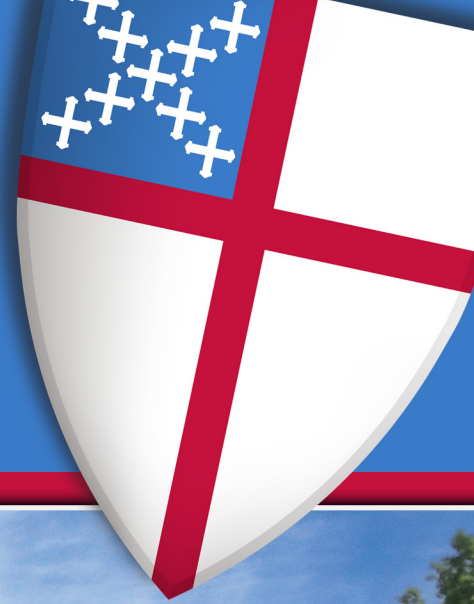


St. Christopher

EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Charleston, WV



*A Place of Worship,
Community, and Service*

www.stchristopherwv.com





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Who We Are

St. Christopher Episcopal Church in Charleston, West Virginia, is a place of worship, community, and service. The church is diverse and welcoming because of its members who have been blessed with many and varied gifts and whose lives God has joined together.

We strive to be faithful followers of Christ by loving God and participating in worship through our Sunday liturgies whether in person or via live stream. We welcome all God's children – no exceptions – to join us in our worship.

We seek to live out Christ's commandment to love one another by creating community. We come together every Sunday after our 10:30 service for a light lunch or full pot-luck dinner. We converse and get to know our fellow parishioners and guests, leading us to genuinely care for one another. Visiting clergy and guests often ask us, "You do this every week? Wow! That's great, and you really like each other!"

We seek to spread the Gospel message to those outside our parish through our various outreach ministries that are described later in the Profile.

We believe that our church is blessed with a strong sense of community, experienced lay leadership, and dedicated members who are willing to give their time and treasure so that we may love and serve the Lord.

In the absence of full-time clergy, St. Christopher's has continued to be a place of worship, community, and service. One parishioner's experience explains it nicely: "While convalescing from surgery, I have been the recipient of the kindness and graciousness of our Pastoral Care Team. I have received a tasty loaf of bread hot from the oven and a beautiful multicolored shawl that brightened my day and warmed my heart and soul. I have also received communion on a regular basis. The extent of the pastoral care for me is immeasurable. We have a caring congregation."

In a world in which divisions are common we believe that offering a place where people are welcomed into a loving community is one of the most powerful ways to live out the teachings of Jesus Christ.



*“St. Christopher’s greatest strengths are what drew us to this church: the diversity of the people in the pews, the intellectual curiosity demonstrated by sermons and group studies and the total community of the church itself. It feels to us as if this church represents a slice of God’s Kingdom.” — **Current parishioner***

*My duty with the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia for several years before retirement was to shepherd struggling parishes into a better relationship with Christ. After retirement I wanted to continue to support the congregation now known as St. Christopher of which was formed from some of the parishes I had worked with previously. I helped to mentor their new priest, the Rev. Melissa Remington, through the new parish’s beginning years. They are great people that do great good in the community. — **Rev. Gil Watkins, Paraphrased by Lloyd Miller***

“Having been the priest who was present when four congregations merged into one, claiming the name of St. Christopher, it was natural that I would return, when I retired. The unity, diversity, and the dedication of the congregation are the marks of the congregation. The life in the parish is a cherished gift!”

— Rev. Jim Lewis

*“St. Christopher is one of the most unique parishes in the Diocese. It is the most diverse parish in the state and is set in our largest metropolitan area and center of state government. The church also has dedicated members whose faith informs their outreach. Because of this the church has potential for significant social witness in the Charleston area. The people of St. Christopher also genuinely like each other and care about each other’s lives. The peace is also joyful and coffee hour is a meal where members—often of very different races, sexualities, and socioeconomic classes—gather to break bread and get to know one another on deep levels. St. Christopher is not a large congregation, but it definitely has the largest heart.” —**Anonymous***

“I joined St. Christopher after Kent’s sudden death because I felt welcomed and known by the congregation. Kent had supplied, and even performed a wedding and at least one funeral there. When I started attending, I felt very fragile and I think that I was still in shock. St. Christopher as a church family has supported me during this time of healing. St. Christopher has been a healing place for me as I have navigated the loss of Kent, a partner of 51 years.

I very much enjoy all of the members of St. Christopher. I find the congregation very diverse, unfailingly welcoming and caring, and filled with interesting people! I very much appreciate the Rev. Jim Lewis, and the Rev. Deacon Denise Giardina in their sermons and general assistance to the congregation. In addition, the church building is absolutely beautiful, light and airy. I appreciate the ministry of food and fellowship following Sunday services.

In addition, St. Christopher has held me in prayer and care long distance through the serious surgery and recuperation of my son Michael, which followed shortly after Kent’s sudden death. As you know, I relocated to Pittsburgh to be with Michael, and his wife Jill during this event. St. Christopher provided ongoing support through the frequent cards, texts and calls from Deacon Denise. I appreciate being able to attend services online. —Gail Higgins, Rev. Kent Higgins’ wife

“In 1978, while a student at Virginia Theological Seminary, I was sent to St. James Episcopal Church in North Charleston to help the priest for the summer. I got to know the parishioners at that time. From 1992 until my retirement in 2013, I taught at West Virginia State University, where several faculty members also attended St. James. St. James was one of four churches that combined to form St. Christopher. In 2022 when I was looking to reconnect with an Episcopal congregation, St. Christopher seemed a good choice because I already knew a number of members. I stayed because of St. Christopher’s endearing qualities. I have never been around a congregation that has such broad congregational participation. I also find St. Christopher to be a very forgiving congregation, in that if something goes wrong (and in life, something will go wrong) no one gets bent out of shape. St. Christopher’s congregation doesn’t make a clergy person feel on pins and needles because they might make a mistake. I have enjoyed my almost two years at St. Christopher among its very loving people.”

—Rev. Deacon Denise Giardina



Who We Seek

St. Christopher prays aloud each Sunday that we receive “a faithful pastor, who will love us and equip us for our ministries.”

We are seeking a shepherd, a priest who:

- will become an integral part of our caring congregation,
- will help lead us on our faith journey,
- is a strong preacher who can apply God’s word to our daily lives right here in Charleston, West Virginia,
- possesses the spiritual maturity to be compassionate and sensitive to the needs of the congregation,
- possesses a collaborative leadership style which is able to hear different ideas and voices, contribute their own, and empower the laity to synthesize a vision that can lead us in to the future,
- will help nurture, develop, and combine our own gifts and skills so that we are effective implements of God’s healing and loving grace both within our parish and in our social outreach ministries,
- will share our task of growing our parish by exploring new ideas and creating new traditions that are better suited to evangelizing to our surrounding community,
- will be community minded so that our social outreach ministries will have an even stronger presence in the area,
- is committed to our Episcopalian liturgy, and
- who is a prayerful student, follower, and teacher of the Holy Gospel.





Ways We Worship

Our worship at St. Christopher can be described as traditionally liturgical, with services following the Rites and Forms of the Book of Common Prayer, but with an eye to the future. New technology has allowed us to stream services at a level of professionalism that is not common for similar sized churches which has given us the opportunity to incorporate various forms of media such as videos, music, and other recorded elements into our service as needed. Our parish has a particular commitment to racial healing and social justice for which we pray a collect weekly.

We are accustomed to a variety of personalities and styles as we frequently have supply clergy. Services are reverent but are usually less formal than what may be found in some larger churches. Our parishioners enjoy a good joke or funny story incorporated into a sermon. Though our numbers are small our members take active roles serving as lay readers, acolytes, on the altar guild or singing in the choir. A visitor may notice some parishioners kneeling for prayers, making the sign of the cross or genuflecting before approaching the altar while others do not. Our congregation has members from a variety of backgrounds and can be generally described as “broad church” where peace is passed joyfully between everyone in attendance.

Weekly Sunday services include a Rite I service held at 8:00 AM and a Rite II service at 10:30 AM. We also look forward to special services held during Holy Week and Advent. Each year our parishioners anticipate decorating the church for these special times with lilies for Easter and Greening the church for the Christmas season.

We are blessed with a minister of music who leads our choir each Sunday and organizes special music for holiday services. Music plays a very important role in our services and our congregation enjoys singing hymns from the 1982 Hymnal, Lift Every Voice and Sing and Wonder, Love and Praise.

Most importantly our services are a time for our congregation to gather, offer praise and thanksgiving, and enjoy fellowship with one another. Many members arrive early to enjoy time to chat together or pray quietly in the sanctuary. Visitors are greeted and invited to stay for fellowship.





How We Serve

St. Christopher is located in a diverse community of ethnicity, cultures, and economics. Parishioners provide services; care for members of the community; support ministries that provide resources and donations of food, clothing and tutoring. Strong lay leadership enables us to support ministries in the community and to provide donations to the diocese to support state and world relief efforts. Our parishioners lead or volunteer in many local ministries.

The following is a list of ongoing service projects as well as some one-time projects performed in our past.

FOOD/CLOTHING:

- Meals for Shut-in - Hospitality Committee prepares and delivers meals to families in distress due to illness or death.
- Food Banks (Manna Meal, Heart and Hand, Dunbar – Institute Samaritan Food Pantry, Covenant House) – food is collected and delivered to these various locations on rotation. In addition to the designation of the general offering of food for the food banks, volunteers assist with the distribution of food on site.
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper – our annual pancake supper allows us the opportunity to share food and fun with family, friends and the community.

EDUCATION/SUPPORT:

- After School Program – The Paul Laurence Dunbar Center is a site where students assemble after school for tutoring, a meal, and recreation. Volunteers from St. Christopher provide time, talent and resources.
- Mary Snow West Side Elementary – our members gather bi-monthly to prepare and deliver the back packs to MSWE.
- West Side Middle School – members provided Christmas presents for a list of students provided by the WMS Administration.
- Armstrong Scholarship Fund – this scholarship is awarded to an applicant annually through the GKVF.
- Peterkin Youth Camp – funding is provided for interested youth to attend.
- Exchange Students – parishioners who are host families encourage exchange students to participate and become a part of our parish family.
- West Side Middle School Faculty and Staff Luncheon – the Fellowship Committee supported the school during summer training by providing lunch.

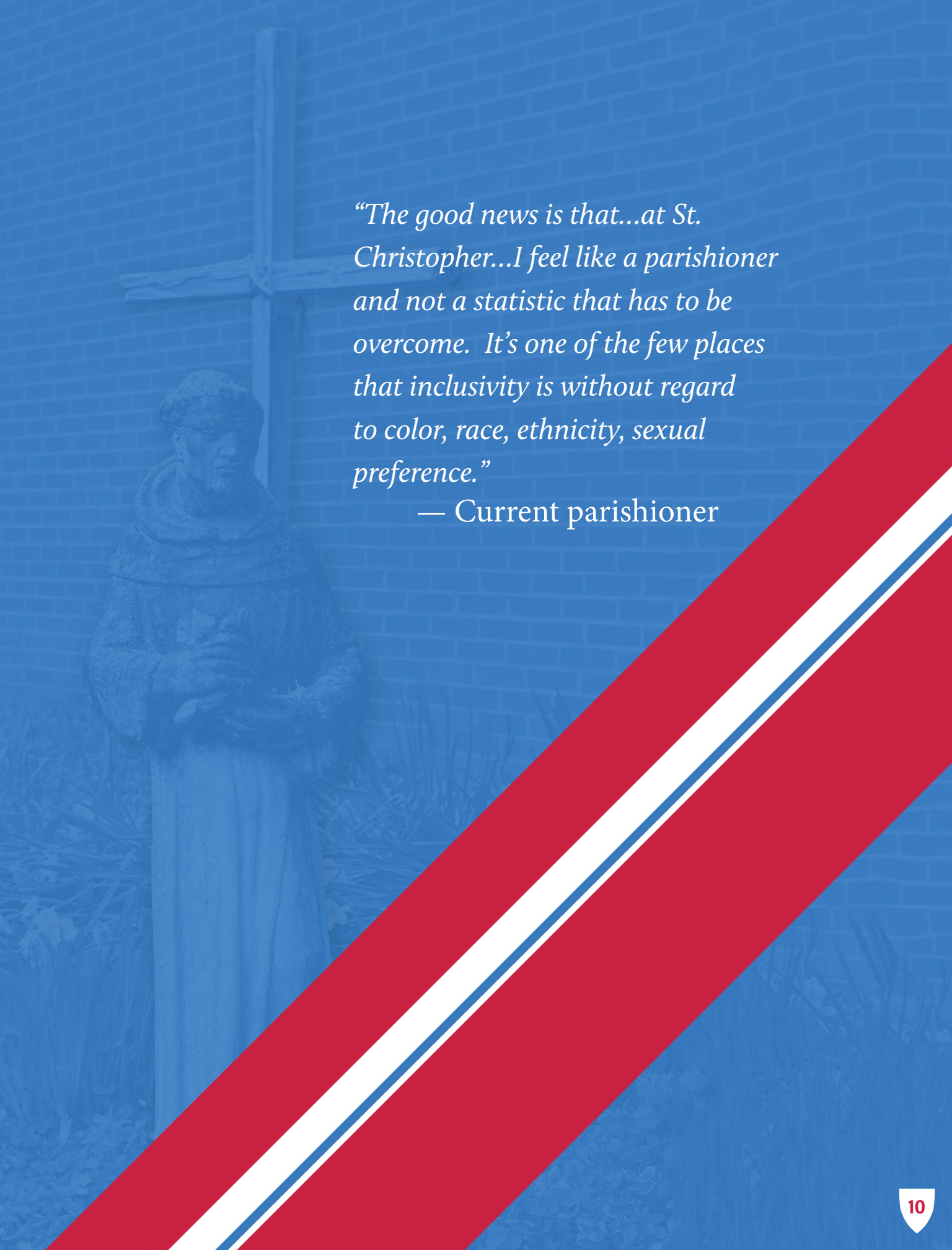


YOUTH/COMMUNITY SERVICE:

- Recovery Programs – St. Christopher has been the home to AA and Al-NON for a number of years. The church provides access to our parish hall, kitchen, meeting rooms and other facilities as deemed necessary
- Library Book Exchange – a free book library for elementary age children
- Soccer for Middle School Students – philanthropic financial support is provided for training of interested participants at the Football Factory for Soccer.
- Prescription Bottles – empty bottles are collected; labels are removed; bottles are cleaned; packaged and shipped to Matthew 25 - an organization that provides medication to the less fortunate.
- Gabriel Project – our members bring diapers that are delivered to the Gabriel Project. This ministry assists families in need.
- National and International Relief Funding – funds are collected during the general and special offerings for relief to support the people in distress due to war, famine and other catastrophes.
- Winter Coat Drive

FUND RAISERS:

- Spaghetti and Pasta Dinners – fund raiser for our service projects.
- Christmas Wreath Sales.



“The good news is that...at St. Christopher...I feel like a parishioner and not a statistic that has to be overcome. It’s one of the few places that inclusivity is without regard to color, race, ethnicity, sexual preference.”

— Current parishioner



Parish Life

St. Christopher is a diverse family of faith, sharing in God's love, participating in ministries to others and each other, and welcoming all. We believe in God's words to live a spiritual life through sacramental worship, music, integrity, fellowship and service to all.

Though our numbers are small our members take active roles within the parish. Their spirit of dedication and volunteerism is commendable.

Integral parts of parish life that contribute to the fulfillment of our spiritual life and worship are:



- Streaming services and Zoom capabilities - enable us to view or participate actively in worship services, meetings and Bible studies.
- Bible Study - Thursday evening and selected topic study during Advent and Lenten.
- 4th of July Fireworks – we share ice cream and watermelon on the hillside with our church family and the community. It is not uncommon to find members of the community viewing fireworks on other holidays/occasions.
- Fellowship – we look forward to the opportunity to gather at the fellowship coffee hour after the 8 a.m. service and the fellowship luncheon after the 10:30 a.m. service. Extra food is packaged and taken to shut-ins.
- Advent Cookie Exchange – Parishioners bake their favorite cookies and exchange them. Packages of cookies are also prepared and taken to shut-ins.
- Pot-Luck Dinners – on special occasions, the 8am and 10:30 am services are combined and everyone enjoys a pot-luck repast.
- Seasonal Activities – our church finds unique ways to celebrate holidays and special occasions with hanging of the greens, Easter egg hunts and picnics.
- Pastoral care - Visitations, greeting cards, prayer shawls.







Education

St. Christopher is blessed with a significant number of educators from public, private and higher education including teachers and administrators.

We have had a curriculum based Sunday school for pre-k through middle school. At present we do not have a consistent number of children to support an on-going program. We hope to attract a priest with skills to encourage young families with children to participate.

We supported a parishioner through the Iona Collaborative Program which led to ordination. This person is now serving another Parish as Rector.

We have a group of St. Christopher members and non-members who participate in our weekly Bible Study via ZOOM led by Deacon Denise Giardina, a well-known Appalachian author. And we have been able to attract participants from distant areas including out of state.

During Black History Month we select a book to study related to issues of race, diversity and equality. There are a few participants that are not members of our Parish which enables rich constructive discussions.

We encourage children and families to take advantage of the Diocese supported Peterkin Summer Camp with financial support.

Through the years St Christopher has had an on-going ministry to support youth with educational activities and projects. Our most recent project is to provide free books to youth in our surrounding community. The project is called "Take a Book, Leave a Book". The enclosed box of books is located for easy access on our property adjacent to the street.

During fellowship hour after church service we, on occasion, have special brief presentations on historical events or about people who have made significant contributions to society.



Our Membership

The average in-person Sunday attendance at St. Christopher during 2023 was 40.

During the pandemic, St. Christopher was fortunate to have a person going through the Iona Collaborative Program who gathered us together virtually with streaming services and even with a “Zoom coffee hour.”

Streaming services via both YouTube and Facebook have continued, with average views during Summer 2023 noted at 27 on YouTube and 50 on Facebook.

We report 166 Baptized Members and 83 Active Participants.

Age groups of Active Participants break down as follows:

Children (ages 0-12)	7
Youth (13-17)	5
Young adults (18-35)	5
Middle adults (35-64)	33
Senior adults (65 and older)	39



Our Property

St. Christopher is located in a heavily treed residential neighborhood between Edgewood Dr. and Somerset Dr., overlooking the West Side Commercial area and the Charleston Central Business District beyond. The property provides for fireworks viewing by parishioners and neighbors.

The building was constructed in 1956 and is located on a one-acre parcel. An additional seven tenths -acre adjacent parcel was procured about 2011. Numerous gardens, including a memorial garden, columbarium, and a fish pond adorn the property. The property is visited and enjoyed by neighbors and visitors frequently.

Parking includes two lots: one in the front with 27 spaces and one in the rear with 14 spaces. Four spaces in the front are allocated for handicap parking.

The building and property are well maintained by volunteers regularly, and contractors when necessary. The Parish Hall and Classroom/Office area received a new roof and heating and cooling system in 2018. The building is in great condition with preventative maintenance ongoing.

Technology was implemented within our operations recently to better serve our parishioners and community. An ethernet system was added in the office and nave with the ability to expand its coverage as needed. This allowed the office information systems to be upgraded and protected. It also allowed for the addition of live streaming capability of our worship services and events. The live streaming capability has increased our reach to those who can not attend in person for worship, Bible study, and meetings. These upgrades also improve the sound system, hearing assistance, and provide the ability to view video on a large flat panel display in the Nave. We have used the video ability to allow readers to pre-record their readings and the Minister of Music to pre-record music to be used when their physical presence is unavailable. A large flat panel display was also added to the Parish Hall for special programs and presentations. Options are being explored to take full advantage of this technology.





Finances

Income

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*
Pledges & Plate	\$142,855.04	\$157,152.30	\$137,233.34	\$142,642.37	\$ 139,782.05	\$142,642.47
Outreach	\$6,181.00	\$8,874.00	\$5,056.00	\$6,271.95	\$19,420.30	
Other Income	\$2,606.42	\$9,401.12	\$18,450.61	\$9,240.87	\$11,704.32	\$2,256.59
Total:	\$151,642.46	\$175,427.42	\$160,739.95	\$158,155.19	\$170,906.67	\$144,899.06

Expenses

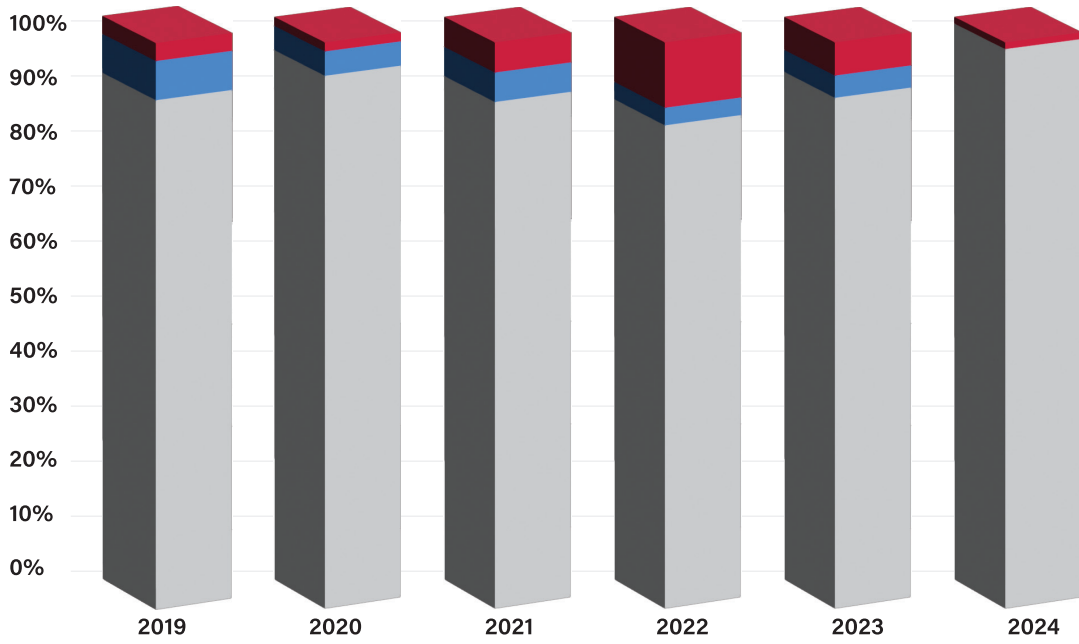
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*
Clergy	\$5,600.00	\$3,975.00	\$73,691.43	\$29,568.38	\$10,942.47	92,375.28
Worship & Education	\$28,943.48	\$43,934.99	\$21,647.52	\$25,873.82	\$26,149.49	\$25,465.18
Outreach	\$9,865.42	\$5,015.00	\$16,696.30	\$11,473.56	\$21,609.55	\$2,400.00
Diocesan Apportionment	\$36,350.04	\$34,662.36	\$29,145.96	\$26,533.92	\$24,629.40	\$25,672.80
Fellowship	\$851.80	\$533.14	\$2,440.71	\$1,877.94	\$2,260.07	\$1,877.94
Office & Administration	\$23,444.15	\$30,671.08	\$33,821.18	\$35,121.89	\$35,148.00	\$33,623.65
Building & Grounds	\$44,007.27	\$58,721.43	\$61,619.89	\$83,325.23	\$50,512.14	\$61,407.86
Other Expenses	\$5,413.66	\$12,435.89	\$7,942.76	\$2,139.52	\$4,688.29	\$1,799.52
Total:	\$154,475.82	\$189,948.89	\$247,005.75	\$215,914.26	\$175,939.51	\$244,622.23

*budgeted

- We realize that stewardship, and the theology surrounding it, is a growing edge for us. We look to invest what resources we have into proclaiming the Gospel. Our new priest will be involved in helping us discern how best to do so.
- Investment account: At the end of first qtr. 2024 its balance is \$694,261.91. It is broken down into 4 categories. They are Building Fund (\$540,403.01), Memorial Fund (\$19,749.91), Organ Fund (\$15,721.96), General Fund (\$ 118,387.03).
- We are taking approximately 5%+/- annually from the earned interest of our investments to sustain operations.

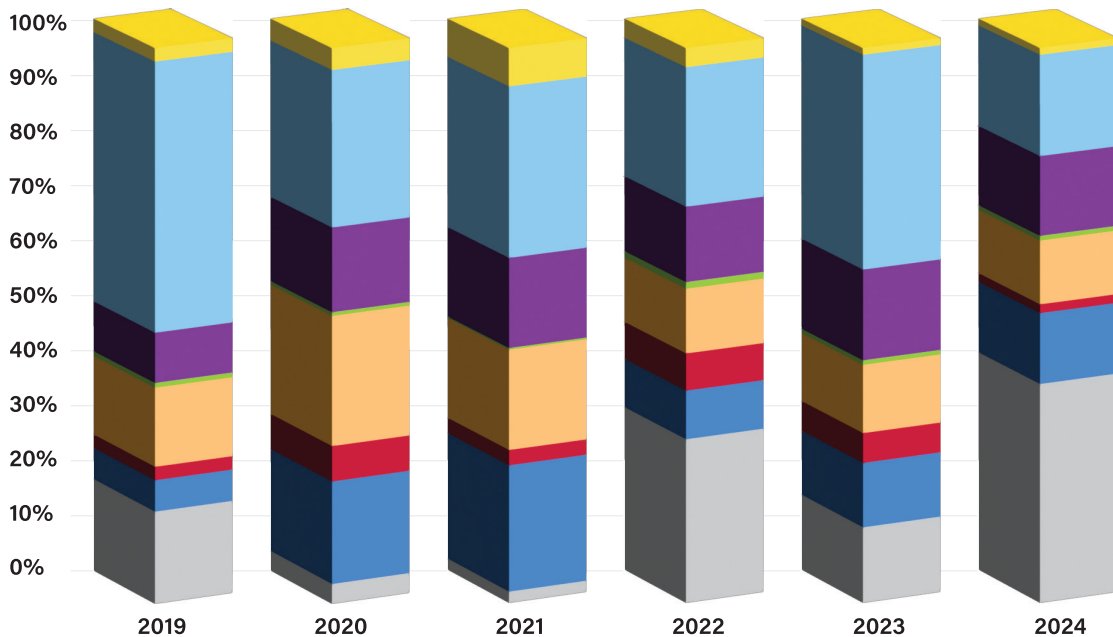
Income

- Other Income
- Outreach
- Pledges & Plate



Expenses

- Other Expenses
- Building & Grounds
- Office & Administration
- Fellowship
- Diocesan Appointment
- Outreach
- Worship & Education
- Clergy





The Charleston Area

St. Christopher is located on the West Side (some say the Best Side) of Charleston, West Virginia, in an area known as Edgewood, the city's first planned suburb, developed in the early twentieth century.

Charleston itself is the capital of West Virginia, and the city is dominated by the gold dome of the Capitol building, designed by renowned architect Cass Gilbert. Completed in 1932, the Capitol and its surrounding park-like capitol plaza provide walking paths and benches perfect for a respite. The West Virginia State Museum is also located within the Capitol Complex.

Nestled in the valleys at the confluence of the Elk River and the Kanawha River, Charleston enjoys year-round natural beauty, surrounded by tree-filled hills. The river and hills allow for plenty of outdoor activities on the water and in the many parks throughout Kanawha County. Kayaking, hiking, biking and trail riding are but a few of the options.

Foodies can enjoy not only the Capitol Market (a farmers' market and indoor-outdoor retail, dining and social hub located at a former railroad depot) but also the many independent restaurants that provide a wide variety of local and international cuisine.

Conventions, concerts, and sporting events may be found at the Charleston Coliseum & Convention Center with additional sporting events found at the Shawnee Sports Complex and Laidley Field. The city-owned Go Mart Park is home to Charleston's baseball team, the Dirty Birds, and also hosts a variety of events throughout the year, including the Light the Night holiday light display. The Charleston Convention & Visitors Bureau website at charlestonwv.com is the place to find out all the area's happenings.

In addition to being the state capital, Charleston is also the cultural center of the state, boasting the Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences, the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra, several local theatre companies, vocal groups, and a ballet troupe. The newly renovated main location of the Kanawha County Public Library has wowed residents and has been featured on national TV.

Charleston also hosts events and festivals throughout the year including weekly Friday evening concerts during the summer at "Live at the Levee," the Vandalia Gathering featuring traditional Appalachian music, FestivALL where a city becomes a work of art, and the Charleston Regatta. Charleston is also the site of the state's largest LGBTQ+ Pride Parade and Festival sponsored by Rainbow Pride of West Virginia.

Institutions of higher education include the private University of Charleston, West Virginia State University (a public HBCU), a branch campus of Marshall University, and Bridge Valley Community and Technical College.

Younger students attend Kanawha County Schools or several private elementary and secondary schools.

Traveling to and from Charleston is easy. Three interstate highways connect in Charleston (64, 77, and 79), and West Virginia International Yeager Airport and Amtrak serve the region.

“I am not from WV, but having lived here for 25 years or so --- consider myself a convert. I may have lived in MN, NY, GA and CA, and all of those places have shaped me. But count me a happy pig rolling in the bounty of Appalachia.”

— Current parishioner





Our History

Saint Christopher Episcopal Church was founded in December 2007. Four small Episcopal churches in the Metro area were asked to merge under the direction of Bishop Klusmeyer, Seventh (VII) Bishop of West Virginia. These four churches: All Saints in South Charleston; Church of The Good Shepherd in Kanawha City; St. James, located in North Charleston; and Saint Luke's located in the West Side of Charleston merged and became St. Christopher. Prior to the merger, the churches rotated Sunday services for about two years moving from one location to another on a monthly rotation in the different buildings. The different congregations had the opportunity to showcase their buildings and their preferred type of worship. The senior and junior wardens and the treasurers of each congregation worked as a committee to help facilitate the merger. During this time the members became acquainted with one another. Once it was decided that a merger would take place a vote was taken to determine a name for the new congregation. The name St. Christopher, called the "Christbearer" and known as the patron saint of travel or journeys was selected. Following the name selection, the building that housed St. Luke's (our current location) was chosen to be the new home for St. Christopher. Once the name and new location were selected, each congregation had a closing service in its building where the sanctuary light was extinguished, and its name removed from the diocesan list of churches. A consultant team was brought in to help guide the new congregation. The consultants and the Rev. Faith C. Perrizo, archdeacon, worked with the selected committee until the first rector was called. During the merging period The Rev. Jim Lewis (a retired priest of the diocese) and The Rev. John Fondrilak (a Lutheran Pastor) served as main clergies. On October 1, 2009, St. Christopher called its rector, The Rev. Melissa Remington. She served us until April 2019 when she retired. After her retirement Greg Pennington, who was a postulant at the time, assumed pastoral leadership in an informal role with the church receiving clergy leadership from supply priests. On December 4, 2021, Greg Pennington was ordained a Deacon and was appointed Deacon-in-Charge. Deacon Pennington served and gave us a sense of stability. In July 2022, he was ordained a priest and continued to serve St. Christopher as Priest-in-Charge until he resigned in April 2023 to take a position as rector of another congregation. Since the merger of the four churches, St. Christopher has attracted new members so that the current makeup of the congregation is almost 50-50, where 50% of members are new to St. Christopher and 50% of members are from the merged churches.



St. Lukes



St. James



Good Shepherd



All Saints



Diocese of West Virginia

The Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia encompasses the entire state and consists of 55 active parishes. Our oldest parish was established in 1740 and our newest (St. Christopher) in 2007. The Rev. Matthew Cowden, elected during our 144th diocesan convention, was consecrated Bishop Coadjutor in March 2022 and became the eighth diocesan bishop upon the retirement of the Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer on October 13, 2022. Click on the link below to view a video produced by the Bishop Coadjutor Search Committee, to see why we love our state and the Diocese of West Virginia.

<https://youtu.be/SRrpAm8Ylow>

The Diocese of West Virginia is involved in various outreach ministries and educational programs, such as the Highland Education Project, Commission on Racism & Diversity, Grow Church (congregational development), summer camps and retreats.

Click on the link below to visit our diocesan website and learn more about our ministries, programs, publications and properties.

Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia - Charleston, WV | wvdiocese.org



How to Apply

If you are discerning a call to be our priest, please submit your resume, a copy of your OTM profile, and your letter of interest to:

The Rev. Canon Chad Slater
Office of Transitions
Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia
P.O. Box 5400
Charleston, WV 25361

Email: cslater@wvdiocese.org

The mission of St. Christopher is to
restore all people to unity with God
and each other in Christ.

Worship Services

8:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite I

10:30 am Holy Eucharist Rite II

stchristopherwv.com