9,769	9,813	9,769	10,630	17,824	14,330	15,377	4,382	9,000
Restricted Income	195	330	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>276,379</b>	<b>278,652</b>	<b>289,604</b>	<b>270,991</b>	<b>255,719</b>	<b>320,773</b>	<b>344,037</b>	<b>311,658</b>	<b>295,828</b>	<b>373,109</b>
Net Income (Loss)	338	0	2,992	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
			Full-time Priest, Part-time PA	Part-time Priest, Full-time PAPC						
Endowment Value (Dec 31)	2,522,112	2,645,784	3,035,353	3,817,852	4,174,843	4,356,960	5,034,131	5,471,119	6,072,905	

personal annual income. At Christ Church, that average is 1.61%. Activating our members to give closer to the national average is a realistic goal for the future.

More information about our finances can be obtained from Ken Bladh, Christ Church Treasurer, at [kbladh@wittenberg.edu](mailto:kbladh@wittenberg.edu)

Our church currently has an active Endowment Fund of approximately \$5.5 million.

## 8. Our Parish Moving Forward

The recent CAT Survey found that these activities, in comparison with other churches, were held in especially high regard by our parishioners:

- † **Pastoral response for those dealing with life challenges and crises.**
- † **Outreach to the unfortunate**
- † **The importance of more opportunities to create positive relationships through small group activities.**

The survey also helped us develop a picture of our hopes moving forward. When asked about priorities for the future, these were the top three:

- † **Expanding membership**
- † **Attract families with children**
- † **Continue to reach out to those broken by life circumstances**

These priorities were widely shared by respondents, regardless of age.

Other priorities that received lower scores, but were still worth noting, included more hospitality, improving morale, paying attention to conflict management and enhancing spiritual vitality.

As we move forward, attention should be paid to the CAT Survey results stating that 21% were clearly satisfied with the church as it is now, with a significant percentage expressing a “wait and see” or “on the fence” view of Christ Church. Possible reasons for this include the pandemic, as well as the transition of several priests in the recent past and declining membership.

The 21% satisfaction rating may also be tied to perceived conflict at our church. In the CAT Survey, 35% respondents stated that they perceived conflict. On a positive note, however, 81% agreed that conflict is generally resolved at our church and 78% disagreed that there is a small group of members who oppose what the majority want. And the majority of respondents stated that they positively perceive the leadership at Christ Church.

Overall, the survey indicated that there is a strong belief in our need and capacity to grow, including attracting new members and new members with children.

Christ Church has a long history of community leadership and service, but some of our activities have come to a natural end. There is a perception, reflected in responses to the CAT Survey, that our church has tremendous energy and talent that is seeking new outlets.

## 9. What We Seek in Our Rector

These are the attributes that our parish seeks in a new rector, as outlined in the CAT survey.

### Someone who can:

- † Be excited about working with a recovery/reinvention church.
- † Be entrepreneurial and visionary.
- † Expose us to new ways of thinking and rethinking about who and what Christ Church means and does.



▲ Interim priest Lee Anne Reat on Palm Sunday

- † Embrace the role of scientist, experimenting with ways to equip new leaders, reconcile us with the past, clarify mission and purpose, and re-energize worship and formation.
- † Facilitate healing within the congregation of past hurts and the pandemic experience.
- † Have an open style of communication.
- † Help us discern and focus upon no more than two priorities in the short run, moving on with new energy as we experience success.
- † Balance the naturally varying interests of different age cohorts (e.g., social justice among under 35s, community coalition building among those 35-64, and strengthening pastoral response among those 65 or older).
- † Help us reach out to the “dones”—people 45 or older who are tired of infighting and judgmentalism within their churches and the larger society.

In many respects, these results reflect other themes discussed in this profile. We are an inclusive and affirming church, eager to grow in the word and in numbers. We seek leadership for our friendly and

capable congregation, and we are eager to love God and our neighbor.

It is also useful for a future rector to know two additional characteristics of our parish culture that emerged through the CAT survey:

We are theologically diverse. While most are theologically progressive, about one-quarter of our parishioners are more theologically conservative. Our ability to hold and learn from different perspectives could help attract new members.

Our flexibility style registers the degree to which, as a congregation, we are willing to make adjustments or experiment with the ways we go about our ministry in order to connect with our local context. A majority of our indicators suggest that parishioners seek renewal, change, and growth — or what can be called “spiritual empowerment.” And yet only about half perceive the church as currently open to changes in worship and programs. This is an area that needs attention. One solution is to approach renewal through thoughtful experimentation as well as to engage in an active and mutually supportive relationship among the rector, the vestry, and parishioners.

## 10. What We Can Offer Our Rector

Christ Church has a long history of tradition and stability. We have a large, well-managed, and stable endowment. We have a respected place in terms of church leadership in Springfield, Clark County, and the wider Diocese.

We must be transparent about our challenges. Our church, mirroring national trends among mainline Protestant churches, is decreasing in size and increasing in average age. Regarding the respondents to our CAT survey, 65% were aged 65 or older. At this point in time we are not attracting many new members, especially young families with children. We have a beautiful, though aging, building that requires upkeep and maintenance.

However, Christ Church has many positive attributes. We have a long history of tradition and stability. We are a regional church and could potentially grow in that regard, helped in part by our new streaming video services that were installed during the pandemic. We have many dedicated volunteers. Our church is filled with parishioners who have had, or continue to have, professional experience in many areas, including K-12 and higher education, business, finance, and health care, and are willing to share those talents. We have a large, well-managed, and stable endowment. We have a respected place in terms of church leadership in Springfield, Clark County, and the wider Diocese.

We welcome your interest and look forward to exploring our collective spiritual journeys together.

## 11. Information for Applicants

The Diocese of Southern Ohio warmly invites candidates to submit their names for consideration using our web form. Please prepare your resume, OTM portfolio, and cover letter expressing your interest in the position, and then visit this website: <https://episcopaliansinconnection.org/job-opportunities/> Click on the «Apply» link that appears beneath the open clergy positions to open the application form and upload your documents. Candidates are welcome to contact the Canon for Transitions Rev. Michael Spencer [mspencer@diosohio.org](mailto:m Spencer@diosohio.org) at any time throughout the search process.

### Christ Church Springfield website

<http://christspringfield.org>

### Christ Church Rector Search Committee

Denise Sharp, Chair. Fred Bartenstein, Bonnie Bingman, Keith Doubt, Kay Koeninger, and Dan McGregor.

### Christ Church Vestry

Scott Yeazell, Senior Warden and Steve Sharp, Junior Warden. Keith Doubt, Bill Hicks, Kay Koeninger, Joy Meyers, Linda Mortensen, and Lori Swafford.

### Christ Church Treasurer

Ken Bladh