

A photograph of the interior of Christ Church Deer Park during a church service. The view is from the back of the sanctuary, looking towards the altar. In the foreground, the backs of several people's heads and shoulders are visible as they sit in pews. The altar area is brightly lit, with a large, ornate wooden cross as the central focus. Behind the cross is a large pipe organ. Three tall, narrow stained-glass windows are visible, each containing a religious scene. The church's architecture features high, vaulted ceilings with blue and white decorative elements. The overall atmosphere is solemn and reverent.

Christ
Church
Deer Park

A
sacred
PLACE

FOR THE LORD IS GOOD;
HIS STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOR EVER,
AND HIS FAITHFULNESS TO ALL GENERATIONS

PSALM 100:5

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Dear Future Rector

Christ Church Deer Park has a long history of experiencing God's faithfulness and of being agents of influence and service within the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Toronto. We have worshipped as a warm and welcoming community for many generations in a beautiful historic building near a major intersection in Toronto.

It has been seven years since Christ Church Deer Park was searching for a new incumbent. It is remarkable what a difference seven years makes in the life of a parish, especially one that has weathered a pandemic. We still have a beautiful historic building, we are still a warm and welcoming community, and we still enjoy wonderful music at our liturgies. Yet in some

ways the church is very different. We are now a church in transition (a theme in the following pages). We are looking to turn the next page in our story.

Our numbers are smaller than they were before the pandemic. However, it is noteworthy how many significant activities, groups, projects,

and liturgies we manage to foster. We are living, breathing examples of what Emily Dickinson in 1891 captured so well:

*Hope is a thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all.*

Our recent parish focus groups revealed that the members of Christ Church love each other, and they love this church. They are deeply desirous of learning to love God more deeply, and of transmitting that love to our neighbours in the Christ Church parish and beyond. Like “the thing with feathers,” we keep singing the tune, even though we don’t know all the words! But we do know the value of our story.

“We want people to come to know Jesus, because we know that the love and compassion they find in Jesus is what the world needs” (Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York). And Toronto is part of that needy world. Our challenge is how to make the life at Christ Church, and the story we live in, attractive to all, and especially to the unchurched, lonely, lapsed, or disillusioned in our neighbourhood.

In the pages that follow, you will see something of where we have come from, where we are now, and what opportunities and challenges we are facing. Where do you fit in? You are the person who will offer us a profound preaching/teaching ministry, and model for us how a deeper relationship with God can help us to develop a more vibrant, committed, and loving Christian life and community. You will be visionary in an area of the city that looks likely to experience significant growth. You will inspire staff and parishioners in the work they do for the love of God. You will encourage us to seek moments of transcendence in our liturgies. And we will be able to see in you what it is to live in the presence of God.

Sometimes, God surprises. He certainly surprised Samuel when He told him to choose David, whose most obvious characteristics at the time were that he was young and “handsome, with ruddy cheeks and beautiful eyes” (1 Samuel 16.12). Perhaps not quite what Samuel was expecting! We are hopeful, searching, and expectant. We are ready to be surprised too!

Please read on to find out the many reasons you would be glad to be a part of this lovely community.





Introduction

To be able to do the work of God we must be the people of God, formed by the love of God. Our life together is deeply rooted in full Anglican worship, nourished by prayer and study groups, given in service to each other and to our neighbours, and enlivened by parish events and celebrations. Our deepest desire is to live out the Gospel revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. As a worshipping community we receive through the sacraments the grace to give ourselves to others through church ministries and through our lives in the world.

Christ Church Deer Park (often referred to as CCDP) has a venerable history and attractive physical presence. With a substantial building and colourful gardens in a central location, it is valued by many who live locally and walk past each day. It is a sacred place, on holy ground. With roots and a visible presence in the Yonge and St Clair neighbourhood, we live out the Anglican tradition of being a church for everyone. We see ourselves as ideally placed for a future where people will re-discover local life, both inside and outside the church, in all its richness.

Christ Church is a church in transition. We have the memory of cultural influence and wide-ranging programs, while becoming a smaller congregation with more intimate relationships.

We have become much more diverse and inclusive during the past 20 years, and yet halved in membership during the past ten. We want the church to be a place of peace, hope, and comfort while also hearing the life-changing claims of the gospel on our lives. We are still an active, outgoing, and outreaching church, yet we have developed and nourished more prayer, more reflection, and more study in recent years. We value the openness and strength of our community. We also work with a group of local churches – the Churches on the Hill – especially to support the Food Bank. A wider cooperation between these churches used to exist pre-pandemic, and it would be good if it could be restored.



There are three strands that make up the larger story of who we are in 2024:

I. FAITH, TRADITION, COMMUNITY, AND WORSHIP.

These have become more central to us as a congregation and, even though the church as a concept has become more marginal in the wider culture, there is a desire on the part of the congregation for a sustained and increased emphasis on our faith, the scriptures, and on our rich traditional Anglican liturgy.

II. WELCOMING AND SERVING PEOPLE ON THE MARGINS.

Christ Church sees God revealed in Jesus as the one who invites all people into fellowship, who avoids the cliques, and who walks over established barriers and judgements about who is in and who is out. Jesus is seen as the model of love to which all Christians should aspire. We welcome seekers, not just cradle Anglicans.

III. FROM BIG TO SMALLER CHURCH.

Christ Church Deer Park is now a smaller church with the memory of a big church on its shoulders. The habits and expectations of operating as a large church linger on, yet the blessings of a small church's cohesive and intimate community are attracting new people who desire closer and deeper relationships. So, our interest in community applies both to our internal community and to the external community of Deer Park.

Being the people of God is possible for Christ Church because by grace we find ourselves living the new life given through Christ. We proclaim the redemption given by God in Christ for each person and at the same time, see our calling to be Christ's body in the world, enacting hope, working for justice, and participating in the mission of God to reconcile all people to Himself.



The Church is located in the Midtown area of Toronto, fronting on the City's main thoroughfare, Yonge Street. It is within easy walking distance of the St Clair station of Toronto's subway system.

While Christ Church Deer Park is surrounded by neighbourhoods of single-family detached housing and mostly lower rise apartment buildings, the area is in transition. There are numerous higher rise condominiums and apartment buildings either under construction or in the approval process along Yonge Street, especially in the vicinity of the St Clair (Yonge and St Clair) and the Davisville (to the north) subway stations, and along St Clair Avenue. Therefore, the population density of the area should increase significantly in the coming years.

There are also significant office and commercial districts stretching along Yonge Street south of Heath Street and to the north of Merton Street. The central hub of Yonge and St Clair, just south of the Church, will see more intense development in the coming years.



MAP OF APARTMENT/CONDOMINIUM CONSTRUCTION IN THE AREA

-  Recently Completed
-  Under Construction
-  Pre-construction

Source: <https://urbantoronto.ca/map>

THE PEOPLE LIVING WITHIN 15 MINUTES OF THE CHURCH

Relative to the City of Toronto averages, the population of the surrounding area is more prosperous, less diverse, and older. It also has higher proportions of apartment/condo dwellers, renters, and single person households. The proportion of households with children is markedly below the city average. The two major postal codes for Christ Church are M4V and M4T. Below is a chart which shows selected characteristics of the population that lives within a roughly 15-minute walk of Christ Church Deer Park.

Selected Characteristics of the M4V and M4T Postal Code Areas

	Parish "Neighbourhood" <i>(Postal Codes M4V and M4T)</i>	City of Toronto
Population	29 605	2 794 356
Immigrant	28%	47%
Christian	43%	46%
Mother Tongue English	73%	50%
Age		
0–14	12%	14%
15–64	63%	69%
65+	25%	17%
Employed	59%	55%
Dwellings		
Apartment/Condo	77%	65%
Renter	54%	48%
1 person	46%	33%
Households		
With Children	22%	33%
Average Income (2020)	\$264 141	\$121 200
Low Income Status	7.1%	8.7%

Source: [2021 Canadian Census](#).

The reported percentages are the proportion of the relevant group who have the indicated characteristic. For example, 47% of the population of Toronto are immigrants. Except for the breakdown by age, because these characteristics are not mutually exclusive, the percentage will not add to 100.



The Parish

OF CHRIST CHURCH DEER PARK

THE BUILDING

Christ Church Deer Park sits on a leafy, lawned property and has a prominent central location on Yonge Street, just north of St Clair Avenue. It was founded in 1870 as the first Anglican church in the area. The current building, constructed in 1922, is an imposing Gothic Revival stone building with a bell tower and slate roof. To the west, there is a treed area that is currently used as a playground.

There are three entrances to our worship space. Our main doors open onto Yonge Street, and there is another entrance off Heath Street on the south side under the bell tower. There is also a ramped entrance off Heath Street, just west of the bell tower. Our main worship space is surmounted by a towering, unobstructed vault with massive wood trusses, and it is surrounded by stained glass windows, including the magnificent east window that faces onto Yonge Street. The space has several aisles of fixed wooden pews with drop-down kneelers, and it can accommodate up to 450 worshippers.

With 28,000 square feet in total, Christ Church offers significant public space, which is used by a daycare, as rehearsal and performance space for music and theatre organizations, and as a venue for meetings of all types.

THE CLERGY

For the last several years, the clergy roster at Christ Church has been composed of an Incumbent, an Associate Priest (previously a Curate), and an Adult Education Minister. While often rotating, the Clergy preside at all of the services at Christ Church including Church on Tap and Jazz Vespers. There are also a number of Honorary Clergy who serve in a variety of capacities.

THE MEMBERS

The parish of Christ Church Deer Park includes people from all walks of life and at different stages of their spiritual journey learning to follow Jesus. Our mission can be summarized as nurturing the spiritual lives of all people

through including them in all practices of the faith as disciples of Jesus. Worship is seen as the centre and source of church life. There is a renewed emphasis on personal faith and drawing new and diverse people into the life of the congregation.

The median age range at Christ Church is 50-70 years, closely followed by 70-90. It is people in these age brackets who most frequently transition from visitors to members. Women outnumber men about 60/40. Since the pandemic, the congregation of Christ Church has become more diverse, in age, theological and ethnic background, and gender identities. In age, we have a younger cohort of people in their thirties and forties. In church background, we have attracted people from a wide range of denominational and theological backgrounds, from those comfortable with historic formulations of the faith to those with questions about those formulations. All are comfortable that Christ Church is a welcoming and nurturing environment for worship and spiritual growth. As for diverse ethnic backgrounds, we find that more and more, our congregation mirrors the cultural and ethnic make-up of our community. And for those with various gender identities, led by our Church on Tap service once a month on Friday evenings, Christ Church has worked hard to reach out and build a relationship with the LGBTQ community. We are very proud of the fact that Christ Church truly reflects

the diverse demographic and cultural make-up of our neighborhood, which in itself is a microcosm of Toronto. All these people are a significant part of Christ Church's sense of itself. In all this we believe we fully reflect and proclaim Christ. Christ Church is part of the broad Anglican tradition that welcomes people who are exploring faith, who have questions and doubts that they want to discuss in-depth, and who are attracted to our sense of God as the one who welcomes all into fellowship and love for each other. In recent years there is a growing sense that God, as revealed in Christ, extends this welcome to all people, especially people who were marginalized and excluded owing to gender and sexual identity.

There is a significant core of people at Christ Church who care deeply about the future of the church and the message of the Gospel. Their lives are sustained by their faith that is nourished through the church and they invite new people to join. They want the gospel of Christ to transform people. There is a palpable sense at Christ Church that more than ever, the world needs to hear that God is love, because it is a truth being lost in a world of self-centeredness, loneliness, judgmentalism, greed, and violence. The task of the church as seen within Christ Church is to follow the example of Jesus anew, find new ways to extend His welcome to the neighbourhood, and to attract people into the church life.





Worship Services

Christ Church Deer Park offers the following regular services.

**SUNDAY 8:00 A.M.
HOLY EUCHARIST**

Sunday worship begins with a quiet said service of Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer, with a small and committed group of between 10 and 20 parishioners in attendance. This liturgy includes a homily. There is no music component at this service, except on Easter Day and Pentecost.

**SUNDAY 9:15 A.M.
HOLY EUCHARIST
CONTEMPORARY SERVICE**

Sunday worship continues with a contemporary service of Holy Communion. The atmosphere is relaxed, and the music is focused around piano and guitar, with a strong connection between music and liturgy. This service was influenced by our 2019 visioning process [See

link in Appendix] and was a direct response to a need that was felt in the community at that time. Between 15 and 25 parishioners attend this service.

**SUNDAY 10:30 A.M.
CHORAL EUCHARIST**

Each Sunday there is a full choral Eucharist with a vested choir. The liturgy generally follows the Book of Alternative Services and draws on a mix of traditional and modern music, both congregational and choral. About 60 to 70 parishioners attend this service. We have recently hired a new Director of Music for this service and the result of her proficiency in organ, her liturgical understanding, and her choir direction has already made a noticeable difference to the worship experience.

WEDNESDAY 11:00 A.M. EUCHARIST

A small number of people, some of whom are unable to attend on Sundays, like to begin their Wednesday with this quiet said Eucharist (following the Book of Alternative Services), celebrated in the side chapel. The service includes a short reflection or sermon by the presiding celebrant. There is no music component to this service.

JAZZ VESPERS

This service was started twenty-five years ago and is held monthly. It attracts regular members of Christ Church as well as members of other churches and even non-church goers. Instrumental music is the principal focus, offered by a number of high-quality professional jazz ensembles of varying sizes and instrumentation. The service is included in the official programme of the Toronto Jazz Festival. The Charlie Brown Christmas and Duke Ellington's Nutcracker are especially popular. The evening includes a few set liturgical prayers, a reading, and a brief talk (which may or may not be on a biblical text). This service is very popular.

CHURCH ON TAP

Held once a month, Church on Tap is a fully inclusive and informal Eucharistic service. It is a casual, affirming service that combines traditional liturgy and contemporary music. People feel welcome and comfortable here no matter their backgrounds. The service is followed by a social hour with great music, a free round of drinks, and a chance to catch up in person and find a deeper involvement in faith. This service has proven attractive to a wide variety of worshippers—two notable constituencies being seminary students and members of the LGBTQ community.

DINNER CHURCH

This is a new venture, held once a month, and so far well attended especially by younger people. Worship is integrated into the meal.

CONCLUSION

Christ Church Deer Park has aimed in the past, and still does aim, to make transcendent worship an integral piece of Christian community building. To that end, the worship services are core to what Christ Church Deer Park is.

The COVID-driven reduction in members has had an impact on the worship services at Christ Church, where there are currently fewer parishioners attending services than before the pandemic. Nevertheless, in the past few years we have welcomed quite a few new people who have been very involved in worship and community building. The numbers may be smaller, but the passion and love for the church is very much in evidence.

As a result of fewer parishioners, there are no longer formal programs for children and young people. However, every week preparations are made and a person is at the ready to provide a program if children are present at a worship service. This is yet another example of parishioners, recognizing the importance of this ministry, stepping up and being ready.



Music is one of the strengths of Christ Church Deer Park, with a rich legacy. Music is thoroughly interwoven into our liturgical life. Our congregation is passionate about the role of music in the worship experience, and our music program includes a wide range of styles and traditions that speak to our diverse community.

Our choir of twelve to fifteen volunteers and four paid leads supports the classic Anglican 10:30 liturgy. In January of this year, we welcomed a highly qualified and deeply spiritual new Music Director, completing her Doctorate in Musical Arts at the University of Toronto. We are excited to develop and grow our music program together. In past years, the Christ Church choir has been active in concerts, including with fellow neighbourhood churches, and members often sing at events such as the Christmas Fair.

The choir sings a wide range of music, from Tudor and Baroque through to contemporary works by British, American, and Canadian composers. The congregation willingly tackles Geneva psalms, Taizé chants, new hymns, and new Eucharistic settings. It is important to

emphasize that for members of the choir, and for the Director of Music, performing church music is not just an enjoyable artistic activity, but an inward spiritual discipline and outward offering in service to God and to the whole assembly.

Depending on the needs of the repertoire, the choir is accompanied either on our 3-manual tracker organ (Karl Wilhelm, 1982) – one of only three trackers in Toronto – which is the visual centre of the chancel beyond the altar, or on a baby grand piano. On special occasions such as Easter Sunday, the music is enriched by trumpeters or other musical guests. The weekly preludes and postludes are awaited with anticipation; the latter are often acknowledged with applause, and sometimes cheers!

It is perhaps significant that this 10:30 classic Anglican liturgy with its rich musical content has always been the best attended of the regular Sunday liturgies.

However, music is not solely the province of the 10:30 service. At each of our worship services a distinct musical approach serves the spiritual needs of the congregation. At our more relaxed and informal 9:15 service, the musical offerings vary, including contemporary songs and re-imagined classics. And many at the 8:00 a.m. service would love to have at least an accompanied closing hymn. The very popular Jazz Vespers service, started by the Rev. Canon Tim Elliott some twenty-five years ago, features some of the city's finest jazz musicians. Church on Tap includes contemporary music with guitar and vocals.

Music could certainly be used more to connect with people outside the church, especially children. Regardless of the style of worship, we recognize that music speaks directly to the soul and we are fervently committed to its role in our spiritual lives. It is key to transcendent worship, at the heart of our love of God and neighbour.





Adult Education

Adult education is highly valued at Christ Church. We believe that providing study opportunities to deepen the roots of our faith and strengthen our commitment to the Lord and the church will form a healthy foundation for both now and the future. In an uncertain and broken world, we are given the tools to walk as disciples of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

PREACHING

The homilies given by our clergy at our three Sunday Eucharist services are based on the Anglican Lectionary Year and are preached in a way that stimulates both intellectual curiosity and practical relevance. They play an important role in teaching and guiding the Christ Church congregation in their faith development and spiritual journey as well as their service both within the church and the wider community. They are anchors to everything that goes on at Christ Church.

CHRISTIAN CALENDAR THEMATIC STUDIES AND RETREATS

Over the last couple of years during Advent and Lent the Adult Education Minister has creatively come alongside our congregation by offering a variety of ways of entering more significantly into each Season. Here are some examples:

- a once-a-week study during Advent and Lent either online or in person
- a one-day retreat during Lent either at a local convent (the Sisterhood of St John the Divine)

or at the church. Time is provided for guided quiet Scriptural contemplation and personal reflection.

- a Lenten walk in a local cemetery (Mount Pleasant Cemetery) after Sunday services, with one of the clergy providing guidance as the group examined the Way of the Cross.

DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING AND CHRISTIAN FORMATION

As disciples of Jesus Christ our desire is to walk in His footsteps. The training given by our Adult Education Minister helps to form a firm foundation on which we can do that. The teachings and learnings may come in the form of a guest speaker, a book study (for example: *Speaking of Sin* by Barbara Brown Taylor), a video series, a virtual visit (for example: *Encountering Our History with Our Indigenous Neighbours*), or they may centre on a topic such as how to share our faith, or how to discover our spiritual gifts and use them at Christ Church, or how to study the Bible, or how to pray.

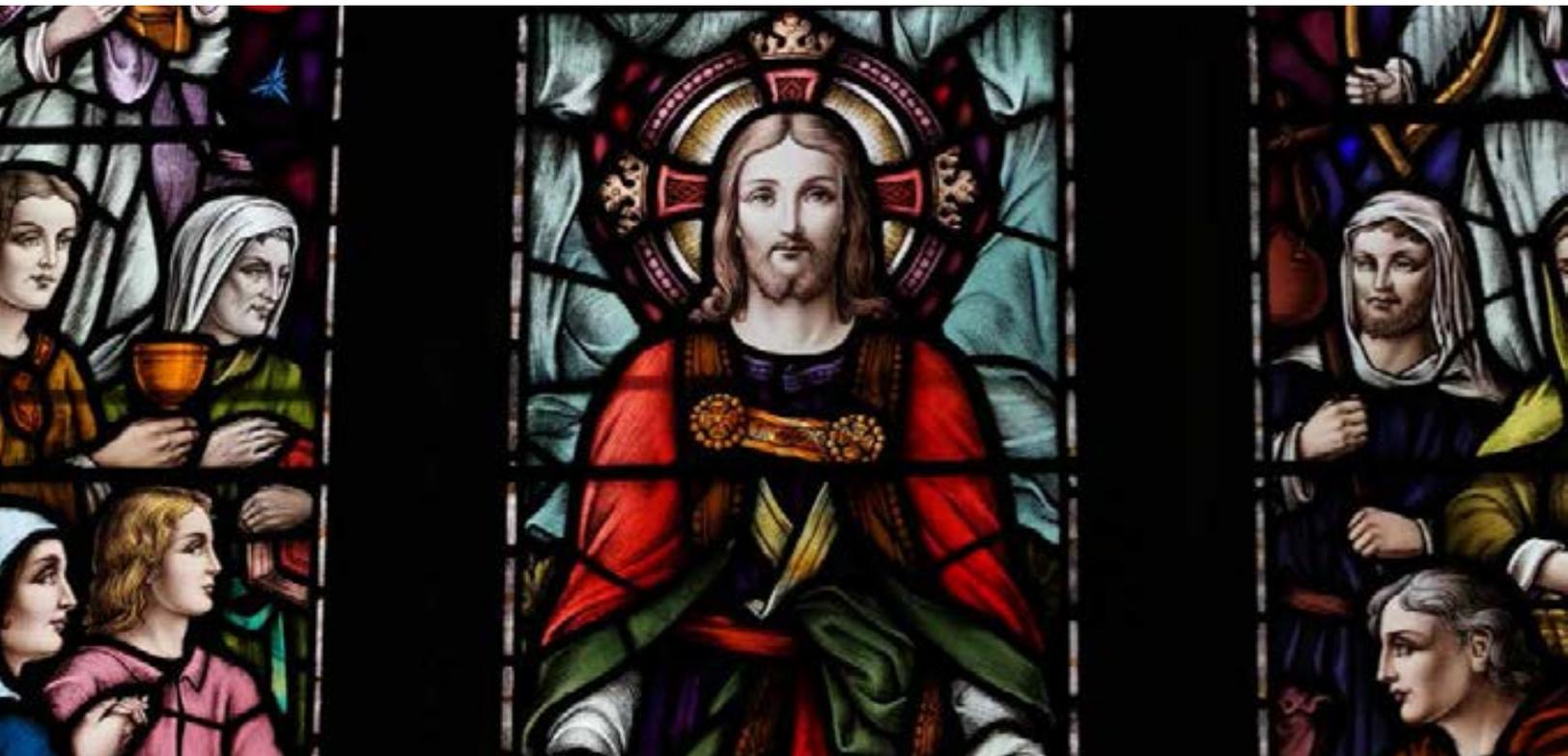
More use might be made of members of the parish with teaching gifts and experience. Some parishioners would welcome opportunities to discuss some of the more controversial topics of the Christian creed, e.g., virgin birth, resurrection, miracle stories, divinity of Christ, etc.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION GROUPS

There are several groups who meet either in person or online on a regular basis. These groups are lay-led and were intentionally formed during COVID to gather those who wanted to stay connected. They are made up of folks at different ages and stages of life. We share our stories, explore our faith, engage with Scripture and that week's sermon, and we pray with and for one another.

BAPTISMAL PREPARATION

A formal course of baptismal preparation is offered for parents who are presenting their children for baptism, and also for mature baptismal candidates.





Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is fundamental to life at Christ Church Deer Park. We operate more like an extended family than just a community who happen to worship together.

THE CLERGY

The clergy regularly visit people who are not able to attend a church service. Together the priest and the parishioner have a time of fellowship and the priest offers communion and shares some prayers. The clergy work in consultation with the Congregational Care Team ensuring all from the congregation who need this kind of care are getting it. The clergy also respond to pastoral crises and meet with families and/or one-on-one with those who are in the hospital, and those who require counselling, confession, or a listening ear.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CARE TEAM

The Congregational Care Team is made up of parishioners who offer friendship on a regular basis to those from the congregation who are temporarily or permanently shut in at home or in a chronic care facility. Depending on the individual's needs, that relationship can involve a phone call or visit and/or rides to and from church for those who otherwise would not be able to attend church events and services. The team is dependent on the congregation

and clergy to keep them current as to who is requiring this kind of care. They gather monthly to ensure that no one who would benefit from this ministry misses out and they communicate regularly with the clergy so that everyone is kept in the loop.

THE PRAYER CIRCLE

The Prayer Circle consists of a group of parishioners (currently 5) who, along with the clergy, pray for those in the congregation who have asked for prayer support for either themselves or someone they love. The team is also committed to pray as requests come in for causes that deeply impact our church, city, province, and beyond. Those on the team consider it a great privilege to come alongside others by praying for them. All prayer requests are sent out to the team via email and are held in confidence.



Outreach, Social Justice, and Advocacy

Christ Church Deer Park is a parish that believes in taking care of its people, its neighbours, and our planet. We are deeply concerned to share the blessings we have received and to reveal God's kingdom on Earth.

Our initiatives include: (i) a **community breakfast program** which serves a hot breakfast on Saturday mornings three to four times per month (and once a month at our ecumenical partner, Calvin Presbyterian Church); many members of the congregation have been involved in this over time; in fact, in the past, it was an activity that our youth were very involved in; (ii) participation in **the Churches-on-the-Hill Food Bank**, which distributes pantry items and meals to people in need out of the food bank location at Timothy Eaton United Church; (iii) partnering with AURA, in **refugee sponsorship**; (iv) a **Truth and Reconciliation Working Group** that seeks to uphold the Indigenous peoples of Canada and advocate for social change; (v) a **Climate Action Group** that advocates for action to combat climate change; and (vi) a greening initiative through a **pollinator garden**.

PROJECTS FOR THE FUTURE

We need to reach out again to families in our community, with programs and ideas that attract children and young people, e.g., the establishment of a junior choir. And we need to find ways to contact residents in condo towers which are difficult, for security reasons, to access.



Other Religious Activities

Nurturing the faith and spiritual lives of all people is a key focus of Christ Church Deer Park. In addition to our regular worship services, the following sacraments and significant life events are part of the life of Christ Church and are observed and celebrated by the community.

HOLY BAPTISM

We celebrate baptism at any age.

CONFIRMATION

As part of the Anglican Church of Canada, we confirm people of any age who are ready to affirm their baptismal vows and publicly declare their Christian faith.

MARRIAGE

We are an affirming parish and welcome traditional and non-traditional couples in celebrating their marriages.

FUNERALS

We offer spiritual counselling or referrals to appropriate professionals to anyone who has lost a loved one. Christ Church conducts funeral services following the basic Anglican liturgy which can be traditional or contemporary.

INTERMENTS

We also conduct interment services for burial and cremation.

RE-AFFIRMATION/RECEPTION INTO THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

We work with any Anglicans who wish to express or confirm their spiritual development and faith through vows of reaffirmation before the parish community. And, of course, we are also happy to receive non-Anglicans into the Church.

CONFESSIONS

We support parishioners with the rite of reconciliation or confession upon request.

BLESSINGS

We provide house blessings as well as blessings for pets.



Social and Fellowship Events

Some dedicated parishioners create opportunities to welcome and include the wider community into the life of the church outside worship services, and then a lively and dedicated team of volunteers works hard to deliver events and activities that engage the parish and its community. There is always a place for more volunteers!

There is a **coffee hour** immediately after each service, which offers parishioners an opportunity to share news and catch up with each other. **Barbecue lunches** on the church grounds also occur. The **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper** is an opportunity to celebrate as a parish before the solemnity of Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent commences; parishioners are encouraged to invite friends and family. It is a joyous, multi-generational celebration, a highlight of the fellowship calendar. A new feature is the **bi-monthly potluck dinners**. These provide an opportunity for fellowship and food over a relaxed dinner in the Church Hall. Numbers vary, but the evening is always good for catching up.

Rummage Sales in the Spring and Fall are always eagerly anticipated and well attended. These events take about three months of preparation by parishioners and other volunteers. They include a café and sometimes music provided by the Director of Music. The Fall event also includes a BBQ lunch on the lawn. Our Rummage team is always thinking of ways to engage people in the church as well as to reach out to the broader community. The Rummage Sales are also a significant source of revenue.

The Christmas Fair gives people the opportunity to enjoy carols and a tearoom, and to purchase home-baked treats, gifts,

and decorations. Last Christmas we also had a "Wish Tree" where people could write their dreams and hopes for the future and hang them like decorations on a Christmas Tree.

A Pollinator Garden has recently been planted, with soil and mulch being donated by a sponsor, and with parish and wider community engagement. It is an opportunity for Christ Church to spread awareness of the importance of pollinators, create a place for our parishioners and the wider community to gather and sit, and a further step in our efforts to "green" our church.

Blessing of the Animals takes place on the Feast of St Francis, October 4. Parishioners and neighbours are invited to bring their pets to the garden west of the church for a blessing.

On Ash Wednesday: early in the morning, the clergy and a few parishioners greet people from the church steps as they make their way to work and school, and they offer ashes and a coffee to go.

Christ Church Deer Park has a website. It provides updates on its worship services and links to the services being streamed. These streamed services are still quite popular, frequently reaching over 100 views. Christ Church also has a Facebook page and an Instagram Page, but is not currently very active on social media.

Spiritus, our newsletter, is published twice a year. It features creative writing and religious musings (for a sample, please see the Appendix).





Operations and Financial Matters

In addition to its worship services throughout the week, Christ Church Deer Park has ongoing activities each day, often from very early in the morning to late in the evening.

The day-to-day operations of Christ Church are overseen by the full-time Director of Operations who also supervises the two full-time custodians and the part time custodians. The book-keeping and financial records are maintained by a part-time Financial Manager.

The Director of Music oversees to some extent all music activities and initiatives at Christ Church, but she is focused on the music of the 10:30 service, under an employment arrangement of 20 hours a week.

Christ Church has four Wardens: the Rector's Warden, the People's Warden and two Deputy Wardens. There is also a Treasurer, who is a member of the Congregation. In addition, there are numerous committees, each with a lay Chair – Stewardship, Investment, Worship, Music, Outreach and Social Justice, Property, and Congregational Care. A specific Warden serves as a liaison with each of these committees.

The annual operating expenditures of Christ Church are about \$1.1 million. This amount, when adjusted for inflation, has been constant for many years. Like most churches, Christ Church has experienced a decline in the overall size of its congregation and the corresponding decline in annual financial gifts that goes with a smaller congregation. Christ Church has

been working diligently on alternate sources of revenue, particularly on the property rentals side, and has had significant success.

However, one of the most significant challenges facing Christ Church is the size of its operating budget when compared to the size of its congregation and the amount of its congregational givings as an overall percentage of the annual operating expenses. Post-COVID, Christ Church is experiencing an operating deficit of about \$150,000 or more per year. This deficit is reduced through transfers into the operating budget from two investment funds. First, Christ Church sold its Rectory a number of years ago and the proceeds are held by the Diocese and invested. Christ Church receives a specified portion of the income on that fund each year. In addition, Christ Church has its own Investment Fund which it manages itself, through investment advisors. The Investment Fund currently sits at about \$1.6 million and a specified portion of the income from the Investment Fund is also added to the operating revenue each year. Any remaining deficit, after those transfers, is closed by withdrawing principal from the Investment Fund. Again, the challenge in front of Christ Church is the importance of increasing overall revenue in order to meet its expenditures without having to tap its Investment Fund to the degree that it currently does.



Parish Consultation Feedback

As part of the preparation of this Profile, we held a number of focus groups, asking for comment on the sections of the Profile we had prepared. Their ideas are reflected in the Profile. We also asked three questions. The answers were illuminating.



What do you love about this church?

Answers included: the sense of community, deep friendships, the beauty of the building, the music and worship liturgies, the openness to accepting people from widely diverse backgrounds.



What do you most hope for the future?

Answers included: that we have a sense that God is guiding us, that we have a rector with an ability to share a vision clearly with the laity.



What should be the top areas of focus for the new Rector?

Answers included: modelling a vision of hope, enthusiasm, and deep spirituality; recognition of the need for change, but an understanding that not all change is good change.



Opportunities and Challenges

MISSION CLARITY AND URGENCY:

Part of being a church in transition is realizing that mission is not so much what we do as it is what we are. Christ Church is called to enact God's mission to reconcile all people to Him in Christ. Part of the context of that mission is the formation and discipleship we share with each other in worship and through loving acts of service and fellowship. Another part is to feed, listen to, eat with, and serve people in our neighbourhood who hunger, not only for food, but for the bread of life. We ourselves hunger for all people to know the love of God. This is the source of our love of neighbour. As a church, we are searching for what form the Christian vision will take in the years ahead, to energize current members, attract new people to the church, and reveal something of the Kingdom of God. We recognize a need for the next generation of lay leaders; for succession planning and

mentorship, especially in committees; and for a discernment process for identifying our gifts.

As we have noted, one of the themes to emerge in this profile of Christ Church Deer Park is that we are a church in transition, but that we look at that as a positive place to be. Another theme is that Christ Church has become a smaller church than it was in the recent past, but that it still carries the memories of a big church on its shoulders. That metaphor carries with it several key challenges for us and for our new Incumbent. It means that we have a good idea of where we came from, but not of where we are going. This uncertainty means we could succumb to anxiety, but we are determined to view the future with confidence and anticipation; we are searching for a new Incumbent who will share that vision.

SMALLER REPRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD:

In recognizing that we are a smaller congregation, we must build positively on that reality. Elsewhere we noted that those who count themselves as regular parishioners of Christ Church are devoted to their church. That devotion is expressed in a desire to love God with heart, mind, and strength, and to develop that love in a sustained and increased emphasis on worship, on our faith, on the scriptures, and on our rich Anglican liturgy.

THE WORSHIP SPACE:

With a smaller congregation, the size of the church itself is a challenge to the intimate setting we seek. There are a number of ideas being discussed to make the worship space more intimate, and those conversations need to continue. Some have questioned whether the sanctuary or chapel could be open during the week for quiet prayer.

FINANCES:

Again, smaller means less revenue, and yet Christ Church, in carrying its big church mentality, likes the larger role it has played and is reluctant to surrender that. Stewardship will play a major part in that discussion, as will alternate sources of revenue – both of which are matters in ongoing and vital conversation.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY:

We see children and youth ministry as part of our wider sense of mission. Until the pandemic, that ministry was still viable, but during the pandemic it disappeared. We need a new vision and approach, and we look forward to engaging our new Incumbent in this discussion, as well as some of our new members. Steps are already being taken to revive interest in the various outreach opportunities sponsored by the church and in the worship experience so crucial to the church's identity. What is notable however, is how few families are checking us out. The families who came prior to COVID have not returned, despite being contacted and encouraged to do so. There is a puzzle here that we need to solve. We look forward to engaging our new Incumbent in all these challenges as we build a future together.





Concluding Thoughts

Transition has been a key theme in this Parish Profile. We recognize that Christ Church Deer Park, like all churches, is in a period of significant change and that this process has accelerated post-pandemic. Notwithstanding this transition, the congregation of Christ Church loves the church and is deeply committed to seeing its ministries succeed. Despite the significant transitions underway, Christ Church sees itself with a bright future and is committed to honouring the past but at the same time charting a course which is reflective of the themes discussed in this Parish Profile.

In addition, it is critical for us to acknowledge that we are now a smaller church with the memory of being a much bigger one, because it equips us to fully understand our potential, while at the same time embracing the blessings of a smaller church's cohesive and intimate community as well as the traditions of our faith.

In the autumn of 2019, Christ Church embarked on a vision planning process, as our congregation was eager to grow and develop in faith, energy, and numbers as it approached its 150th anniversary of ministry. The report, entitled *Charting Our Future with Christ*, is in the appendix. This document is linked there, as many of the ideas expressed remain goals. COVID interrupted the implementation of some of the conclusions, but this report shows the significant involvement and engagement of the congregation of Christ Church in its future.

The Congregation of Christ Church remains enthusiastic about the process of finding a new Incumbent and looks forward to engaging with those interested in becoming our new Rector, so that together we can continue to build upon the long history and rich traditions of Christ Church Deer Park.

PRAYER OF THE CHRIST CHURCH PARISH SELECTION COMMITTEE:

Lord God, a great task lies before us, and great trust has been placed in us. We ask that we all may be attuned to the voice of hope as we search out the next person of faith, love, wisdom, imagination, devotion, and compassion to lead Christ Church Deer Park into the challenging and exciting times ahead.

APPENDIX

Below are links to the parish's newsletter, *Spiritus*, May 2024 edition, available on christchurchdeerpark.org, and the 2019 Vision Planning Report.



PARISH NEWSLETTER:
[*Spiritus*](#)
May 2024 edition



PARISH DOCUMENT:
[2019 Vision
Planning Report](#)



**Christ
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Christ Church Deer Park is part of the the Anglican Church of Canada.