

# Parish Profile of St. Charles Episcopal Church



## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| WHO WE ARE .....                               | 2  |
| OUR MINISTRIES/OUR OUTREACH .....              | 3  |
| OUR LITURGY AND OUR MUSIC .....                | 5  |
| OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES .....             | 6  |
| OUR FUTURE .....                               | 7  |
| WHAT WE SEEK IN OUR NEXT RECTOR .....          | 8  |
| OUR COMMUNITY .....                            | 9  |
| OUR FACILITIES/OUR HISTORY .....               | 11 |
| OUR FINANCES .....                             | 12 |
| EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF CHICAGO/APPLICATION ..... | 13 |

## WHO WE ARE

*"I wanted to extend my heartfelt thanks to... the entire congregation for the warm, welcoming atmosphere you created on Easter Sunday. From the moment I walked through the doors with my oldest son and my husband, I felt embraced—not only by the beauty of the liturgy, but by the genuine spirit of community and compassion that filled the sanctuary..."*

*The openness, inclusivity, and thoughtful message of love and resurrection reminded me of what I've always sought in faith: not rigidity, but grace, truth, and a sense of belonging. Thank you for creating that space—and for embodying a kind of leadership that nurtures rather than judges, and that listens more than it lectures."*

*-email from a visitor on Easter Sunday 2025*

These comments embody St. Charles Episcopal Church, where service, worship and community in the spirit of Christ are the foundation of everything we do. We are a faithful, compassionate and welcoming church in the Diocese of Chicago.

The CAT survey results reinforced what many parishioners could tell you--"the small church with a big heart" is a very supportive, service-oriented parish, where members genuinely care about each other. We have become known for our welcoming spirit, joyful fellowship and hospitality, and look forward to our fun, tasty time together at coffee hour.

Largely Caucasian and well-educated, our parish has gone through a period of gradual membership decline and is slowly growing again with God's help--to the point that we recently held another newcomers' dinner. One of the newcomers wrote after, "What an absolutely lovely evening!...what rests on my heart today is the immense warmth, everyone's dedication to the church community..."



*Progressive as well as open-minded to other points of view, our church takes pride in being a welcoming community to all. When the Lord sends us strangers, we try to show them the face of Jesus in ours.*

## OUR MINISTRIES

The Jimmy Carter quote on the right deeply resonates with our congregation, and we wholeheartedly embrace it. Our faith is active, and we are passionate about the ministries we serve. Equipped by our worship and fellowship, we actively participate in the work God has entrusted to us.

Our parishioners take on a variety of roles before, during, and after services, including choir members, acolytes, ushers, lectors, altar and flower guild members, Eucharistic ministers, healing prayer teams, prayer shawl ministry, Bible Study, intercessors and coffee hour hosts. We proudly support our local chapter of the Daughters of the King.

During the challenges of COVID-19, we adapted by launching a live-stream service, which has since become a successful and integral part of our services. We continue to offer the livestream on YouTube and Facebook, and we are expanding our social media presence to further connect with our congregation and the community. We look forward to growing our presence on other platforms as well, sharing the message of faith and hope with even more people.

Links to our website and Facebook page:

<https://www.stcharlesepiscopal.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/StCharlesEpiscopalIL>



*"To me, faith is not just a noun, but also a verb."*

*- Jimmy Carter*



*"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*

*- Matthew 25: 40*



## OUR OUTREACH

Throughout the long history of St. Charles Episcopal Church (SCEC), our outreach programs have sought to make and build a better community through service and action. Our focus, although not exclusively, continues to be on feeding people.

Every month for over 35 years we have served at Hesus House in Aurora, the second largest homeless shelter in Illinois. Making 100 bag lunches and cooking breakfast on site in Aurora for over 200 guests, it is our longest continuous outreach program.

We partner 4-6 times per year with the Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva to make upwards of 400 sack lunches for the Aurora Sandwich Board, a program that provides lunch where there is need. Lunches are distributed by us on site at Trinity Episcopal Church in Aurora.

Ongoing since 2009, our Free Spaghetti Dinner provides delicious meals monthly to 200 to 250 people in our community. Pre-pandemic, it was a dine-in meal, complete with checkered tablecloths, live music, and a friendly wait-staff. Today, while still offering the inside, seated option, we find many people are more comfortable dining in their own homes and we now offer a to-go service. As part of the Free Spaghetti Dinner, we also deliver 20-30 meals (with a children's menu option) to Lazurus House, a shelter in St. Charles, and 30 meals to the Carroll Towers, a low-income senior living center in our community.

Four times a year a volunteer family from the parish will purchase and prepare an entire meal for 30 guests at Lazurus House. Typically created in their home, it is delivered to the shelter fully cooked and ready to eat.

We have had a long relationship with the Salvation Army, sponsoring an angel tree in the past, and continue to do December bell ringing as we have done for the past 11 years. The last couple of years we have sponsored a giving tree for the needy with the nonprofit Community Santa Project.

For 10 years we have been a member of the Fox River Valley Initiative (FRVI), a broad-based community organizing group which is part of the Metro IAF (Industrial Areas Foundation). In that time the FRVI has worked to create mental health education programs for police and dispatchers, helped organize the building of a 40-unit affordable housing complex in Elgin, and pushed successfully for a Crisis Stabilization Unit created at Mercy Hospital in Aurora.

In late 2024, responding to tent fires in the homeless encampment in Elgin, our parish sent a sizable donation to the Elgin PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter) organization to help them provide services to those who were displaced.



*At St. Charles Episcopal Church we are grateful for the opportunity to work with and in our community.*



## OUR LITURGY AND OUR MUSIC

*"...our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, 'Take eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.' After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, 'Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.'"*

- Book of Common Prayer Rite II

The Eucharist is central to the worship at St. Charles Episcopal Church and is celebrated each Sunday at the 9:30 am service. Rite II liturgy is used, and all are welcome to partake in communion. The recent CAT survey revealed many people find the music to be a central part of the Sunday worship. The music is carefully planned to reflect and connect the liturgical calendar and the appointed readings of the day. In addition, the congregation is encouraged to worship by lifting their voices in song, both traditional and contemporary.

The recently refurbished 21-rank Howell pipe organ provides the foundation for most of our music. It is frequently supplemented by piano, violin, cello, and/or hand bells.

Our choir leads the congregation in hymns and offers an anthem on Sundays as well. The anthems, chosen by the Music Director, echo the church calendar and span a variety of musical styles. The music is never an end in itself; rather, it is the servant of the liturgy, allowing the worshipper to discover the presence of God in new and meaningful ways.

Our Home Eucharistic Ministry Team provides in-home Eucharist to our home bound parishioners once a month. One Sunday a month a healing prayer is offered during the Eucharist.

There is a weekly Compline Service on Thursday evenings via Zoom.

A coffee hour follows the Sunday service and provides fellowship as well as refreshments.

There are many additional opportunities for worship and music throughout the year: a Pet Blessing in October, Advent Lessons & Carols, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Ashes-to-Go at the train station early on Ash Wednesday morning, Ash Wednesday evening service, Maundy Thursday service with foot washing, Stations of the Cross weekly during Lent, Good Friday, Taize services, and Holden Evensong services. For some of these special services, guest musicians participate.



## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Like many mainline churches today, our congregation is older. Where we differ, however, is in our service-oriented and energy-filled spirit. Few churches our size (86 communicants in good standing) are so dedicated to faithfully giving back to those in need in the community. We definitely put our faith into action! Whether it is cooking and serving a free monthly meal, volunteering at a homeless shelter, or helping out at a soup kitchen, we're there.

Not only have we shown how we dedicate our time and talent to service, but you can also see it in our financial stewardship. The number of pledging units has grown from 44 two years ago to 50 today. In that time, annual pledge income has risen over 17% to \$212,090. That is another clear demonstration of how important our church is to us!

*The church was recognized with a Community Image award from the St. Charles Area Chamber of Commerce in 2023 for its renovations.*

Despite COVID, we were able to conduct a successful capital campaign that refurbished our parish hall, added air conditioning, new furniture and updated our kitchen. We also began the process to update our Howell 21-rank pipe organ, which is now complete.

In our quest for spiritual growth, we offer adult formation. We are blessed to have several former educators in the parish to lead us. A number of our parishioners have experienced Education for Ministry (EFM). Our deacon leads Compline and Bible study weekly. Multiple Sacred Ground racial justice education circles have been held; we have a Daughters of the King chapter and a Creation Care group. Our parish would welcome more educational opportunities.

We are raising our profile in the community through our online presence and in-person events. In our 75th anniversary year in 2023 we held an after-hours event with the St. Charles Area Chamber of Commerce. We have marched in the St. Patrick's parade in St. Charles the last two years. We forge alliances through community events such as presentations on the Underground Railroad, immigration rights, voting education (nonpartisan) and LGBTQ+ awareness.

The CAT survey reinforced our desire to grow. We are challenged with how to attract new members from all age groups in order to continue to do Christ's work through our ministries and outreach programs.

Another potential challenge the survey identified is that we are somewhat settled. Yes, our traditions are important to us, but to grow, most of us recognize we have to be open to change. With good communication, listening, and patient shepherding from our next pastor, we confidently pray that change will bring a bright and promising future!





*The future of  
St. Charles Episcopal  
Church is one of  
growth, innovation,  
and unwavering  
commitment  
to service.*



## OUR FUTURE

St. Charles Episcopal Church envisions a future where spiritual growth is paramount. This involves not only nurturing the faith of our current congregation but also attracting new members. We look forward to working collaboratively with our next rector to explore innovative programs and inclusive worship experiences. We want to offer a variety of spiritual services and a more robust Adult Formation. We want to connect with other church groups and become more visible within the community. By fostering a welcoming environment, we hope to inspire deeper connections to faith and spirituality.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

In the coming years, St. Charles Episcopal Church seeks to continue to deepen its community engagement through outreach programs that address local needs and foster solidarity. We will continue to enhance our efforts in providing food and essential services to those in need. Partnerships with local charities, businesses, and government agencies will be crucial in amplifying the impact of these initiatives. We would like to partner with other congregations to work for positive change in our community.

### DIGITAL PRESENCE

A robust digital presence will continue to be essential for our future. St. Charles Episcopal Church is looking to enhance its online platforms, including its website and social media. Virtual services will continue to make our offerings accessible to a wider audience.

### COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

Our Racial Justice Committee is dedicated to advocating for equality, inclusivity, and human rights. Our Green Team (Creation Care) Committee works to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, reduce our energy costs as well as educate our parishioners and the community on ways to care for creation in green and sustainable ways. Future initiatives will continue to focus on addressing social issues such as racial and environmental justice, gender equality, and economic disparity. Educational programs, community dialogues, and advocacy campaigns will continue to be instrumental in promoting social justice and fostering a culture of empathy and action.

### SUPPORT FOR MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

St. Charles Episcopal Church will continue to support marginalized communities through targeted outreach and services. Efforts to provide safe spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants, and refugees should be explored. We will work collaboratively with advocacy groups to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background, feels welcomed and supported.

The future of St. Charles Episcopal Church is one of growth, innovation, and unwavering commitment to service. By embracing spiritual growth, community engagement, modernization, and social justice, we aim to be a transformative force in the lives of our congregants and the wider community. As we move forward, St. Charles Episcopal Church will continue to honor its rich heritage while pioneering pathways for an even brighter, more inclusive, and compassionate future.

## WHAT WE SEEK IN OUR NEXT RECTOR

As we move forward, our goal is to find a full-time priest who will nurture and support our gospel mission. Through our small group sessions, the following key attributes emerged:

### PERSONAL STRENGTHS

We seek a person who is fearless yet graceful, able to challenge us while maintaining respect and compassion; a person with exceptional communication skills who can inspire, encourage, and empathize with our congregation; someone warm and patient, who listens attentively; a leader who remains focused, yet flexible in navigating change; a diplomat who can handle sensitive matters with tact and maintain confidentiality; and, of course, we hope to find someone with a great sense of humor!

### PASTORAL CARE

We desire a priest who is deeply attentive to our pastoral needs and who encourages us to support one another in the same way. It's important for us that our new priest is present with us during times of crisis and shares in our joy during moments of celebration.

### STRATEGIC VISION AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXCELLENCE

A primary goal for us is to grow and strengthen our parish. We are looking for a rector who is innovative and capable of thinking outside the box to lead us in this important direction. Our next priest should welcome newcomers warmly and help cultivate a thriving, inclusive community. We are also focused on building sustainable programs and ministries that draw from our collective personal, financial, and physical resources, while also identifying new opportunities for growth. Having a rector with administrative skills, financial insight, and active participation in our ministries and stewardship initiatives is essential.

### SPIRITUAL AND LITURGICAL PASSION

Our congregation is spiritually diverse, and we seek a priest who shares our passion for varied liturgy while fostering unity in worship. The ideal candidate will be adept at creating a sense of oneness among a diverse group of worshippers. We hope for a rector whose sermons are thoughtful, inspiring, and motivating, encouraging us to grow in love and grace in all we do.

### PASSION FOR MUSIC

Music is one of our most cherished ministries. We are blessed with a talented Musical Director, choir, and musicians who are respected and appreciated. Our next rector must value and support the musical ministry, working collaboratively with our Musical Director to create an environment where music can thrive—satisfying the musicians among us, the singers in the pews, and those who simply wish to enjoy the beauty of the music.



*We are excited about finding a new priest who will help lead us into a new chapter of growth and spiritual enrichment, and we look forward to welcoming the person who will share in this journey with us.*





## OUR COMMUNITY

Just 35 miles west of Chicago, St. Charles, Illinois offers the amenities and charm of a small town with easy access to all the benefits of the big city. With the God-given beauty of the Fox River as a backdrop, St. Charles is one of the region's most livable cities.

Chicago is a major transportation hub. O'Hare International and Midway International Airport are within an hour or so of St. Charles offering a variety of airline choices and competitive fares. A Metra commuter rail station in nearby Geneva takes passengers to Chicago and beyond, and there is a suburban bus system. A variety of interstate highways can be found nearby.

One of the blessings of living in St. Charles is that it is part of what we call the Tri-Cities. It is nestled just north of Geneva, county seat of Kane County, and Batavia. St. Charles has been known for decades as the "Pride of the Fox." Within 10 miles of these three interconnected river cities is a population of about 100,000, which creates a dynamic market that has attracted a large variety of businesses and services.

The chambers of commerce and downtown organizations have done a good job of advocating for local small businesses, so each city has a robust, walkable downtown. Tourists travel from throughout the Midwest to attend festivals, peruse the unique shops and dine in the many diverse restaurants throughout the Tri-Cities. Geneva's quaint Third Street is known as a boutique shopping mecca. Geneva is also home to the area's largest shopping center, Geneva Commons.

Founded in the 1830s, all three of these historic mill towns take pride in their history. There are three historical museums, and historic preservation is a source of pride in the area.

St. Charles has a population of 33,338, a median household income of

\$109,889 a year, and a median age of 41.9. The latest U.S. Census Bureau data lists St. Charles as 75.7% Caucasian, 11.9% Hispanic or Latino, 4.8% Asian, 3.1% African American and .3% Native American and Alaska native. 94.7% of those 25 and older are high school graduates and 51.2% have attained a bachelor's degree or higher. 3.9% are below the poverty line.

The Tri-Cities offers excellent healthcare from Northwestern Medicine's Delnor Hospital in Geneva and a wide variety of individual practices. Tri-City Health Partnership in St. Charles provides free medical and dental care for community members who are unable to pay.

Educational resources abound in the area. Award-winning St. Charles public school District 303 has two traditional high schools and its innovative alternative Compass Academy high school, two middle schools grades 6-8, and 11 K-5 elementary schools. For students needing an alternative learning program to be successful, Mades-Johnstone School supports K-12 students. A short drive to the north is Elgin Community College which was recognized in 2025 with the Aspen Prize for excellence as one of the top 150 community colleges in the nation. Northern Illinois University in DeKalb is a well-established research institution offering a gamut of undergraduate and graduate experiences. Nearby there are several private universities, as well as highly rated colleges and universities in Chicago.

St. Charles Public Library, only about a mile from the church, offers a recently renovated facility with a collection of about 400,000 items. Founded in 1888 and later supported by Andrew Carnegie, the library is one of the focal points of the community. It is more than a repository for books, with a vast array of online resources, community education programming and entertainment.

Looking for fun? The scenic Fox River provides all kinds of recreational opportunities--fishing, boating, kayaking, and canoeing. The Kane County Forest Preserve has protected thousands of acres for public use and enjoys much popular support. The St. Charles area is recognized for having one of the best systems of bike and walking trails in the country. The award-winning St. Charles Park District has a top-notch nine-hole golf course, 18 hole mini-golf, paddle wheelers, Olympic-size pool, tennis and pickleball and 26 parks.

St. Charles has its own nonprofit Arts Council promoting the arts with an annual fine art fair, sculptures in the park and 180+ pieces of public art. The historic Arcada Theatre built in 1926 brings top name musical talent and entertainment to St. Charles. The Steel Beam Theatre in St. Charles offers professional productions in an intimate space. The St. Charles Singers, a group of 32-38 professional musicians, has been recognized nationally for its sublime interpretation of choral classics. The Norris Cultural Arts Center has provided visual and performing arts programs to St. Charles for decades. The nearby Paramount Theatre in Aurora is the nation's number one subscription theater, bringing Broadway-quality shows to the area at affordable prices.

What about sports? We're big on them! From the Kane County Cougars, one of the Midwest's most successful minor league baseball teams to the U.S. Hockey League's Chicago Freeze, the Tri-Cities offers fun family sports.



The Tri-Cities has a plethora of markets, too: indoor farmers markets, outdoor farmers markets, an artisan market, French market, even a flea market. But not just any flea market, the monthly Kane County Flea Market in St. Charles is billed as one of the largest antique and collectible flea markets in the country. There is something for everyone in the St. Charles area!



## OUR FACILITIES

Groundbreaking on our current sanctuary and nave started in May of 1951. A year later our first priest (The Rev. Frederick Ludtke) was installed, and the new building was dedicated by Bishop Conkling. A three-bedroom, two-bathroom rectory, adjacent to the church parking lot, was added in late 1958 and upgraded in 2015. In 1968 work began on the parish hall (now known as Ludtke Hall), kitchen, library, church offices, and church school rooms. Our building is a Neo-Georgian structure on four acres of land. The grounds contain a columbarium fronting a memorial garden, a permanent Chartres-size labyrinth, and large grassy areas where outdoor gatherings are held.

In the last twelve years we have redesigned and built a new parking lot and have added handicapped parking spaces near the front of the church where an accessible entrance is also available.

Ludtke Hall was recently renovated. New flooring, dropped ceilings, bathrooms, a modern audio-visual system, a commercial grade refrigerator, and non-appliance items in the kitchen were all installed or updated.

Our worship space, which seats approximately 100, has been fitted with modern LED lighting, a sound system, and current technologies which allow us to live stream our services and events.

Our church has been well maintained over the years, and, as we continue to repair and replace in a timely manner, it will provide many more years of service for us and the community.

## OUR HISTORY

In 1948, 34 original parishioners signed the charter to found Holy Rood Mission in St. Charles, the predecessor to our church. (Rood is the Anglo-Saxon word for cross.) In 1951, ground was broken on the present location at 994 North 5th Ave. The church's architectural design is Neo-Georgian, reflecting the wishes of the Norris family, who donated the land to harmonize with the nearby Delnor Hospital. The parish enjoyed a period of strong growth and development under the leadership of the Reverend Frederick N. Ludtke.

In 1984, Reverend Ludtke retired and Reverend John L. McCausland was called. He brought great energy and transformation by focusing on new outreach ministries, youth programs, and renewed forms of liturgy.

In 1992, Reverend McCausland was called to another parish, and Reverend Stephen Winsett became the new rector. He continued the commitment to education and oversaw the installation of our permanent outdoor labyrinth.

In 2000, Reverend Winsett retired, and Reverend William Nesbit was called. Under his leadership, we further expanded our spiritual practices and outreach ministries, focusing on those which help feed the hungry in our community. Additionally, our church began offering the Blessing

of the Animals for the Feast of St. Francis, contemplative Taize services, the offering of the healing prayer during Eucharist services, and Ashes to Go. It was also during this time that the lay religious order, Daughters of the King, established a chapter at St. Charles Episcopal Church.

In 2015, Reverend Nesbit stepped down and Reverend Stacy Walker was called in 2017. Reverend Walker continued the focus on our outreach programs and led a successful capital campaign to pay off our mortgage and update Ludtke Hall.

In 2022, Reverend Walker resigned, and Reverend Fran Holliday stepped in as our interim Rector. Reverend Holliday retired April 2025.

## OUR FINANCES

*“Commit your way to the Lord and put your trust in him, and he will bring it to pass.”*

*- Psalm 37:5*

We are a financially stable parish! See below a summary of our 2025 and 2026 financial data:

|                            | 2025<br>Actual | 2026<br>Budget | 2026<br>Actual YTD through<br>February 2026 |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|---|
| INCOME                     | \$308,604.00   | \$268,662.00   | \$77,587.00                                 |
| EXPENSES                   |                |                |   |
| Parish Programs & Outreach | \$33,045.00    | \$34,270.00    | \$3,454.00                                  |
| Administration             | \$12,235.00    | \$14,482.00    | \$2,741.00                                  |
| Building & Grounds         | \$66,529.00    | \$62,200.00    | \$12,535.00                                 |
| Personnel                  | \$102,365.00   | \$193,747.00   | \$14,417.00                                 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES             | \$214,174.00   | \$304,699.00   | \$33,147.00                                 |
| ASSETS                     |                |                |   |
| Current                    | \$337,275.00   | N/A            | \$380,201.00                                |
| Fixed                      | \$2,693,412.00 | N/A            | \$2,693,412.00                              |
| Total                      | \$3,030,687.00 |                | \$3,073,613.00                              |

*“After my first visit, I knew this would be my church home. I cried tears of joy.”  
-from the November 2024 CAT survey*





## EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF CHICAGO

The Episcopal Diocese of Chicago is geographically and culturally expansive. The diocese spans the northern half of Illinois, stretching from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River, from the Wisconsin border nearly to St. Louis. Our 115 congregations are found in urban, suburban, and rural settings across the state.

The Episcopal Diocese of Chicago encompasses congregational vitality initiatives such as The College for Congregational Development, established Episcopal college ministries throughout the state, and a strong commitment to social witness, as expressed through the work of Episcopal Charities and Community Services, the social outreach arm of the diocese.

The Right Reverend Paula E. Clark became the thirteenth Bishop of Chicago in September 2022.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for this position, please complete the Diocesan Clergy Information Form for Transitions found on the diocesan website.

<https://episcopalchicago.wufoo.com/forms/m1poxgz40cwsj2w>

Questions about this position should be directed to The Reverend Canon Andrea Mysen, Canon to the Ordinary:  
amysen@episcopalchicago.org

