

Christ Episcopal Church

Newton, New Jersey

"Let Mutual Love Continue."



Parish Profile

2022

Characterized by Joy

For more than 250 years, Christ Church Newton has embraced the call to serve Sussex County and the wider world. From its modest pre-Revolutionary War beginnings, our parish has faithfully celebrated the sacraments, heeded the word of God, and lifted high songs of praise. Our rich heritage emboldens us to express God's timeless truths to a modern world needing Good News.

Located in the heart of rural Sussex County, N.J., our growing, vibrant, and diverse Christian community offers a range of ministries for all ages and interests, educational opportunities for children and adults, strong lay leadership, and an expanding number of outreach programs.

Our parishioners include those who have called Christ Church home for generations, those new to the Episcopal Church, and those who have recently moved to the area and are seeking a church family. We welcome all who worship with us—and, especially, to join us at the Lord's Table for Holy Communion each Sunday. And while our members' views on matters political, social, and theological may vary, we accept and celebrate those differences and come together as a community of faith.

Every parish has a unique flavor and ours might aptly be summed up in one word: **Joy!** Though our opinions on some pressing matters may differ, our commitment to Christ enables us to worship joyfully, as one—a community of unified members enjoying each other, sharing in the work of the Holy Spirit, and serving others out of a Jesus-centered mission-mindedness.

If you are interested in learning if God is calling you to be our next Rector, we invite you to discover more about our parish, its people, and our vision for the future.

Our Mission: To invite God's people into worship, community, and spiritual growth by commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ through service to others, Christian education, and stewardship.

Our Vision: To be recognized as Christ's presence in our community.



Our Next Rector: Shepherding Us into the Future

The following attributes brought by our new Rector will continue to increase the membership of our church family and help strengthen the faith of current parishioners:

Biblically Grounded: Solidly Christ-centered, believing in all the underlying tenets of the Christian faith, as outlined in the Nicene Creed.

Preacher: Strong homiletic skills; able to communicate effectively to all members of the parish, ideally with erudition and humor.

Passionate, Respectful: Passionate about the critical issues facing our Christian community and wishing to be involved with trying to address those issues; respectful that our parish includes individuals across the political spectrum and able to help guide our parish to living out the “politics of Jesus” rather than getting mired in the secular politics of the Left or Right. Such has been a tradition of the church from its earliest days—when our first Rector refused to take sides during the Revolutionary War—and this tradition is one of the reasons we believe our church is attracting new members.

Pastor: Well-trained in pastoral care, able to skillfully provide counsel, advice, and consolation to parishioners in need of assistance.

Spiritual Guide: Able to motivate the congregation to become better stewards of their time, talent, and treasure; able to inspire and encourage spiritual growth among members.

Fiscally Responsible Manager: Solid expertise in financial matters, with the ability to manage a large budget and with assistance from the Vestry, make prudent financial decisions; strong management skills.



To summarize: Our ideal candidate will be a confident preacher and teacher. Music and liturgy are essential to our parish, as is the Rector’s ability to interpret and instruct within an informed and cordial atmosphere. Equally important is the ability to be honest, enthusiastic, and socially warm in all endeavors.

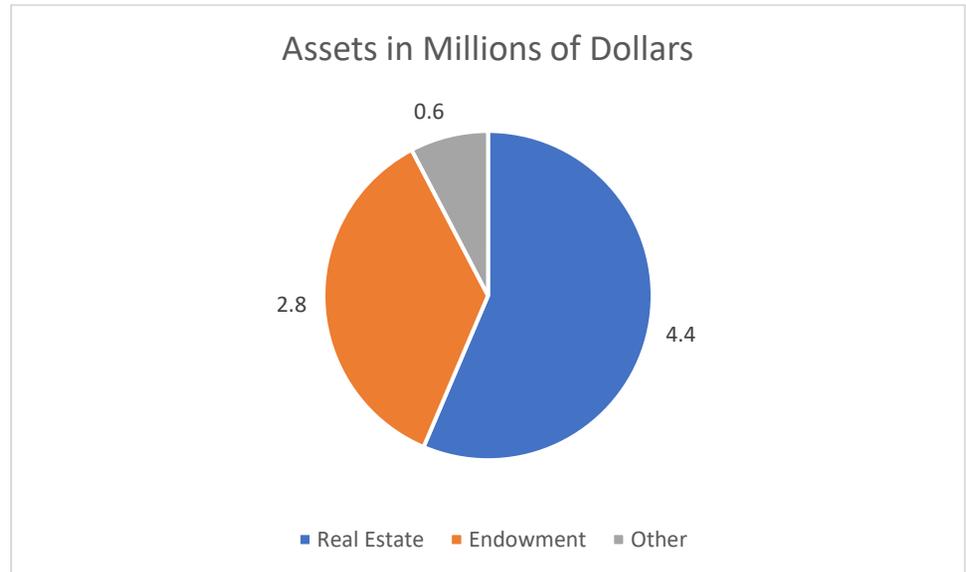
In short, we are searching for someone who can support our commitment to a dynamic Christo-centric Trinitarian worship experience through preaching, music, and sacraments rooted in our Anglican tradition: A thoughtful leader who will shepherd us into the future.

Financially Sound

At a time when many churches are struggling to maintain members and to remain financially solvent, Christ Church enjoys a strong financial position.

Thanks to prudent investment decisions, conservative and responsible financial management, and generous contributions by numerous church leaders, the church currently has total assets (as of 5/31/22) of approximately \$7.8 million and liabilities of approximately \$9,722. Aside from our real-estate holdings, valued at approximately \$4.4 million, our primary asset is an endowment of approximately \$2.8 million.

Christ Church is committed to the tithe as the biblical standard of giving for Christians. All members are asked to work towards the tithe through proportional giving. Every fall, the church conducts an **Annual Stewardship Campaign**, part of which includes a weekly member testimonial about the impact of the church on their lives. The campaign also has included a church-wide **Stewardship Dinner** and, usually, a special dinner gathering of the parish's largest givers. These campaigns have prompted generous responses from parishioners and despite the pandemic and other financial challenges over the past several years, **pledges in 2022 compared to 2021 increased by approximately 7%.**



Recent Capital Improvements

Significant capital improvements performed in recent years have included a major renovation of the church in 2010; upgrading of the sacristy in 2012; repointing of exterior stonework and refurbishment and painting of the church interior in 2017; renovation of the rear of the church in 2019; replacement of the copper and slate roofs for all church buildings; as well as renovations of the kitchen, parish house, and church parlor. Some of these improvements were financed by specific capital campaigns while others were funded by member bequests.



Clergy Housing

Christ Church provides a generous housing allowance that allows a Rector to select suitable housing for their (and their family's) needs and to build equity in this personal real-estate investment. All types of housing are available in the area, from garden apartments to large, single-family homes.

Sussex County, NJ Housing Market

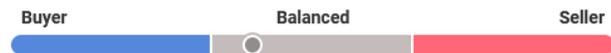
In May 2022, the median listing home price in Sussex County, NJ was \$349.9K, trending up 7.7% year-over-year. The median listing home price per square foot was \$197. The median home sold price was \$375K.

Median Listing Home Price vs. Median Home Sold Price



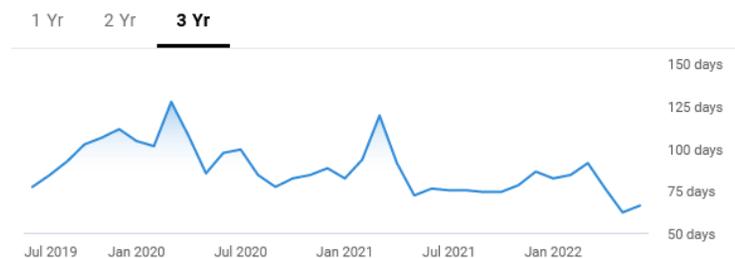
Sale-to-List Price Ratio: 103.23%

Homes in Sussex County, NJ sold for 3.23% above asking price on average in May 2022.

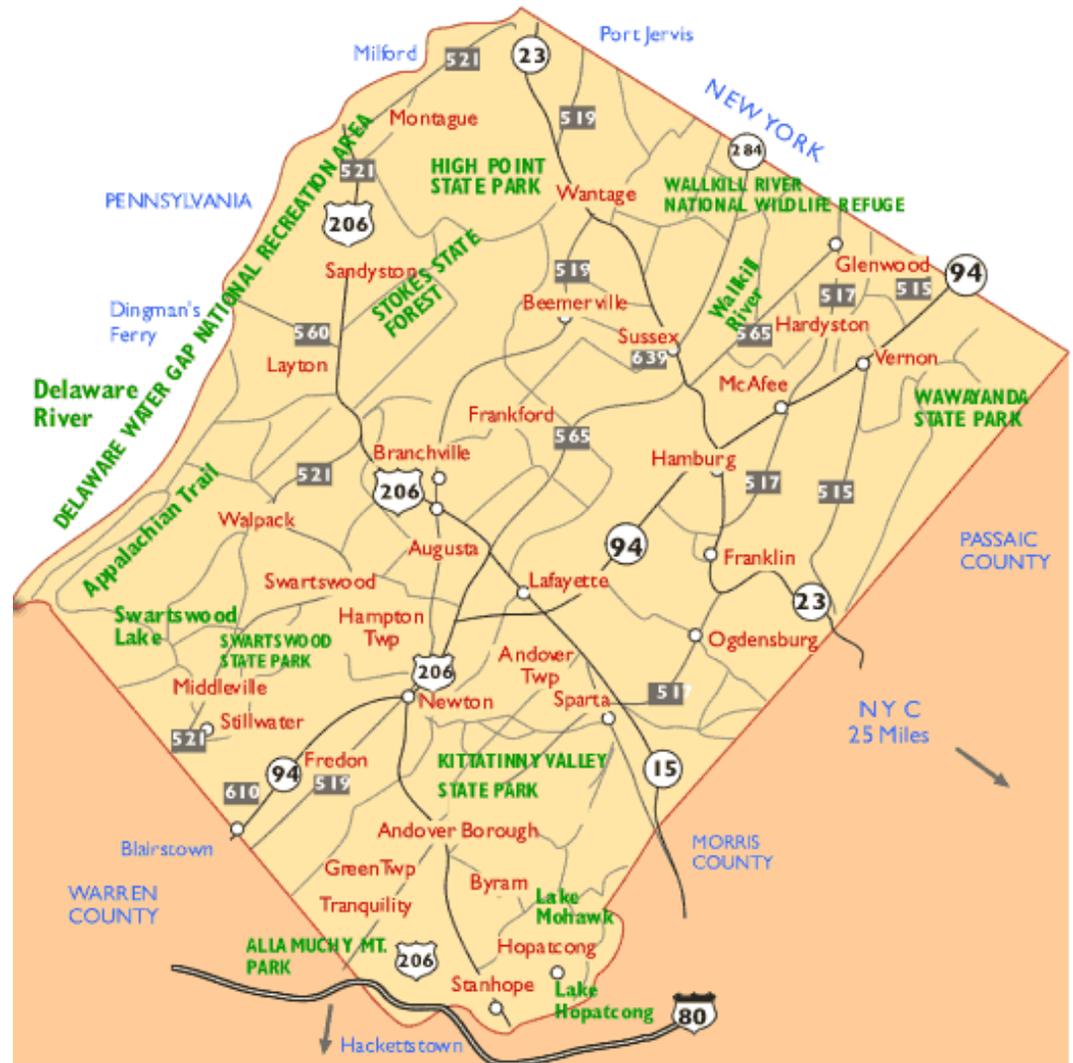


Sussex County, NJ is a **balanced market** in May 2022, which means that the supply and demand of homes are about the same.

Median Days on Market: 66 Days



Source: www.realtor.com



About Newton, New Jersey

The town of Newton is situated in Sussex County, N.J., approximately 60 miles northwest of New York City. As the county seat of Sussex County, the town is the location of the county's administrative offices and court system. Within the town's boundaries are Sussex County Community College, an accredited, two-year public community college, and Newton Medical Center, a modern, 146-bed hospital, part of the Atlantic Health System. The town is bordered to the north and east by Hampton Township, to the west by Fredon Township, and to the south by Andover Township.

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Newton had a total area of 3.38 square miles and a population of 8,374.

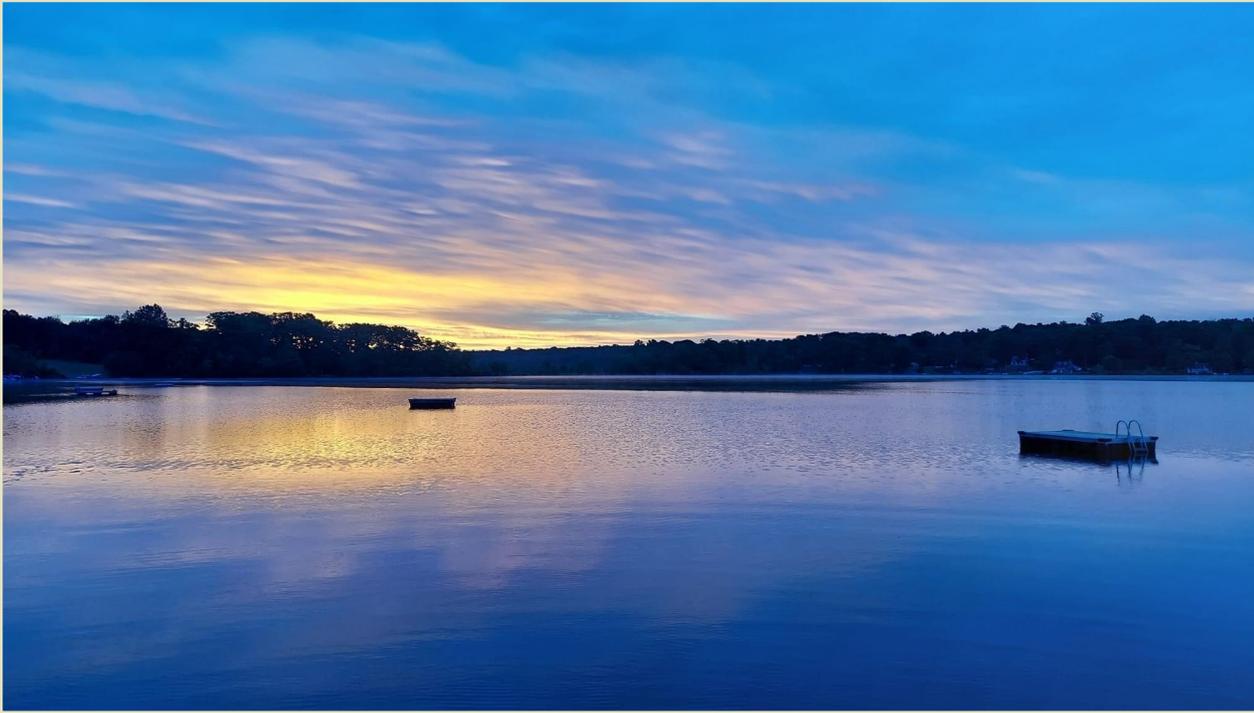
Many of the houses within the town's boundaries and, especially the downtown area, are in the Victorian style. The town's school system serves students in kindergarten through 12th grade, with enrollment that includes high school students from nearby Andover Borough and Andover and Green Townships, who attend the high school as part of sending/receiving relationships. As of the 2018-19 school year, the district had an enrollment of 1,546 students in its three public schools (475 in elementary, 345 in middle school, and 715 in high school). The town previously had a Catholic school, Saint Joseph's Regional School, which closed in 2016 and was one of four schools that merged with Reverend George Brown School in nearby Sparta Township.

Over the past several years, Newton has attracted new, young businesses and entrepreneurs. It has a revitalized Main Street and boasts restaurants that have been well-reviewed by *The New York Times*, as well as interior designers, advertising firms, and other professional businesses. Construction recently began to bring a Panera Bread, a Chipotle, and a Starbucks to the nearby commercial area.

The town is home to The Newton Theater, a former Reilly and Hall movie theater originally constructed in 1924 that was converted in 2008 into a 605-seat performing arts center. The Theater has attracted such iconic acts as Judy Collins, Lyle Lovett, LeAnn Rimes, The Robert Cray Band, various tribute bands, and many others. Recreational facilities in Newton include several athletic fields and a swimming pool at Memory Park.



About Sussex County, New Jersey



Sussex County is considered among the most scenic areas of the mid-Atlantic States. Occupying the northwest corner of New Jersey, the county is blessed with wooded hills, deep valleys, rolling fields, winding roads, clear lakes, and shallow streams. Numerous state and national parks and recreational areas, including large portions of the Appalachian Trail, add to the richness of life in this area. Camping, fishing, biking, canoeing, power boating, skiing (both downhill and cross-country), and more are all available nearby. The county is also the home of numerous golf courses, a small public-use airport, and activities for the more adventurous such as hot air ballooning and sailplane flying.

Skylands Park is located five miles north of Newton and is home to the **Sussex County Miners** baseball team, which plays in the Frontier League. Various other events are held at Skylands Park, including concerts, fireworks, a farmer's market, and community activities.

Adjacent to Skylands Park is the **Sussex County Fairgrounds**, which hosts the New Jersey State Fair Farm and Horse Show every year during the first week of August. The fairgrounds are also the site of other civic and public events, including an Annual German Christmas Market, Newton Medical Center's Annual "Wine and Roses" event, the Crawfish Fest music festival, and a Rock, Ribs & Ridges Festival.

Large employers in the county include the corporate headquarters and facilities of **Thorlabs**, an optical equipment manufacturer; **Bristol Glen**, a premier independent and assisted living community for seniors; the **Selective Insurance Agency**; rubber solutions company **Ames Corporation**; and **Crystal Springs/Mountain Creek**, a four-seasons resort, golf, and skiing complex.

Diocese of Newark

The Diocese of Newark, to which Christ Church belongs, is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion represented in the United States (as well as some other parts of the world) by the Episcopal Church. It was established in 1874 as the Diocese of Northern New Jersey by the third Bishop of New Jersey, William Henry Odenheimer, who then became its first Bishop. In 1886 the diocese changed its name to the Diocese of Newark.

The diocese comprises the northern third of New Jersey, with congregations in Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, Warren, and Union counties. More than 3.5 million people live within its bounds. It is a largely urban diocese, and includes the two largest cities in the state, Newark and Jersey City. The western and northern portions of the diocese are far less densely populated, some areas being rural in character, wooded and mountainous. Of New Jersey's 566 municipalities, 206 are located in the diocese.

There are 97 congregations and four affiliated worshipping communities located in the Diocese of Newark. There are approximately 26,000 worshipping Episcopalians with more than 200 active ordained clergy, both men and women. Worship and liturgical expression are vibrant and varied throughout the Diocese, ranging from Anglo-Catholic to liberation to conservative to liberal Protestant to Evangelical.



We enjoy a strong mutually supportive ministry with the **Diocese of Panama** and our congregations are engaged in mission throughout the world, in places like the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Cameroon.



The **Right Reverend Carlye Hughes** was consecrated as the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Newark in September 2018.

Parish Family

The congregation of Christ Church is made up of a diverse group of parishioners, distinct in age, length of membership, socioeconomic status, and even political perspective. From lawyers to artists, from teachers to computer consultants, from child-care providers to accountants and craftspeople, we are a congregation whose talents are an integral part of our daily lives and who seek opportunities to use our unique gifts to serve God's kingdom.

Currently, Christ Church has 673 registered members, of whom approximately 614 are active communicants. Our weekly attendance for both Sunday services averages 250. We attract a wide range of people each Sunday morning, from young adults with families, to older adults with grown children, to single people and seniors. Most of our active members have been at Christ Church for 15 years or longer, but our new members are also increasing and, equally important, are staying to become involved in our faith community.

We draw our parishioners from a large geographic area—about 25 towns in five counties—and some of these individuals travel 30 minutes or more to be part of our parish life.

Regardless of faith background, economic situation, political leanings, or age or gender differences, our members are invited to enjoy a wide range of activities that foster fellowship with the extended parish family.



Worship Services

Holy Eucharist is celebrated at two services each Sunday, 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

Parishioners serve as acolytes, crucifers, lectors, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, and chalice bearers.

Both services use Rite Two; the 8 a.m. Holy Eucharist is attended by about 80 people per week, while the Choral Eucharist at 10 a.m. is attended by roughly 170 individuals per week.

Additional services are scheduled throughout the year. Three services are offered on **Ash Wednesday**. During **Lent**, **Morning and Evening Prayer** are offered daily (Morning Prayer is also available via Zoom). **Holy Eucharist** is offered on Wednesday evenings during Lent, followed by a potluck supper and special presentation.

Palm Sunday service begins with a Blessing of the Palms in Newton Town Square followed by a procession into the church to begin the 10 a.m. service. The **Maundy Thursday** service is held in the evening. **Good Friday** services are at noon, Children's Service at 5:00 p.m., and a Good Friday Office at 7:30 p.m. A somber service is held on Holy Saturday morning at 8 a.m., with the **Easter Vigil** in the evening, followed by a festive feast in the dining area of the parish hall known as Holley Hall.

The **Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols** is held in the evening of the fourth Sunday of Advent, and usually features a brass ensemble or orchestra, along with guest soloists.



The **Blessing of the Animals**, in honor of St. Francis Day, is held on the Sunday nearest to October 5 and usually in the afternoon.

All are invited to bring their pets—live and plush—to an outdoor service of thanksgiving and to receive an individual blessing from the Rector.

In 2016, the parish launched the Christ Church Newton YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/ChristChurchNewton>. The Sunday 10 a.m. service is livestreamed on this channel every week, as are other special services throughout the year. The channel is also used to livestream the presentations during Lent. During the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, a weekly fireside chat was broadcast on this channel as well. The channel has approximately 200 subscribers, and services are viewed by 50-65 people each week.



Parish Ministries

Music

The Music Program at Christ Church is celebrated throughout the diocese and is a vital part of our worship ministry. Director of Music, Joseph Mello, began his tenure in 1979. Children's Choir Director Deborah Mello also joined Christ Church in 1979. Christ Church recently welcomed pianist, organist, and music educator Diana Greene to the Music Department staff.

Joe and Debbie have been recognized repeatedly for their commitment to excellence, including receiving the inaugural Distinguished Music Educator Award from Yale University in 2007, among other accolades.

In addition to their duties at the 10:00 a.m. service from September through June each year, the **Senior and Junior Choirs** perform at the annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols in December. The choir is frequently joined by guest musicians, including brass quintet and timpani at the Easter Sunday service at 10 a.m.

The Junior Choir, directed by Debbie Mello, was suspended at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In its place, music education was included as part of the Sunday School curriculum. The Junior Choir will return to rehearsals and performances in September 2022.

The church has a pipe organ, built by the Reuter Organ Company in Lawrence, Kansas, and installed in the church in 2003. More recently, the parish was grateful to receive a fully refurbished 1924 Steinway Model "B" Concert Grand Piano donated in memory of late parishioner Eugenia Bethea Dunstan by her family.

During the summer months, soloists and/or musical ensembles provide a musical offering.



Christian Education

Sunday School

The church provides a Sunday School program for children ages preschool through sixth grade. Sunday School meets from September through June at 9:00 a.m. and is led by certified teacher and daycare provider Susie Mittelstadt, assisted by several adult and teen volunteers. Students are divided into age-appropriate groups for instruction, and effort is made to keep the activities fun, engaging, safe, and inclusive for all.

For instruction, the Sunday School team uses the Episcopal Church lesson plans for the week. Children also participate in an annual Christmas pageant and other activities (crafts, singing) as appropriate. Typically, the Sunday School program conducts a "kick off" gathering in September, a festive event for children and parents that includes food, games, and outdoor activities.

Due to demographic changes in the area, attendance in the Sunday School program has waned recently.



Christian Education

Youth Group

The Christ Church Youth Group, known as "Journey," meets on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. from September through June. The group, composed of students in seventh through twelfth grade, aims to strengthen bonds among the parish's teenagers while also providing opportunities to practice the Gospel message of service to others. The group typically takes a hands-on approach to teaching lessons and on most Sundays includes discussions of the Bible, current events, and other topics of interest.

Teens participate in outreach activities throughout the year, which in the past have culminated in a Youth Group trip to **Panama** following the **Rite of Confirmation**. In addition, the group participates in local community outreach, including the Sunday Brunch-in-a-Bag ministry, assembling meals and distributing them to those in need; an annual visit to nearby Liberty Towers, a senior housing complex; and clean-up projects at an inner-city park. To cultivate social interaction, the group also has engaged in fun bonding activities, such as snow tubing, hiking, and meals.

As with the Sunday School program, the Youth Group needs support and would benefit from renewed effort to attract more teens.



Christian Education

Adult Education

Adult Bible Study takes place on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. in Holley Hall or on the church patio, weather permitting, drawing adults from both the 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. services. These gatherings, led by the Rector, invite parishioners to discuss the day's Gospel and its message for their lives, that of the parish, and the wider world.

Weekly Bible Study, held on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. from September through June, meets in the Parlor. During this time, parishioners and friends gather with the Rector to explore the Gospel assigned to the upcoming Sunday service. During the summer months, Weekly Bible Study is held in the evenings.

Lenten Education Series

On Wednesdays during the season of Lent, the church celebrates Holy Eucharist at 6:00 p.m., followed by a potluck supper at 6:30 p.m. After supper, the church hosts a presentation and discussion on a topic of relevance to the Lenten season. In the past, the theme of this Lenten series has ranged from finding God's calling in our lives to addiction and recovery, racial reconciliation, and more.



Ministries

Altar Ministries

Ushers are responsible for greeting people at the door, handing out bulletins, taking up the weekly collection, and attending to the individual needs of parishioners during the service.

Lectors help to lead worship by reading aloud the words of the Old and New Testament, as well as the Prayers of the People, during the service.

Acolytes assist the Rector at the altar, carry the cross and candles, help with the offertory, and other duties.

Lay Eucharistic Ministers assist the priest with the distribution of Holy Communion, the consecrated host, and wine. If called upon, the Lay Eucharistic Ministers are also charged with taking the sacrament to the ill or homebound.

The **Altar Guild** cares for the vessels, linens, and vestments used during services, and prepares the altar for services on Sundays, holy days, funerals, and other occasions.

Our newest altar ministry, the **Flower Team**, arranges flowers for the altar every Sunday and on holy days or special occasions as needed.



Hospitality Ministries

Christ Church is known throughout the county for its exceptional hospitality ministries—not only for the generous, tasty food served but also for the welcoming way all are invited to partake. These hospitality ministries allow our parish to “break bread together” in the manner of Jesus and his disciples. They also enable us to get to know newcomers who may be searching for a church home.



Coffee Hour: Immediately following the 10 a.m. service on Sundays, parishioners are encouraged to meet and mingle over coffee, tea, and assorted pastries, bagels, fruit, and other delights. Coffee hour is catered by volunteers.

Monthly Church Breakfasts: Parishioners gather for fellowship and breakfast once a month, from September through May, from 8:45 to 9:30 a.m., in lieu of Christian Education. Informative presentations often accompany the delicious food, which is prepared by a crew of volunteers.

Easter Vigil Reception: A feast of roasted lamb and Greek delicacies is served immediately following the Easter Vigil each year.

Concert Receptions: Concerts and musical events take place frequently at Christ Church, and these are often followed by a reception of appetizers, desserts, and other treats, typically catered and served by volunteers.

Ministries

Christ Church Women

Christ Church Women (CCW) follows the mission of the national **Episcopal Church Women (ECW)** organization, which since 1871 has championed the Christian foundation of God, family, and women's issues. This is a ministry of the Episcopal Church and celebrates that Episcopalians believe in a loving, liberating, and life-giving God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **All women at Christ Church are considered members of CCW.**



In our parish, CCW is an active, engaged, and dedicated group of women who are empowered by working collaboratively and with individual women to transform the world, the church, and their own lives in Christ. **The CCW's purpose is to provide fellowship with spiritual, devotional, and social activities for its members, the members of Christ Church, and the community at large.** Members of CCW also support each other as they serve in the general ministries of the church and the various outreach programs sponsored by Christ Church.

CCW meets monthly for a potluck luncheon and business meeting at the church or in the homes of active members. Several times a year, creative and interactive socials are planned during the evening or weekends to share fellowship and Christ's love. Members help each other to express love for neighbors and ourselves. The group also publishes a monthly prayer list that includes prayer requests submitted by members and the general church prayer list.

CCW has a partnership with women from a nearby companion church, Newton's **Mount Calvary Baptist Church**. These two groups attend and support each other's meetings, services, and programs, with the focus on bridging these local communities of faith and ministering through social outreach. After delays caused by COVID-19 lockdowns, CCW and Mount Calvary planned multiple joint projects in Newton during the summer of 2022. Also during COVID, CCW was able to maintain meetings and companionship through scheduled Zoom events, prayer partners, and its newsletter.

CCW members are always generous with their time and provisions. Members are often asked to supply food for grieving families and members undergoing a health crisis, as well as set up for various receptions. Members always step in to assist.



Ministries

Annual Retreat

The **Christ Church Women's Annual Retreat** is held each year to enhance the spiritual growth of CCW as well as other interested women in the church, with the goal of providing an extended time of fellowship and fun. This retreat encourages CCW members—many of whom have busy, stressful lives—to set aside nagging obligations and spend time in reflection, renewal, and fellowship to connect and listen for what God may have planned for them. During COVID, the parish held a six-part Zoom series featuring instruction, discussion, and opportunities to feel God's presence.

Faith Community Nurse/Health Partner Program

Christ Church participates in the Faith Community Health Partner (FCHP) program, established in 2014 at Newton Medical Center, part of the Atlantic Health System. This program aims to connect members of congregations with their spiritual leaders and community members during difficult periods in their lives. The program also notifies church volunteers when one of their members has been admitted or discharged from an Atlantic Health System hospital.



In addition, FCHP works with faith communities to develop health-related ministries that can address the medical concerns of their congregations, such as education, health screenings, and mental health first aid.

Christ Church has its own Faith Community Health nurse on staff, Beth Batastini, R.N., who serves in this important role. Beth helps to promote the general health of the Christ Church faith community, provides emotional and health-related support to parishioners as needed, and is a resource for health-related questions.

Beth Batastini, RN, Faith Community Health Nurse

Ministries

Book Club

The Christ Church Book Club meets on the last Wednesday of every month via Zoom to discuss books selected by its members. All are invited to attend. Books selected range from classics in the Christian tradition to more contemporary literature about issues such as the Holocaust, racial and social injustice, family dynamics, and even science fiction. The group previously met in the church Parlor, but following the pandemic, the group switched to a virtual format for convenience.

Christ Church in Stitches

The mission of Christ Church in Stitches is to provide support and comfort to those in need, within our parish as well as to local organizations, through the gifts of prayer shawls, blankets, scarves, and hats. Anyone who enjoys crocheting, knitting, and sewing, at any level, is welcome to join. The group meets monthly at the church to work on projects together.

Welcome Gift Bags

Newcomers experience warm hospitality from the first moment they step through the door at Christ Church. The ushers present them with a gift bag, containing materials such as a note of greeting from the Rector, a schedule of church services, information on church activities, Sunday School facts, and the latest copy of *Forward: Day by Day*, a daily prayer and Bible study resource. Newcomers are also invited to come to coffee hour after the 10 a.m. service.

Keeping in Touch

The mission of this ministry, led by CCW, is to handwrite personal notes (on specialty notecards) to members of the congregation and to friends of members. The aim of Keeping in Touch is to unite and empower CCW to share and build their faith, reach out to the community and beyond, and act as a spiritually-nurturing force. By expressing the sentiments and compassion necessary for human connection, these cards represent tokens of love for those experiencing loss, illness, recovery, and isolation, as well as acknowledging appreciation, gratitude, and celebration. Cards are written and mailed monthly and CCW members provide supplies (including notecards and stamps), volunteer as scribes, and maintain the list of recipients. During COVID-19, this ministry was a strength to many.



Ministries

The Diocese of Panama



Christ Church has partnered with the Diocese of Panama with the goal of creating mutual understanding and helping each other achieve our shared mission of being Christ's presence in our respective communities. Each teen confirmation class has taken a group trip to Panama to serve others. Upon their return from this trip, the teens present a very moving presentation about the project's success and the life-changing experience of spending a week with Panamanian teens and adults.



The support provided by Christ Church has helped the Diocese of Panama to build a new church in the village of Lajas Lisas, add a new roof and purchase pews for the church in San Jose in La Chorerra, construct a new home for a disabled member of the Embera tribe, and assist with other construction projects in the diocese.

A new church constructed for the mission of Santiago was completed on-time and under-budget, with funding provided by Christ Church. Parishioners in the village of Lajas Lisas and the surrounding area provided all of the labor.



The church of San Jose in La Chorerra has established a companion relationship with Christ Church. Boasting about 100 active parishioners, the church is located in a small city, about 45 minutes to the west of Panama City.

In addition to the ways Christ Church has participated in the ministries of the Diocese of Panama, so too have members of that diocese helped support the ministries of Christ Church. Our brothers and sisters in Christ from Panama, who have visited Newton many times, have assisted with our Helping Hands Ministry, giving support to local senior citizens with home repairs, construction, and other needs. This reciprocal relationship between our two faith communities nurtures us both.



Ministries

Helping Hands

The Helping Hands program at Christ Church began in 2013. This program gives parishioners of all ages and skill levels the opportunity to help local senior citizens with household maintenance, yard work, light construction projects and other needs. Candidates for assistance are screened by the Sussex County Division of Senior Services, and seniors then meet with representatives from the parish to identify their needs and to set a date for the work. A brigade of parishioners armed with paint, brushes, brooms, rakes, clippers, weed whackers, hammers, and power tools do the work. The assistance is provided free of charge to eligible seniors.

Terry Syberg, a member of Christ Church and former staff coordinator of this program, shared how Helping Hands has made an impact on individuals in Sussex County: "One woman was on dialysis and after we cleaned up her home, she was able to receive dialysis treatment in her home as opposed to going to a dialysis center. We truly made a big difference in the quality of her life. Another good example is when our volunteers helped in the home of a Vietnam veteran who was in a wheelchair. He needed simple projects completed like changing light bulbs and fixing a loose gutter. His gratitude was apparent by his awe that we would help free of charge, asking for nothing in return."

The program stopped when Terry relocated and funding ran out. There is strong interest in restarting Helping Hands in the future so that this program can continue to allow parishioners of all ages to work together towards a common goal:

To be the presence of Christ in our community.



Feeding Ministries

Sunday Brunch-in-a-Bag

This program offers pre-packed meals every Sunday from 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. to anyone as needed, no questions asked. The lunches are made immediately following the 10 a.m. service by seven rotating teams of volunteers who make 50 to 60 sandwiches and pack lunch bags with a sandwich, choice of fruit, chips, granola bar, cookies, and bottled water or juice choice. Each Sunday a table is set up in the back of the church, with lunches ready to give out.

When COVID-19 began, the church was able to continue this vital outreach by using the sliding glass window in our newly renovated kitchen as a pass through, which offered a way for volunteers to distribute these lunches each Sunday safely for all. Our ability and desire to continue this important ministry, despite COVID health challenges that forced us to halt many other church programs, speaks to the commitment of our parishioners to serve the hungry in our community.

Manna House

Christ Church provides volunteers to help cook and serve lunch to low-income families at Manna House, located next door at the **First Presbyterian Church of Newton**. The volunteers meet regularly on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The church has a volunteer manager who helps coordinate details to ensure there are enough volunteers for each session. Any needy member of the community is welcome to eat and chat with friends. Several times a year, Manna House hosts a spaghetti dinner to raise funds for its ministry.

Bread of Life

This is another church-supported mission offering food and fellowship to people in need. Lunch (hot soup, sandwich, chips, fruit, dessert, and beverage) is prepared and donated by the sponsoring team on Saturday as an addition to Manna House, which is only open on weekdays. This group meets at our neighboring church, First Presbyterian.



Organizations that Use Our Facilities

Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-Step Groups: Our Undercroft is the site of regularly scheduled meetings of AA and several other 12-Step groups that also hold occasional, special luncheon gatherings upstairs, using the kitchen and Holley Hall.

Pathways 2 Prosperity: This group also uses the church's Undercroft. Pathways aims to teach people from the community how to "secure life-wage employment, not just a job; build savings, not just pay bills; obtain reliable transportation, not just a ride; and develop a long-term solution to insufficient resources, not just a short-term, temporary fix." Pathways 2 Prosperity has weekly meetings in the church, which also provide dinner and opportunities to create a plan for success. Prior to COVID, women from Christ Church prepared dinner (appetizers, salad, dinner, and dessert) every four to six weeks, boxed the food in serving containers, and transported the dinner to whenever the meeting was held.

Sussex County Youth Orchestra: This group, composed of talented young musicians from the area's junior and senior high schools, meets at Christ Church's Holley Hall weekly for rehearsals. We are occasionally one of the fortunate venues where they perform.

Sussex County Oratorio Society: This group features a collection of singers that perform classical music. The group also "explores all manner of quality choral singing employing a range of instrumental accompaniments while endeavoring to educate and enlighten their audiences and themselves." They rehearse once a week at Christ Church and hold their concerts in the church. Their next performance is scheduled for December 2022.

Center for Prevention: This group meets in our facility and aims to help adults and children sustain healthy lifetimes by providing services that foster addiction-free lives, emotional wellness, and safe communities.

Ginny's House: This is a neutral, child-oriented, and safe environment for children under the age of 18. Although they do not meet regularly at Christ Church, they hold their annual Christmas party in Holley Hall.



Parish History

Christ Church is the oldest church in Newton and the second oldest in the Diocese of Newark. The parish traces its roots back to December 29, 1769, when a "Congregation in Communion with the Church of England" was organized in what was then called New Town. The parish was incorporated by royal charter signed on August 15, 1774, in the name of King George III.

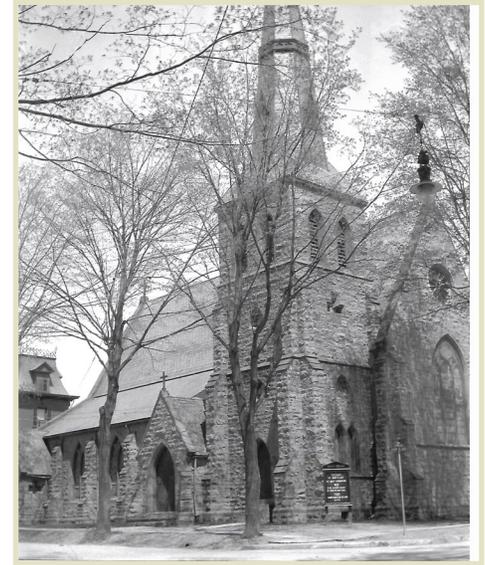
Newton became the county seat in 1765 and in its early years, the church used the town's Court House as its place of worship. On November 9, 1823, the first parish church was consecrated. The parish met at this church until 1863, when the structure was disassembled to make way for a new, larger house of worship, the cornerstone for which was laid on August 21, 1868. That church, where the parish still worships today, held its first Sunday service on July 11, 1869, the same year the parish celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Other physical expansion has followed over the years. Most significantly, thanks to a gift from the estate of Alice H. Holley, a descendant of the fourth rector, the parish in 1965 purchased the historic Anderson House, located in the lot next to the parish house. That year the parish also constructed Holley Hall, a two-story structure that expanded the parish house and connected it to Anderson House.

There have been two recent histories written of the parish, both authored by Merritt Lerley, a longtime church member and professional writer: *The Inheritance of the Faithful*, written in 1993 in honor of the church's 225th anniversary; and *The Broken Staff: The Improbable Story of Uzal Ogden 1744–1822*, written in 2019 in honor of the church's 250th anniversary. Both vividly describe the parish's rich history: its colonial roots, controversial and colorful first rector, and the formative years of the Episcopal Church in the United States.

The parish takes pride in its history, which reflects its longstanding desire to be a beacon of Christian faith in the community. Most recently, to celebrate the parish's 250th anniversary in November 2019, the Rector, the Rev. Canon Robert Griner, reenacted the November 1769 horseback ride of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Chandler from Elizabeth, N.J. (where he served as Rector) to Sussex County. The church held a commemorative gathering at the Court House, featuring the recitation of historical documents, followed by a procession to the church for a choral eucharist and baptismal service.

Today, Christ Church is renowned for its beautiful architecture, sublime music program, lively children's activities, and community outreach. The congregation of the church is a uniquely harmonious blend of people from a broad spectrum of political beliefs, gender identities, ethnic groups, and socioeconomic backgrounds who work together to be Christ's presence in our community. Our congregation is growing every day.



Our Facilities

The Church, Parish House, Holley Hall, and Anderson House are located at the corner of Church and Main Streets in the heart of Newton's historic district.

Church Building

The current church building, erected in 1868 -1869, is an example of the Rustic mode of Gothic Revival architecture, patterned after medieval English parish churches. The beautiful interior nave features numerous stained-glass windows, fabricated by world-renowned J&R Lamb Studios and depicting scenes from the life of Jesus.

On September 24, 1992, Christ Church, Newton was granted the honor of inclusion on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places as part of the Newton Town Plot Historic District. Two months later, this entire historic district, comprising 51 buildings, was recognized on the National Register of Historic Places for its "significance in architecture, commerce, community planning, settlement, and politics from 1762 to 1941."

Against the east wall of the marble-floored sanctuary is a stone reredos against which is set a large stone altar. The nave is symmetrical, with a center aisle and two side aisles. The church's cushioned pews can seat 250 adults, and a handicapped-accessible section is located on the front left of the sanctuary (adjacent to the piano).

In 2010, the parish initiated a major renovation of the church. That project included constructing a moveable altar, installing choir stalls in the nave, making the pulpit removeable, and shifting the railings separating the nave from the sanctuary to the sides of the space. A row of pews on the center aisle in the front of the church also was removed, and the sanctuary flooring was extended to create space that could be repurposed for performances.



The parish has conducted several successful capital campaigns to fund various renovations. Thanks to the donations from these campaigns, the parish in 2017 was able to repoint the exterior stonework as well as refurbish and paint the church interior. Fire detection, air conditioning, and audio/visual capabilities also have been added over the years. The sacristy was upgraded approximately 10 years ago. In 2019, the parish conducted an extensive renovation of the rear of the church, constructing cabinets for storage and relocating the baptismal font to a central location between the side aisles. As part of that renovation, the church reconfigured the pews in the rear to accommodate the movement of caskets during funeral services.

Most recently and following a years-long "Raise the Roof" capital campaign, the parish replaced the copper and slate roofs of the church, Parish House, and Anderson House.

Our Facilities

Parish House and Holley Hall



The Parish House and Holley Hall are connected to the church. These spaces are used for hospitality events, including weekly coffee hours, monthly church breakfasts, and gatherings for other events such as the reception following the Easter Vigil, potluck dinners during Lent, and special events. Thanks to a generous bequest from a faithful parishioner, Holley Hall is scheduled to be renovated in 2022-2023.

Approximately 12 years ago, the parish renovated its bathrooms to increase handicap accessibility. The kitchen was also gutted and renovated to install new cabinetry, countertops, and a dishwasher. The space also contains a large refrigerator and freezer.

Around the same time, the parish also renovated the hospitality area of the Parish House to install a History Wall and to create the Parlor, which now contains a cozy, well-lit, and inviting sitting area with a natural gas fireplace. This space is used for weekly Bible Study, Vestry meetings, and other small gatherings.

Lower Holley Hall contains multiple rooms used for Sunday school and other gatherings. During the 1990s, the area was used by an afterschool program and used to house

the homeless when the church was involved in the Family Promise program during the early 2000s. In addition, the large meeting space was rented for several years by the English as a Second Language program administered by Sussex County Community College.



Undercroft

The Undercroft beneath the church was excavated and constructed in 1964 following a successful capital campaign. The space contains multiple meeting rooms (in the past used for Sunday School), two bathrooms, and a small kitchen area. The Undercroft is used for daily 12-Step meetings and serves as office space for the NORWESCAP Pathways 2 Prosperity program.

Our Facilities

Anderson House

The church's real-estate holdings include an eighteenth-century Federal-style townhouse that was the home of Colonel Thomas Anderson (c.1743-1805), deputy assistant quartermaster general of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. Anderson was one of the parish's original vestrymen (elected in 1769) and a warden of the church from 1784 to 1794. This home, built around 1785 and relocated to its present site adjacent to the church property in 1896, was purchased by Christ Church in 1965. The first floor serves as the parish office and the second floor is the home of the church's live-in Sexton. In 1958, the Society of Daughters of Colonial Wars in New Jersey marked Anderson House with a historical plaque.

Patio and Playground

The parish constructed an outdoor playground in the late 1990s to serve as an inviting place for children to play. Adjacent to this playground is a patio, which was expanded in 2020, along with a recently constructed outdoor fire pit. In 2022, lighting for the playground and patio was upgraded.

Columbarium

The Columbarium is adjacent to the nave and features 42 niches for the ashes of deceased parishioners. The decorative cross on the wall was handcrafted by a former Sexton specifically for the space. The structure was created in the 1990s and is currently full.

Memorial Cremation Garden

Created and consecrated in 2019, the Memorial Cremation Garden is nestled between the parish house and Anderson House. The garden offers a peaceful final resting place for parishioners and friends of the church; the names of the deceased are memorialized on a series of brass plaques on the adjacent exterior wall of the parish house. Commemorative benches flank the garden, inviting loved ones to stay for quiet reflection.



Our Future

Under the leadership of the Reverend Canon Robert Griner, Christ Church has enjoyed many years of recent growth, attracting new members from across Sussex County, both those who were formerly unchurched and those seeking a new church home. At the same time, we have strengthened our financial position, despite the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, and kept up our outreach ministries to a hurting world.

We want to continue the work that God is doing in this place and, as such, have identified four strategic goals for the future:

- ◆ **To present a meaningful worship experience to all people.**
- ◆ **To nurture and expand children and youth involvement in the life of the church.**
- ◆ **To expand our educational and outreach opportunities.**
- ◆ **To support our budget through pledged income.**

Surveys of our parishioners (both in written format and through three “listening sessions”) were conducted to discern the desired priorities for the future.

Time and again, our parishioners expressed their desire to continue our:

- ◆ Outstanding music program
- ◆ Relationship with Diocese of Panama, including Youth Group mission trips there or to a similar location
- ◆ Engagement with the recovery community
- ◆ Conservative and responsible financial management

At the same time, we learned that parishioners want more:

- ◆ Outreach ministries, both to the community and to Panama. For example, consider helping with an urban park in Paterson, New Jersey.
- ◆ Innovative use of our church space/Holley Hall: perhaps hosting a space for the arts (music, poetry, dance, art shows) that could also incorporate youth/teens. Such could also serve as a tool for evangelism.
- ◆ Greater engagement of our children and youth, with expanded programs and offerings that will attract more young families to the church; this could be on Sundays but also one day during the week
- ◆ Collaboration with other local churches
- ◆ Enhanced (more frequent and on a variety of topics) adult education offerings
- ◆ More opportunities for small group get-togethers (both social and spiritual) to foster deeper relationships

Other ideas put forth include:

- ◆ Improve the lighting of the church exterior at night, so it stands out more
- ◆ Hire a part-time associate/youth pastor to help with expanded children/youth offerings when implemented
- ◆ A Lenten film series or quarterly film discussion

Respectfully submitted, The Parish Profile Committee, 2022

Addendum

Describe a moment in your worship community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

In 2019, Christ Church Newton marked the 250th anniversary of its November 1769 organization. The celebration spanned a variety of events, and a concerted and successful effort was made to include all parishioners in every aspect of the festivities. The local newspaper, *The New Jersey Herald*, even produced a special commemorative section devoted solely to the history of the parish.

The month-long celebration kicked off on November 3rd with a commemorative horseback ride to the Sussex County Court House by the Rector, the Reverend Canon Robert Griner, in a nod to the original journey by the Reverend Dr. Thomas Chandler from Elizabeth, New Jersey, to Sussex County. After the parish had gathered in the Court House, church leaders staged a special recitation of several historical documents. In the evening, the Christ Church Senior Choir gave a lively concert featuring American and British sacred and patriotic music, accompanied by a full orchestra.

On Saturday, November 23rd, the parish celebrated a special Evensong service, using the 1662 version of the *Book of Common Prayer*. The Right Reverend Dr. Alan Wilson, Bishop of Buckingham, served as guest preacher.

The following day, the Most Reverend Julio Murray, Bishop of Panama and Archbishop and Primate of Central America, joined us for the 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Sunday services. A special Gala Celebration followed in the evening. At that event, which was attended by hundreds of parishioners and community members, the Christ Church Youth Group presented an entertaining "mockumentary" video about the parish history. In acknowledgement of this historic occasion, proclamations were offered by Sylvia Petillo, Deputy Director, Sussex County Board of Commissioners; New Jersey State Senator Steve Oroho; and Cheryl Krouse, Director of Community Outreach for U.S. Representative Josh Gottheimer. Congratulations and best wishes also were brought by the Right Reverend Dr. Alan Wilson and the Most Reverend Julio Murray. The Right Reverend Carlye Hughes, Bishop of the Diocese of Newark, delivered the evening's keynote presentation, and attendees were treated to a video message of congratulations by Archbishop Michael Curry, Primate of the Anglican Church.

How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?

In addition to our website, the parish has developed a robust following on social media, using YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to convey our message of being Christ's presence in our community. During the pandemic, many of our parishioners became accustomed to attending virtual church "on demand," rather than joining us in person for services. It is important for us to continue to offer this ministry to those who desire to engage with us virtually.

Furthermore, our outreach programming has adapted to meet the changing needs and demographics of the community we serve. For example, the Brunch in a Bag and Helping Hands ministries were developed to address food insecurity and the needs of seniors who desired to stay in their homes. We will continue to offer meeting space to several organizations that assist our neighbors in need, including Alcoholics Anonymous and Pathways 2 Prosperity.

Addendum

Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

The following attributes brought by our new Rector will continue to increase the membership of our church family and help strengthen the faith of current parishioners:

Biblically Grounded: Solidly Christ-centered, believing in all the underlying tenets of the Christian faith, as outlined in the Nicene Creed.

Preacher: Strong homiletic skills; able to communicate effectively to all members of the parish, ideally with erudition and humor.

Passionate, Respectful: Passionate about the critical issues facing our Christian community and wishing to be involved with trying to address those issues; respectful that our parish includes individuals across the political spectrum and able to help guide our parish to living out the “politics of Jesus” rather than getting mired in the secular politics of the Left or Right. Such has been a tradition of the church from its earliest days—when our first Rector refused to take sides during the Revolutionary War—and this tradition is one of the reasons we believe our church is attracting new members.

Pastor: Well-trained in pastoral care, able to skillfully provide counsel, advice, and consolation to parishioners in need of assistance.

Spiritual Guide: Able to motivate the congregation to become better stewards of their time, talent, and treasure; able to inspire and encourage spiritual growth among members.

Fiscally Responsible Manager: Solid expertise in financial matters, with the ability to manage a large budget and with assistance from the Vestry, make prudent financial decisions; strong management skills.

Our ideal candidate will be a confident preacher and teacher. Music and liturgy are essential to our parish, as is the Rector’s ability to interpret and instruct within an informed and cordial atmosphere. Equally important is the ability to be honest, enthusiastic, and socially warm in all endeavors.

In short, we are searching for someone who can support our commitment to a dynamic Christo-centric Trinitarian worship experience through preaching, music, and sacraments rooted in our Anglican tradition: A thoughtful leader who will shepherd us into the future.

Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services by your community.

Holy Eucharist is celebrated at two services each Sunday, 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Parishioners serve as Acolytes, Crucifers, Lectors, and Lay Eucharistic Ministers.

Both services use Rite Two; the 8 a.m. Holy Eucharist is attended by about 80 people per week and is a quiet, contemplative service. The Choral Eucharist at 10 a.m. is attended by approximately 170 individuals per week. It includes hymn singing, with piano or organ accompaniment, by the Christ Church Senior Choir, many members of which are professional musicians, and attracts enthusiastic participation by the congregation. The 10 a.m. service usually also features one song by the Junior Choir, comprising children from grades 3 through 8 [the Junior Choir is resuming this fall after a hiatus due to COVID]. Music is a central part of the worship experience during the 10 a.m. service.

Addendum

Additional services are scheduled throughout the year. Three services are offered on **Ash Wednesday**. During **Lent, Morning and Evening Prayer** are offered daily (Morning Prayer is also available via Zoom). **Holy Eucharist** is offered on Wednesday evenings during Lent, followed by a potluck supper and special presentation.

Palm Sunday service begins with a Blessing of the Palms in Newton Town Square followed by a procession into the church to begin the 10 a.m. service. The **Maundy Thursday** service is held in the evening. **Good Friday** services are at noon, Children's Service at 5 p.m., and a Good Friday Office at 7:30 p.m. A somber service is held on Holy Saturday morning at 8 a.m., with the **Easter Vigil** in the evening, followed by a festive feast in the dining area of the parish hall known as Holley Hall.

The **Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols** is held in the evening of the fourth Sunday of Advent, and usually features a brass ensemble or orchestra, along with guest soloists.

The **Blessing of the Animals**, in honor of St. Francis Day, is held on the Sunday nearest to October 5 and usually in the afternoon. All are invited to bring their pets—live and plush—to an outdoor service of thanksgiving and to receive an individual blessing from the Rector.

In 2016, the parish launched the Christ Church Newton YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/ChristChurchNewton>. The Sunday 10 a.m. service is livestreamed on this channel every week, as are other special services throughout the year. The channel is also used to livestream the presentations during Lent. During the early days of the COVID pandemic, a weekly fireside chat was broadcast on this channel as well. The channel has approximately 200 subscribers, and services are viewed by 50-65 people each week.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

Parishioners of all ages and skill levels are encouraged to participate in worship services and church organizations as they are able. The annual Opportunity Sunday, held in early September, offers young and old the chance to register for Christian Education and to sign up to serve in a variety of capacities within the church. Brunch in a Bag, Helping Hands, Christ Church in Stitches, Manna House, Breakfast Crew, Coffee Hour, and the Christ Church Women's Group always welcome new participants. Young people are invited to sing in the Junior Choir or serve as Acolytes, Lectors, or Crucifers. Adults are also encouraged to serve as Lectors, in addition to other worship roles, such as Ushers, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, or members of the Altar Guild.

As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being?

Christ Church participates in the Faith Community Health Partner (FCHP) program, established in 2014 at Newton Medical Center, part of the Atlantic Health System. This program aims to connect members of congregations with their spiritual leaders and community members during difficult periods in their lives. The program also notifies church volunteers when one of their members has been admitted or discharged from an Atlantic Health System hospital. In addition, FCHP works with faith communities to develop health-related ministries that can address the medical concerns of their congregations, such as education, health screenings, and mental health first aid. Christ Church has its own Faith Community Health nurse on staff, Beth Batastini, R.N., who serves in this important role. Beth helps to promote the general health of the Christ Church faith community, provides emotional and health-related support to parishioners as needed, and is a resource for health-related questions.

Addendum

In addition to the FCHP program, Christ Church offers many alternative means of support throughout the year. The Lenten presentation series has focused on relevant topics such as the role of the arts in our lives, mental health, addiction, spiritual calling, etc.

Special presentations are often featured during the monthly Church Breakfasts, ranging from parish activities to topics of community interest. The annual Church Picnic offers children and adults the opportunity to relax, play, and enjoy each other's company. Annual Stewardship Dinners have highlighted the culinary and performing talents of numerous parishioners.

For those who need help achieving and maintaining sobriety, Christ Church houses daily Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

As previously noted, Christ Church maintains meeting space for Alcoholics Anonymous. In addition, parishioners volunteer to serve daily meals at Manna House, a lunch feeding program at our neighboring church, The First Presbyterian Church of Newton.

Our parish's women's group, Christ Church Women (CCW), partners with the women from nearby Mount Calvary Baptist Church to sponsor activities of mutual interest, including support groups, picnics, Bible Study, and other events. CCW also facilitates an annual women's retreat, which is open to parishioners and friends who seek solace and a deeper understanding of their spirituality. The Keeping in Touch ministry, facilitated by CCW, creates and mails personalized note cards to those experiencing illness, loss, or other challenges.

For those who find joy in music, Christ Church hosts frequent concerts as well as the annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. Several outside music organizations use our space for rehearsals, including the Sussex County Youth Orchestra and the Sussex County Oratorio Society.

Christ Church is fortunate to have the chaplain of the local hospital as an active parishioner. The Reverend Randy Parks is always available to assist and support those in need.

Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.

Christ Church maintains a partner relationship with our brothers and sisters in the predominantly African-American congregation of Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Newton. The two churches have come together for numerous activities, including a virtual series on the role of race in America, as well as regular get-togethers for our women's groups.

The parish also has a partnership with the Diocese of Panama. This mutually supportive arrangement has allowed members of our respective Youth Groups to visit each other and participate in service projects in both Panama and Sussex County.

The support provided by Christ Church has helped the Diocese of Panama to build a new church in the village of Lajas Lisas, add a new roof and purchase pews for the church in San Jose in La Chorerra, and assist with other construction projects in the diocese. In 2017, a group of parishioners constructed a new home for a disabled member of the Embera tribe.

A new church constructed for the mission of Santiago was completed on time and under budget, with funding provided by our church. Parishioners in the village of Lajas Lisas and the surrounding area provided all the labor. The Reverend Canon Robert Griner, our Rector at the time, was on hand to consecrate the new church building in January 2011.

Addendum

The church of San Jose in La Chorerra has established a companion relationship with Christ Church as well. Boasting about 100 active parishioners, this church is located in a small city, about 45 minutes to the west of Panama City. The congregation is one of several led by Father Eliadio Rodriguez.

Closer to home, Christ Church supports the community through its involvement with Alcoholics Anonymous, Manna House, and the Helping Hands program.

Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years.

Christ Church is proud to have developed the Brunch in a Bag program after a parishioner identified a need for a Sunday lunchtime feeding program in the town of Newton. This program offers pre-packed meals every Sunday from 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. to anyone as needed, no questions asked. The lunches are made immediately following the 10 a.m. service by seven rotating teams of volunteers who make 50 to 60 sandwiches and pack lunch bags with a sandwich, choice of fruit, chips, granola bar, cookies, and bottled water or juice. Each Sunday a table is set up in the back of the church, with lunches ready to give out.

When COVID began, the church was able to continue this vital outreach by using the sliding glass window in our newly renovated kitchen as a pass through, which offered a way for volunteers to distribute these lunches each Sunday safely for all. Our ability and desire to continue this important ministry, despite COVID health challenges that forced us to halt many other church programs, speaks to the commitment of our parishioners to serve the hungry in our community.

The Helping Hands household maintenance program for seniors was also developed recently by the parish. This program gives parishioners of all ages and skill levels the opportunity to help local senior citizens with household maintenance, yard work, light construction projects, and other needs. Candidates for assistance are screened by the Sussex County Division of Senior Services, and seniors then meet with representatives from the parish to identify their needs and to set a date for the work. A brigade of parishioners armed with paint, brushes, brooms, rakes, clippers, weed whackers, hammers, and power tools do the work. The assistance is provided free of charge to eligible seniors.

What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

Stewardship is celebrated at Christ Church. Each October, select individuals give testimonials during the worship services regarding the meaning of their relationship with the parish and the role their faith plays in their lives. Major donors are invited to attend a special gathering to thank them for their contributions to the life of the church. The annual Stewardship Dinner welcomes individuals and families and is often centered around a unique theme, such as a talent show or a celebration of the many cultural backgrounds of our parishioners.

Addendum

What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? How have you addressed it?

In the early 1990s, during the tenure of our former Rector, a decision was made to significantly change the sanctuary space to abandon the use of the eastern-facing high altar in lieu of a free-standing altar facing the congregation. At that time, there was no explanation for the switch offered to the congregation nor was there a suggestion that any input would be solicited from parishioners. The altar was hastily constructed out of cheap materials and installed without explanation. Consequently, several members of the congregation were deeply distressed by the change as well as the lack of transparency. The ripple effect caused controversy in the parish.

After a new Rector was installed, the Wardens and Vestry elected to consider a complete remodeling of the front of the church, including the sanctuary and altar. This time, the leadership was completely open regarding the rationale for the renovation, which included the following:

- Greater flexibility was desired for the use of the space, particularly during concerts.
- The choir stalls were in a cumbersome location in the nave, which impeded the flow of traffic during communion and special events.
- Increased square footage was needed for the positioning of coffins during funerals.
- The placement of the altar railings constricted the movement of personnel during services.

Detailed floor plans were drawn and presented to the parish over a period of months. A Question-and-Answer period was established to solicit feedback from members of the congregation, and suggestions were incorporated into the final design plans, which featured:

- The choir stalls were moved into the chancel.
- The altar was moved forward.
- All elements of the altar space, including the pulpit and lectern, were constructed to be completely removable during concerts and other events, as needed.
- The flooring was extended to allow parishioners to circle the altar during communion.
- All design elements mirrored the woodwork already in place throughout the church.

As a result of the decision-making and implementation process, all those parishioners who had felt disrespected during the 1990s renovation now felt validated and appreciated. Once completed, there was an overwhelming approval of the new design.

What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? Poorly? What did you learn?

Switching from the Use of Rite One to Rite Two at the 8:00 a.m. Service

Like many churches, the earlier service on Sunday mornings at Christ Church traditionally used the Rite One liturgy rather than the more contemporary language of Rite Two. Several years ago, a decision was made to switch to the use of Rite Two based on the changing demographics of those in attendance. It has been deemed a tremendous success. Now the use of the Rite One liturgy is saved for special services, such as Morning Prayer.

Changing the Start Time for Sunday School

For many years, Christian Education for all ages has taken place between the 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. services, beginning at 9 a.m. During the past two years, Adult Education and the Journey Youth Group maintained their 9:00 - 9:45 a.m. time slot, but the Sunday School program for youngsters was switched to 9:45 a.m. This has not been successful in attracting new families to the program. In fact, the time change has resulted in a dearth of available children to participate in Junior Choir or the Acolytes program during the 10 a.m. service. As a result, the Sunday School time will revert to the previous schedule this fall.

Addendum

Weekly. Average Sunday Attendance:	200
Number of Weekend Services:	2
Number of Weekday Worship Services:	1 only during lent
Number of Other Per Month worship services:	0
Current Annual Compensation:	\$100,000
Cash Stipend:	Negotiable
Housing/Rectory Detail:	Negotiable based on family requirements
Utilities:	Negotiable
SECA:	\$5000
Compensation for New Position:	Negotiable based on experience
Housing Available:	Negotiable based on family requirements. Area provides many options.
Pension Plan:	In compliance with CPF requirements
Healthcare Options:	Negotiable based on family requirements
Dental:	Provided
Housing Equity Allowance:	Provided
Annual Equity Allowance:	Negotiable
Vacation:	4 weeks, including 5 Sundays
Continuing Education:	Offered, amount funded is negotiable

Other benefits such as sabbatical, other insurance and personal accounts can be provided. We are willing to work with our new Rector based on family needs and personal preferences.