

## Parish Profile

Christ Church parish, which consists of over 250 families, draws its congregants from the Village of Cooperstown and the surrounding environs. The focus of the parish may be concisely defined by our credo: seeking, living, and sharing Christ. Although differing viewpoints on contemporary issues may exist, as a congregation we are united by our common beliefs and the celebration of our faith together

### Worship at Christ Church

On every Sunday of the year the Eucharist is celebrated in the church at 8:00 a.m. and 10 a.m. The 8 a.m. service consists almost exclusively of Rite I, the sermon, and organist without the choir. The larger 10 a.m. Eucharist consists of forms of Rite II, the sermon, and organist and, during the months of September through June, full choir. Often in the summer months soloist from the Glimmerglass Opera Company contribute to the worship at the 10 a.m. service. Although the 10 a.m. service has a higher attendance, both are considered essential to the spiritual well-being of the congregation. The combined average Sunday attendance is 125 people.

Our Laity play a significant role in both services as ushers, lectors, acolytes, readers of the prayers of the people, and oblation bearers. Members of the altar guild and the flower committee work effectively behind the scenes to complete the presentation of a beautiful and meaningful worship. In addition, following the 10 a.m. service Lay Eucharist Ministers bring the sacrament to those homebound or in nursing homes.

A Eucharist is celebrated every Wednesday morning at 8 a.m. During Lent, services are held on Wednesday evening at 6 p.m. with a potluck dinner afterwards. Special services throughout the year include Recovery Sunday, Youth Sunday, Advent Lessons and Carols, the Christmas pageant, and Holy Week Services. The periodic addition of Quiet Days has proven to be quite popular.

Over the years Christ Church has been blessed with strong music programs that continue to play a substantial role in our worship. We have a gifted organist/choir director who conducts the adult choir as they sing from both the 1982 Hymnal and the Celebration Hymnal. In addition, a weekly anthem or and energetic gospel spiritual often completes the musical offerings. One of the most exciting developments over the past four years has been the growth of the Praise Band. This youth oriented group performs contemporary worship music at the 10:00 a.m. service several times each year. Their contribution has been well received by the congregation. The striking acoustical assets of the church building frequently make it the chosen venue for both secular and sacred classical concerts throughout the year.

Every summer we participate with the other local churches in hosting an ecumenical Vacation Bible School for elementary students. The Youth for Christ ministry for middle and high school students has recently been started. This is led by professional youth ministers and is part of a national youth ministry.

## Prayer

Christ Church recognizes that prayer is an essential element in any healthy church community. On the afternoon of the first Sunday in each month an ecumenical healing service is conducted at the church. This includes the laying on of hands with anointing for those seeking healing for themselves or others. A prayer group meets every Tuesday evening to intercede for the needs of the parish, community, and the world. Furthermore, the parish has a prayer chain that immediately addresses pray needs. Beginning in the summer of 2008, a lay led ministry called “The Prayer Table” convened outside the Church every Saturday morning and offered intercessory prayer for any passerby in need. This has been well received by the community.

## Education at Christ Church

Currently a part-time Director of Religious Education oversees children’s Christian education and alerts the rector to needs and issues as they arise. Sunday school classes are offered during the school year for the youth grouped by age and taught by dedicated volunteers. The younger elementary students take part in the King’s Kids curriculum that has both lessons and hands-on activities. For the older elementary students there is the Explorer’s Club and Rite 13 for the middle schoolers. The high school students prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation using a catechism developed by the Diocese.

Adult education includes the weekly Lectionary Bible study group conducted by the rector and held between the two Sunday services. Christ Church sponsors an ecumenical Bible study and prayer groups for both men and women. On occasion educational programs such as the Alpha series or Faith Alive weekends have been offered.

Cursillo has been used as a leadership tool for the Christ Church community. Roughly 15 members of the parish are Cursillistas. Not long ago the lay reader and treasurer of the diocese-wide Cursillo movement were members of our parish. Also, the Leatherstocking Ultreya meets throughout the year and is open not only to Cursillistas but to other parish members as well.

The present rector and the congregation are proud to have nurtured Polly Bailey, Joe Aconfora, Donna Steckline, and most recently, Vickie Hunter as deacons-in-training.

## Old Friends and New

After each Sunday service a social hour convenes in the dining room of the parish hall. This affords everyone the opportunity to converse, welcome visitors, and share refreshments. Many members of the parish family enjoy the spring and fall clean up

Sundays. Parishioners tidy up the inside and outside of the church and then share a soup and sandwich communal meal. The annual church meeting is held in May. A parish picnic on the first Sunday in June is also popular, especially with young families. Every winter a series of Koinonia group dinners helps parishioners meet and become friends with other church members.

Christ Church is a Stephen Ministry member and has trained more than a dozen parishioners as Stephen Ministers to provide one-on-one support for fellow church members. Stephen leaders and ministers meet twice monthly for peer supervision/continuing education and assist the rector in providing spiritual care to people in crisis.

### Giving Back

Many years ago Christ Church initiated a concerted effort to reach out to both our local community and the world beyond. Locally this effort has taken several forms including; becoming a covenant church for our local Habitat for Humanity chapter, supporting the Cooperstown Food Bank with donations of food and funds, sponsoring the local CROP walk, holding an alternative Christmas market during Advent, contributing several arks to the Heifer Project, and holding a semi-annual rummage sale to assist area resident in finding quality items at reasonable prices while generating funds used to support other outreach efforts. A recent and novel innovation has been the “caring coins” program, in which all coins placed in the plate on Sunday are counted by the children and designated by them for an appropriate outreach project.

Seniors use the parish house for a twice weekly meals program. We make these facilities available to a wide range of no-profit organizations and efforts, including AA, Al-Anon, the Red Cross and many other community organizations.

Another important and rewarding global out-reach program has been the support of our mission to the Dominican Republic. In the past decade Christ Church has sent teams almost every year to the DR. We have built churches, schools, playgrounds, and clinics under the guidance of Bishop Julio and local rectors. Several years ago our congregation experienced the joy of celebrating the Eucharist with Father Naphataly, who came from the DR to thank us. Many of the youth and adults involved in this program have had life changing experiences. In addition, through a scholarship program, families in our parish have provided half tuition that has enabled dozens of Dominican children to attend school.

### Organizational Structure and Staffing

Christ Church, located in the Diocese of Albany and under the energetic and orthodox leadership of Bishop William Love, employs a single fulltime rector charged with the responsibility of running the church. Though the Albany Diocese covers a 19 county area of upstate New York, Christ Church has had a strong influence on diocesan affairs including regular attendance at the annual diocesan convention, serving in key diocesan

roles and endeavoring to meet our annual assessment. The rector has the services of a full-time sexton, part-time secretary, organist/choir director, treasurer and director of Christian education for assistance. The governing body of the congregation consists of a nine member Vestry and two wardens. Three vestry members and the junior warden are elected by the parish at the annual meeting held in May. The junior warden usually becomes the senior warden the following year.

Many committees support the work of the parish and report to the vestry. These include Financial Planning, Building and Grounds, Communications, Congregational Life, Outreach, Christian Education, Stewardship, Columbarium/cemetery, and other ad hoc groups as necessary. Various guilds exist that perform numerous essential functions such as the Altar guild, St. Margaret's and the Flower Guild.

The Sunday bulletin, a continually updated web site, and the monthly Chronicle (a parish wide newsletter) serve as vehicles of written communication.

## Our Facilities

The church facilities are totally contained on a half block plot of land deeded to the church in 1806 by the village founder William Cooper. The church was originally a rectangular brick structure. In the 1840's the church was "Gothicized" under the direction of James Fenimore Cooper. Numerous changes to the interior and exterior have taken place since then. In 1999 a complete restoration of the church took place that restored the historical details of the sanctuary. The structure is sound and up to code.

St. Agnes Chapel was built in 1860 and also restored in 1999. A delicate cloister connects the chapel to the main church. St. Agnes Chapel serves as a site for smaller services and other special functions.

The parish house is located immediately adjacent to and behind the church. A two story structure, the parish house has on its main floor a large hall that can accommodate 90 people for various functions, a commercially equipped kitchen, nursery, and storage facilities. The second level contains the library, classrooms, church archives and offices, including that of the rector. In the basement one will find additional classrooms, the choir room, and a large meeting room with a small kitchen area.

The rectory, located adjacent to the cemetery, consists of a five bedroom, three bathroom Tudor Revival residence constructed in 1889. This house serves as the rector's residence and has been fully maintained throughout the years. The rector and his family must occupy this facility. A small saltbox house next to the parish house serves as the residence for the sexton.

The historic churchyard was the common burial ground for the Village of Cooperstown until William Cooper donated the land to Christ Church. The cemetery has been closed to burials since the 1950's. However, the recently completed columbarium, constructed of

native fieldstone, is available to people of all faiths in keeping with the ecumenical nature of the original village cemetery.

## Financial Health

Christ Church possesses a substantial endowment that provides for 40% of our annual expenditures, almost equal to the amount raised through pledge and plate income. More recently a Legacy Society has been established with an aim toward providing for our future as well. The accompanying charts illustrate the general breakdown of our annual budget.

## Life in Cooperstown

Cooperstown, located in central New York, is a rural, historic village of about 2500 people. It is best known as the home of the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Although our population expands in the summer, the village retains its rural character despite the 300,000 visitors to the Hall each year. Often referred to as the “village of museums”, Cooperstown also offers the Fenimore Art Museum, which contains an exceptional collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century, American Indian and folk art. The Farmer’s Museum, a working village, depicts life in central New York in the 1840’s. Recent additions to the cultural offerings include the now nationally recognized Glimmerglass Opera that every year produced a highly respected and innovative summer opera festival. The Cooperstown Music Festival features exceptional chamber and other classic musical offerings, not infrequently performed in our church.

Cooperstown is located at the southern end of the 9-mile long Otsego Lake, which is the headwater of the Susquehanna River. A clearly defined four season climate supports numerous opportunities for such outdoor activities as swimming, boating, golf, tennis, fishing, hunting, hiking, skiing, sledding or bike riding. The Clark Sports Center, offering a membership for a nominal fee, features an Olympic size indoor swimming pool, indoor track, climbing walls, ropes courses, bowling, squash and racquetball courts, Nautilus and aerobic rooms, and a variety of year-round recreational opportunities for all ages.

Cooperstown schools are well regarded and supported by the local community. The school system consists of 3 divisions: the elementary, middle and high schools. All the schools are located on a single campus near the south end of the village. The facilities are up to date and the athletic fields plentiful. Students are expected to be polite and respectful toward the staff and each other. There is a dress code that promotes modesty and an honor code that promotes self-respect. Discipline problems are few.

The elementary school (grades kindergarten through fifth grade) teaches the standard state curriculum but also features an active music program and makes use of the local museums for a hands-on learning experience.

The middle school (grades 6 through 8) really is a “school within a school”. It is located within the high school building but in a separate wing and has its own administration. This allows the students to gradually acclimate to the more demanding climate of high school. The middle school teachers work as teams and teach “across subjects” such that in music students may study medieval polyphonic chants, in English read about King Arthur, and in science study the physics of a catapult all in a coordinated fashion. Other highlights of the middle school education include a weeklong Medieval festival, study of the grave markers in our churchyard, and competition in the National Spelling Bee, to name a few.

The Cooperstown High School was in the top 4% of Newsweek’s most recent annual “Top High Schools” ratings. 93% of the 2008 graduating class went on to secondary education, 3% entered the military and 4% entered the work force. A variety of Advanced Placement college credit courses are offered. Despite its small size (<500 students) Cooperstown High School does well in athletics, having a number of state championships to its credit. The music department is active with several choirs, a concert and jazz band in addition to offering instruction in classical instruments. Students participating in the National History Day competitions have been recognized at the national level with such projects as interviewing the last few living Navajo “code talkers”. Five to seven high school students take part in the Rotary Club International student exchange program for a year of study abroad.

Over the last few years Cooperstown graduates have been accepted to some of the most selective colleges in the nation.

The Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital is the largest employer in the region. It consists of the local hospital as well as a network of regional clinics. A teaching hospital associated with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University, the Bassett has a successful open heart surgery program and features the latest diagnostic and therapeutic capabilities. The Bassett Research Center conducts funded basic science research. Dr. E. Donnall Thomas was awarded the 1990 Nobel Prize for Medicine for work partly conducted at the Bassett Research Center.

Much of what makes Cooperstown special is due to the benevolent commitment of the Clark Foundation presently under the leadership of Miss Jane Forbes Clark. The Clark Foundation provides generous scholarships to area students, maintains a huge green space outside the village, and graces the town with seasonal planting and decorations.

Cooperstown is a rural village and, though somewhat insular, prides itself on its quaint setting. Hence, there are no fast food or lodging chains within the village limits. Likewise, there are few empty storefronts, although many are devoted to baseball. Only a single traffic light exists in the village.

The village does support a supermarket, bakery, deli, and a hardware store. Many people travel to the nearest city, Oneonta, for shopping. Specialty shopping will require a trip to Utica (one hour drive) or to Albany (one and a half hours drive). Two colleges are

located in Oneonta: the State University College at Oneonta and Hartwick College, a private liberal arts institution.

## The Future

In our search for a new rector the committee has conducted meetings with the congregation and collated surveys to identify our strengths, weaknesses, and directions for the future. The Vestry, at the direction of the Bishop, acts as the search committee.

What have our efforts shown us so far? We value strong preaching, personal integrity and compassionate pastoral care. We find music an important part of worship. We believe that local and global outreach programs are essential.

Areas for improvement include developing educational opportunities for the young, attracting younger families to the parish, developing a healthier approach to stewardship, and increasing the endowment to better support both outreach and parish needs.

What do we want in a new pastor? We seek a learned, compassionate pastor who can both guide and support the congregation. Someone who is available in times of need, a good teacher, thoughtful preacher, spiritual advisor, able administrator and a focused, dynamic leader.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Roger MacMillan,  
Michael Thomas Miller

***Paid Positions:***

*Rector Fr Samuel Abbott*  
*Sexton Michael Page*  
*Music Director Roberta*  
*Treasurer William Mason*  
*Secretary Rosemary Koenig*  
*Director of Christian Education Linda Van Cleef*

***Volunteer Positions:***

*Senior Warden Martin Tillapaugh*  
*Junior Warden Susan Snell*  
*Vestry Teri Barown, Bob Birch, Janet Rigby, Roger MacMillan,*  
*Michael Miller, Ashley Cooper, Sandra Thorne, Audrey Murphy*

WWW.CHRISTEPISCOPALCOOPERSTOWN.ORG.

69 Fair Street

Cooperstown, NY 13326

Phone: 607-547-9555

Fax: 607-547-7414

Email: [ceccoop@telenet.net](mailto:ceccoop@telenet.net)  
CHRISTEPISCOPALCHURCH