

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

PARISH PROFILE 2020

INTRODUCTION

Christ Church is the largest Episcopal church in Manatee County. Bradenton is located along the Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. The area's islands are renowned for white sandy beaches, shimmering Gulf waters, tranquil blue skies and warm tropical breezes.

We are members of the Diocese of Southwest Florida, along with 78 congregations. As such we are members of the worldwide Anglican Communion and the Episcopal Church in the United States. The Diocese extends along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, with our northernmost congregation in Brooksville and our most southern on Marco Island. It includes the cities of Bradenton, Tampa, St Petersburg, Sarasota and Ft Myers. The easternmost congregations are in Plant City, Arcadia and LaBelle.

As a diocesan community, we seek to live out Jesus' Great Commission that we should be in the world to make disciples of all people ministering God's redemptive gifts of love and grace. "Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded." (*Matthew 28:19-20a*)

We consider the church to be the body of which Christ is head and all baptized people are the members. We encourage you to worship with us and share with others the joy we have found in serving our Lord and the world He came to save. May God bless you.

HISTORY

In 1885 a group of settlers to Florida's west coast decided to organize Sunday school activities to promote Christian living in their community. They longed for their children to worship God in the tradition of their Episcopal forefathers. So in tiny Braidentown, Sunday school classes began in a small building that became known as St Luke's Chapel.

Florida, in the late 1800s, was still a rugged, formidable frontier with untamed land. Despite a yellow fever outbreak from 1887 – 1888, about 31 families were able to fund and build the first Episcopal Church in Manatee County, Christ Church. The church's bell came from Springfield, Massachusetts. That same bell still peals nobly over Bradenton from the tower in its current location on Manatee Avenue.

By the early 1900s, this part of west Florida began to grow and its influence increased. Braidentown became Bradenton and encompassed the villages of Fogartyville, Manatee Village, and Palma Sola. Thus, Christ Church's membership continued to grow.

By 1909, Christ Church raised \$10,000 to start construction on a new church. The Board of Education bought the original church building. The new church was built on land

adjacent to the original site in what is now downtown Bradenton. Here Christ Church grew and flourished until the 1950s when it became too small for its growing congregation.

Foresighted parishioners, with the enthusiastic encouragement of the Reverend Fred Kyle, purchased land outside the then city limits to build a new Christ Church. The first service in the new church was held on Christmas Eve of 1957. Soon the city of Bradenton grew to meet and encompass Christ Episcopal Church.

Half a century later in 2004, Christ Episcopal Church needed renovating. Like every well-used, deeply-loved church, our facility needed refurbishing, repairing, and updating. The Vestry, this time under the guidance of Reverend Dennis Kezar, agreed to renovate the church. The process of expanding and improving the church was completed in 2006.

Christ Episcopal Church established Saint Stephen's Episcopal school over 50 years ago. Both institutions have independent governance structures, but they share buildings, grounds, and facilities and work together to further the Christ Church Mission of "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. "

As our forbearers knew, change must occur and the congregation must grow. More than a century after the original Christ Church was founded, our parish continues to build on our forefather's wisdom.

Our faith in God and His Son inspire us to expand and improve our physical worship surroundings and increase our church family. We continue to keep the faith we have developed and nurtured for more than 130 years. We invite everyone to join us and see for yourself where you can fit into our wonderful ministry. Come grow with us and share our traditions!

CHURCH DEMOGRAPHICS

Christ Church is a well-established traditional Episcopal church with about 460 baptized members. There are approximately 333 families in the parish. Our Average Sunday Attendance is 287. In the fall of 2019, a parish profile survey was distributed. There were 184 surveys completed and returned. The following were the results of the survey based on the number of surveys, not on the total church membership.

72 percent have attended over 10 years, 17 percent attended less than 5 years.
90 percent attend at least 3 Sundays per month.
65 percent are retired, 26 percent work outside the home and 9 percent work from home.
64 percent are female and 36 percent male.
72 percent are married, 16 percent widowed, 8 percent divorced and 3 percent single.
79 percent are over 65, 18 percent are 51 – 65 and 4 percent under 50.

We want our priest to display the following characteristics (in order of importance):

1. Spirituality
2. Integrity
3. Effective as a preacher
4. Accessible
5. Works well with all age groups
6. Personable & outgoing
7. Able to motivate others
8. Effective as a teacher
9. Sense of humor

We want our priest to have strengths in the following areas of ministry (in order of importance)

1. Preaching
2. Spiritual growth
3. Pastoral care
4. Counseling
5. Christian education
6. Outreach
7. Crisis ministry
8. Stewardship development

All other information about our parish – services & times – music programs – children & youth – ministries – clergy, staff, etc. - Please visit our website at www.christchurchswfla.org