

Christ Episcopal Church



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Welcome to *Christ Episcopal Church*

Thank you for your interest in Christ Church in Cañon City, Colorado. In reading this Parish Profile you will find that our community is both traditional and open, discerning and centered. We consider ourselves a welcoming, trusting shelter for those seeking spiritual depth and for the marginalized, amid a society characterized by exclusion and mistrust. Within our church walls there is care and joy. Outside of them, with God's help, we desire to bring the same. We hope that this Parish Profile portrays our church community accurately.

We are seeking a part-time pastor. We are also open to sharing a pastoral position with another Episcopal or ECLA Lutheran Church. If you do have questions, please feel comfortable to inquire.



"To a large extent, soul searching is why many of us belong to a church or church-like group: to find community, to provoke thought, to grow, and to find peace in that."

Dr. Tatiana Bailey

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Church phone number: 719-275-2028

Church website: <https://christchurchcc.org/>

# Where We Come From:

*Christ Episcopal Church ~ Cañon City, Colorado*

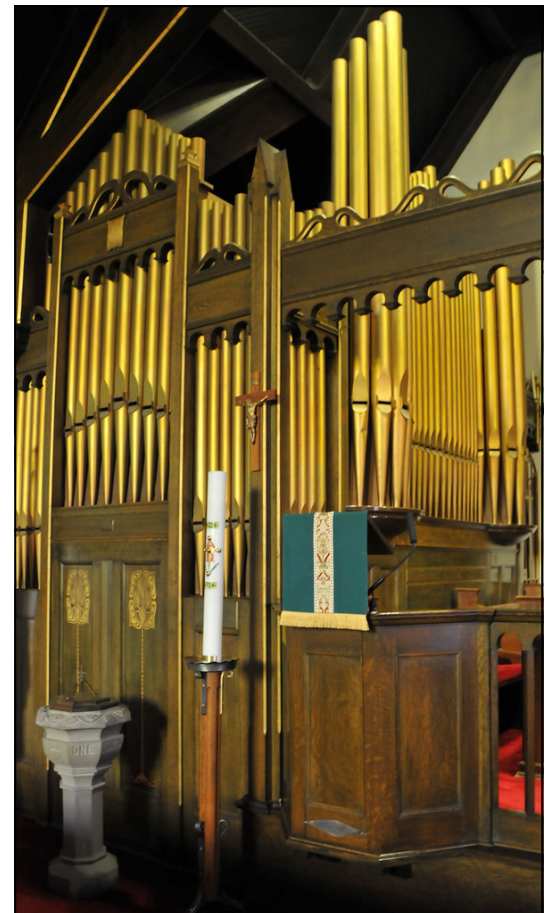
A church is the Body of Christ; it is the *people*, not the building. Yet the word for “church” in Scripture derives from the Greek word for “assembly,” and an assembly must have a place to



assemble. We members of the Body of Christ who call ourselves “Christ Episcopal Church” have inherited a great gift from those who have gone before – the gift of a beautiful building.

Our history began in 1876 with a small Episcopalian congregation located at 5<sup>th</sup> and Macon Avenue. As this community grew, expansion of the parish’s physical space became necessary.

In 1902 architect Thomas MacLaren’s original church design was a L-shaped structure, which included a nave and guild hall. Our historic building comprised of a locally sourced cut block sandstone exterior, has a dark wood interior with vaulted ceilings. Original stained-glass windows adorn its walls. A pipe organ installed in 1903, still continues to add music to our worship.





As the congregation continued to grow, additional space was needed for various ministries and for community fellowship, so a Parish Hall, including a kitchen, was added in 1960. The former Guild Hall was converted into the Chapel of the Resurrection. Two



neighboring homes were purchased in 1981. These homes border the east side of the church campus and have provided office space and rental income. Christ Church was added to the Colorado State Historical Registry in 1994.



An outdoor ramp was constructed to support accessibility to the Church main doors and the Parish Hall. An ADA restroom was also installed. The basement, recently cleaned and painted, now allows room for offices and workspace for administrative meetings and ministries. Two

columbaria, located in the Chapel of the Resurrection and outside on the west grounds, honor the remains of parish and community members. Recent Vestries endorsed the use of technology to provide information about who we are, and to effectively extend our worship service. Christ Episcopal Church members enjoy and greatly benefit from sustained wise stewardship, ensuring a lasting home for worship.

# Who We Are Now:

## *Key characteristics from 2024 parish discernment*

Over the years, having realized changes in membership dynamics, the Vestry, along with our congregation, have been working to articulate our mission. We found ourselves at a standstill and felt that professional guidance might offer new perspectives, better questions, and specific steps toward defining our mission, identity, and calling in the larger community.

During 2023 and 2024, our Vestry engaged The Rev. Elizabeth Denham Thompson of the Eremos Consulting Group to lead a parish-wide discernment process. One facet of our contract with Elizabeth was exploring and articulating who we have been as a parish, who we are now, and who we are called to be going forward.

### **Key Characteristics of Christ Church – who we are now.**

- We are loving with each other and in outreach to the larger community.
- We are an open and inclusive church. Our congregation is diverse and loving. We truly know that everyone is accepted at God's table.
- Hospitality at our worship services and parish activities is evident to all.
- Our membership is primarily made up of older adults and retirees.
- The tone of our church is intellectual and contemplative, with thoughtful and reflective sermons, classes, groups, and discussions.
- Our worship is traditional, but flexible – Episcopal rituals and liturgy.
- We strive to offer spiritual presence and depth, including a contemplative approach. *“Going Deeper”* is our motto.



# How We Pray & Worship & Grow:

*"No matter who you are, no matter who you love, no matter what you have done,  
God loves you."*

<http://christchurchcc.org/>

Our church is a community grounded in going deeper in faith and in relationship with God and with others. Community worship and prayer are led by the desire to grow in love of neighbor, justice for all persons, and the part we play in Peace.



Our Sunday 10:00 a.m. service is both contemporary and traditional. Prayer, Scripture, and Sacrament ground us in Christian wisdom and balance.

Prior to worship, those gathered study the week's scripture readings or participate in 'Faith Seeking Journey', an opportunity to grow in knowledge of church practices, and if desired, prepare to receive church sacraments. Prayer Ministers gather in prayer requests. These become intercessory prayers that are shared during Prayers of the People. A Caring Bear Ministry gives stuffed bears to visiting children, to the grieving, and to those needing a hug.

Beginning worship, the "Lighting of a Connection Candle," reminds us that we come together onsite or online, to be one community. Recognized and served, those unable to attend



Sunday worship are provided communion at home.

It is said that the Sunday Coffee Hour (most times a lunch) and the occasional 'Glorified Coffee Hour' (an abundant banquet hosted by the Hospitality Committee for special acknowledgements) are sacramental times as those attending enjoy good food and Spirit-led, supportive fellowship that not only celebrates but listens and encourages one another.

As a small church community, it takes everyone and both hands to maintain our building and grounds, set the altar, read, sing, welcome, and set the table and make the coffee. We recognize each one's gifts and give of our time in kindness



and in forgiveness and with utmost charity. This work is also our prayer.

Groups gathering during the week are: 'Seek and You Will Find,' a question-and-answer discussion; silent prayer and reflection during 'Centering Prayer'; meditation and dialog during 'StillPoint' Zen

Buddhist group. A twice a month Healing Service instills prayers and blessings for those seeking physical, emotional, or spiritual





relief for themselves and for others. Seasonal opportunities to go deeper and to pray include Lent's 'Stations of the Cross', and Lent and Advent's half-day Saturday Retreats.

In this ever-changing, fast-paced world, our church gives us a sense of meaning, belonging and purpose and a mission of hospitality, love, and inclusion.

*"This place of peace and love feels like an oasis in today's troubled times. It is at once traditional and contemporary, a sacred place that follows the Gospel and supports Christian contemplative teaching and practices."*

<http://christchurchcc.org/>

# Outreach to the Larger Community

Our outreach ministries extend from local programs to regional, national, and international church opportunities. Some of our current programs include:

- Our Little Free Pantry, located near the church entrance, provides food and personal items to the surrounding community.
- Monthly 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday collections are designated to local and regional non-profits.
- Lenten donations are earmarked for El Hogar de Amor y Esperanza in Honduras.
- Befriender Ministry shares skills for building listening relationships.
- Valentine Card Ministry connects with the homebound and people facing life's challenges.
- Festival Fair proceeds go to local, regional, and national non-profits.
- The Feast of St. Francis Blessing of the Animals is offered community wide.
- Partnership with Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church include: joint worship services; a 'Joint Discernment Committee;' and shared picnics.
- PEO Chapter DK, Bridge Club, Centering Prayer, and a contemplative Zen group, utilize church facilities for meetings.
- A community Recital Series performs in the church and offers fellowship in the parish hall.
- Donated funds were given to Loaves and Fishes community laundry center to finance a new washer and dryer.
- A church dedicated fund awards two \$1,000.00 scholarships to high school graduates attending trade or technical school.

Members of our congregation also volunteer individually in the community, serving on local and regional boards, non-profits, and advocacy groups including the Pregnancy Center, Loaves and Fishes, Meals on Wheels, National Alliance on Mental Illness and many other community and charitable organizations.



## Facts and Figures: Our Parish and our Communities

Our current church staff includes The Rev. Mark D. Meyer, Rector, an organist, and a parish administrator. Although our rector's position has been full time, it will be part time going forward. Both the organist and parish administrator are part-time positions. Church Vestry members include Barbara Smith, Senior Warden, and seven additional members.

Christ Church currently has an active membership of 55 adult parishioners. Sunday attendance typically sees 35-45 participants, primarily 50 years and older. Sunday on-line participation averages 2-4 persons, with another 2-3 dozen viewing You Tube worship recordings during the week. In addition, we have roughly 20 beneficiaries of our outreach ministries per week. Thus, on average, 100+ people are impacted weekly by our church services.

**The Fiscal Year End for 2024 was \$227,129, with the majority of income breaking out as follows:**

- ♦ 24 Pledge Payments: \$61,170 (27%)
- ♦ Contributions: \$81,930 (36%)
- ♦ Plate Offerings: \$ 3,925 ( 1%)
- ♦ Endowments: \$31,667 (13%)

**Total expenses for 2024 were \$227,129, with the majority of expenses designated as follows:**

- ♦ Administrative Salaries & Expenses \$94,963 (42%)
- ♦ General Operating Expenses \$101,118 (45%)
- ♦ Diocesan and Regional Assessments – we contribute 12% of our monthly pledges, contributions, and plate offerings to our Colorado Diocese (10%) and Sangre de Cristo Region (2%)

**The 2025 projected Approved Budget income includes:**

- ♦ 28 Pledge Payments: \$81,440
- ♦ Rental Property Income: \$30,000

**Christ Church operated on an annual balanced budget in 2024 and is debt free.**

# Cañon City and Surrounding Communities

Our Christ Church congregation includes members who reside within the cities of **Cañon City** (population 17,000), **Florence** (population 4,000), the unincorporated community of **Penrose** (population 3,700), and several mountain-home districts.

Cañon City is a small, beautiful town resting alongside the Arkansas River, at the mouth of the Royal Gorge. It is the county seat of Fremont County, located 100 miles south of Denver, 45 miles southwest of Colorado Springs, and 35 miles west of Pueblo.

Credit: Ground 2 Air Productions



Cañon City's cost-of-living is about 20-25% less than the average city in Colorado. The median home value is about \$350,000. A typical three-bedroom home rents for \$1,500

to \$2,000 month. The Royal Gorge region is nicknamed "The Climate Capital of Colorado," for its comparatively mild winters.

Our area is served by the Cañon City School District and the Florence / Penrose School District. Educational options include both traditional and alternative formats, a strong vocational arts program, and a Core Knowledge charter school. In addition, special program schools serve pre-school and special-needs youth.

Pueblo Community College's Fremont Campus is housed just outside the city in a new facility with state-of-the-art technology, small classes, and strong academic programs that work closely with local industry to train students for employment.

Fremont County is home to the Royal Gorge Bridge and Park,



Royal Gorge Scenic Railroad. An extensive trail system accesses world-class fishing, rafting, hunting, hiking, bicycling, rock climbing, and birding. Other recreation opportunities include two 18-hole golf courses and a historic main street - with a



coffee shops, restaurants and a thriving art community. The Cañon City Recreation and Park District provides a variety of sports opportunities, kid's after-school programs, and special events. Music and theater events occur regularly in the three communities.

Cañon City offers both traditional and alternative health care options. St. Thomas Moore Hospital is an acute care facility that recently completed an \$18 million renovation project. The facility features a new ICU, new surgery center, new private patient rooms and a Health & Wellness Institute. Outpatient care is provided by family physicians, several specialists, and quality nursing home facilities.



Within an hour's drive of Cañon City are the cities of Pueblo (pop. 110,000) and Colorado Springs (pop. 490,000).

These cities offer a multitude of specialized health care providers, a full complement of shopping options, and diverse cultural opportunities. Colorado Springs Airport provides convenient

access for domestic and international flights.

For more community information click on the following link:

<https://www.canoncity.org/DocumentCenter/View/737/2024-Relocation-Guide-PDF?bidId=>

# Recent Accomplishments and Challenges

## Accomplishments

**“Laundry Love”**, a national organization, and participated in by Christ Church provided laundry services for the homeless and those in need. Dedicated parishioners worked to assist those who attended free laundry days. The program was interrupted by Covid restrictions in 2020 and was recently superseded by a new laundry center at Loaves and Fishes Ministries. Remaining

Laundry Love funds were donated in 2024 to Loaves and Fishes to support their laundry center.

**“El Hogar”**. For many years Christ Church parish members supported educational programs in



Honduras. Parishioners, John and Jocelyn Rhode, founded and developed school programs and residential facilities for orphaned children. The early curriculum of El Hogar focused on agricultural education to help students become independent members of their communities. Later the program expanded to include more students and a broader curriculum. We continue to be a benefactor of these programs.

**Relations with Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church.**

Meetings have been held to provide communication between our churches, organize joint worship and social activities. Recent changes in the pastoral leadership of both churches have inspired exploration for sharing pastoral leaders.



Fall Festival, hosted by Christ Church, brings members and



community together to enjoy lunch, a yard sale or a crafts fair. Funds raised from sales support El Hogar and local non-profits.

Additional church revenue is monthly derived from the rent collected from two homes owned by the church. One of the two homes, our former office space, was extensively renovated in 2023-24 and is now rented to a community resident. Office

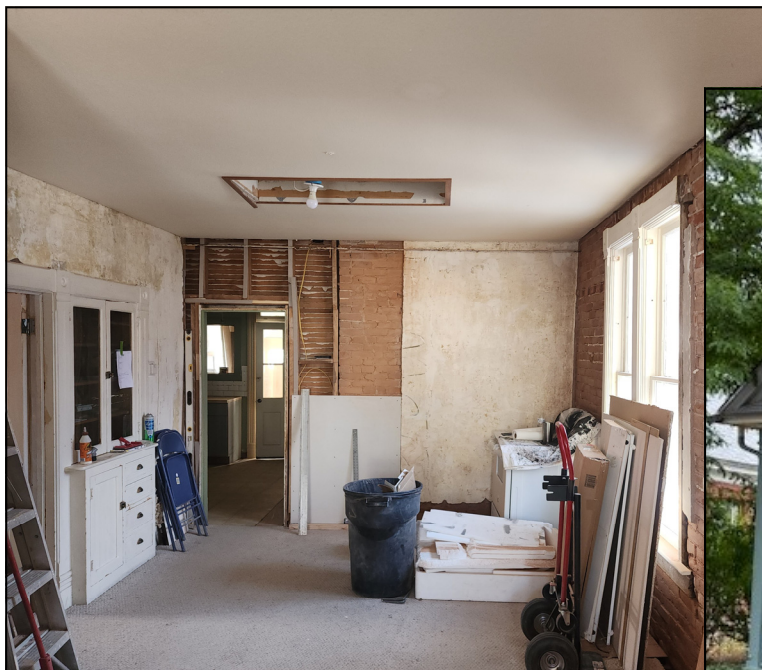


space now resides in the parish hall basement.

Since 2024 extensive sorting, storing or discarding of items and materials has been an ongoing project of the **Building and Grounds Committee**. Building and Grounds also undertook the task to paint and provide better lighting for the basement office space.

On the second and fourth Sundays of the month **second collection is taken up**. These collections have been generously supported and help to finance the Rector's Discretionary Fund, community organizations, and specifically identified projects and expenses.

Enhanced church services and streamed broadcasts are due to a recently upgraded computer system, better lighting, and a **state-of-the-art sound system**.



## **Recent Challenges**

As Christ Church prepares to transition to our new rector, replacing Father Mark Meyer is a huge challenge faced by church leadership and members. A solid rock for the congregation for 28 years, he has been kind, attentive, present and a friend to many.

Financial security is a constant challenge. Contractual requirements, stipends for support staff, purchased services and maintenance of the buildings and grounds require a carefully planned and tight budget.

Our church membership has gradually declined over the past two decades as the average age of church members continues to increase. The number of youth and younger families is declining. On the other hand, half of our senior members are recent additions to Christ Church. This influx has added spiritual diversity and renewed energy for parish ministries. We must continue to attract new members.

Ensuring a welcoming home for diversity among our congregation has been a legacy of the present church leadership. Continuing this inclusive stance leaves us one of very few welcoming sanctuaries in our community.

Core members provide much of the support services for the church. Age and fatigue of these volunteers requires fresh ideas and simplification of tasks.

*“Lord, lead us in round-about ways that end up in the right direction.”*

Taken from the original Hebrew for Psalm 23.

# Where is God Calling Us?

## **Our Vision**

As a small, senior community, we endeavor to provide a spiritual haven to those seekers desiring a deeper understanding of God, oneself and others. At a time when our society is experiencing an epidemic of loneliness, we believe that God is calling us to build this loving community.

## **Our Mission**

As members of the body of Christ we aspire to live deeply in the love of God, one another, and our world. We hope to accomplish our vision utilizing the following strategies:

- Create and enhance viable ministries that best utilize our time and talents both within and beyond the church.
- Create an atmosphere where there is a strong message of diversity and inclusion, where all people feel loved, valued and welcomed.
- Create a parish where laity and clergy collaborate to foster strong ministries and educational programs that serve parish and community members.
- Embrace new models of worship that will help to nurture existing parishioners and attract new members to our congregation.
- Stay creative and open to what God's Spirit is developing within Christ Church and our local community.

*“Divine action is always new and fresh. It never retraces its steps but always finds new routes.”*

Jean-Pierre de Caussade



## We Seek a Rector Who...

- embraces diversity and the belief that all persons are welcomed, valued, and loved;
- has a genuine enthusiasm for sharing the gospel message, can effectively relate the gospel message to the congregation and, as a teacher, facilitate learning in a creative and supportive manner;
- can convey a scriptural frame of reference and spiritual guidance for these challenging times;
- realizes that a contemplative mind and heart is fundamental to going spiritually deeper, and who embraces the Christian contemplative tradition and contemplative practices;
- is both a spiritual and administrative leader who is confident and kind, experienced and thoughtful, and an attentive listener;
- comfortable with leading and pastoring a congregation of mostly older people;
- values and builds a sense of community and actively visits with current members and prospective members;
- is open to new and creative approaches to grow and enhance the worship service;
- has a collaborative leadership style which supports laity in developing their abilities and skills for leading parish ministries.

*These characteristics were the most highly desired pastoral attributes in a survey of our congregation conducted on June 15 and 22, 2025 with 53 participants.*

# *Thank you for your ministry in service to the Body of Christ.*

*We, Christ Church, appreciate the time you have taken to learn about our parish.  
By getting to know us, we hope you can discern whether you are called to be our  
new pastor.*

*May you realize every grace and much good,*

*The People of Christ Church*

*“As we embrace this divine future, as we begin to live it now, co-create it with  
God, and join with others to bring it into being, then slowly that future be-  
comes a reality. It often differs from our expectations, it can take much long-  
er than we want, and it’s not a guarantee of a pain free life. But as we cling  
to hope and live into our desired future a little more each day, life has a way  
of leading us forward in creative and restorative ways.”*

John van de Laar

