

# COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO: Christ Episcopal Church, Stratford, CT

## COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO INFORMATION

**Church name:** Christ Episcopal Church      **City:** Stratford, Connecticut 06615  
**Address:** 2000 Main Street      **Phone:** 203-375-4447

### Contact information

**Name:** Judy Kurmay      **Address:** 45 Alexandra Dr.  
**City, State:** Stratford, CT 06614      **Phone:** 203-378-802

**Average Sunday Attendance:** 120

**Worship Service Numbers:** **Weekend:** 2      **Weekday:** 1      **Others:** none

### CURRENT Annual Compensation (includes all the following)

**Cash stipend:** \$46,400.00      **Housing Allowance:** Rectory provided

**Utilities included:** \$8,160.00      **Utilities NOT included:** ---

**SECA Reimbursement:** \$7,720.00      **This is:** half

**Other:** \$2,385.00 (housing equity allowance)

**Additional Compensation Note:** none

**Compensation available for NEW Position:** Diocesan standard

**Negotiable:** yes

**Housing available for:** up to 8 persons

**Pension Plan:** Church Pension Fund

**Healthcare Options:** Full family

**Dental:** yes      **Life Insurance:** yes      **Life Insurance Amount:** diocesan standard

**Budgeted Housing Equity Allowance:** yes      **Amount:** diocesan standard

**Vacation weeks:** 4 weeks    one month (including 5 Sundays)

**Continuing Education:** one week    **Funding:** \$1500 – diocesan standard (non-cumulative)

**Continuing Education Details:** does not include Sundays

**Sabbatical Provision:** yes (leave adheres to diocesan policy)

**Link to Diocesan Sabbatical Policy:** [ctdiocese.org](http://ctdiocese.org)

**Auto account:** no

**Other Travel:** no

**Professional/Business Account:** yes      **Amount:** reasonable expenses for conduct of duty

### Comments:

For financial and pastoral reasons, it is our strong preference for the candidate to live in the rectory. However if it is an issue of hire, we can negotiate a mutually satisfactory arrangement.

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## Previous incumbents in this position:

<b>Name:</b> Rev. Robert Stuhlmann	<b>Date Begun:</b> 1996	<b>Date Ended:</b> 2010
<b>Name:</b> Rev. Thomas Diggs	<b>Date Begun:</b> 1986	<b>Date Ended:</b> 1994
<b>Name:</b> Rev. Kenneth Taber	<b>Date Begun:</b> 1974	<b>Date Ended:</b> 1985

**Notes:** We have been in a slow gradual decline since 1985. We need a priest whose passion and joy is rebuilding and growing parishes.

## Schools:

### Church School

<b>Children:</b>	<b>Students:</b> 15	<b>Leaders:</b> 6
<b>Teens/Young Adults:</b>	<b>Students:</b> 13	<b>Leaders:</b> 2
<b>Adults:</b>	<b>Students:</b> 25	<b>Leaders:</b> 1

**Day School:** none

## NARRATIVE

### QUESTION 2: Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship in your community.

Using *The Book of Common Prayer*, The Holy Eucharist: Rite One is used at the weekly 8 a.m. service with no music. The Holy Eucharist: Rite Two is used at the 10 a.m. service. Lay persons participate by reading the lessons which precede the Gospel and leading the Prayers of the People. A mid-week Communion Service is held using The Holy Eucharist: Rite Two. The Sunday music is a combination of traditional hymns and contemporary music. On holidays such as Easter and Christmas the music program is enhanced.

### QUESTION 3: How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

- We use our Buildings & Grounds Commission in two ways. We are able to reduce the cost of repairs and maintenance by doing the repairs ourselves. This creates a fellowship with all the volunteers.
- We serve an off-site food kitchen that allows us to function as a group. This creates fellowship among parishioners at Christ Church.
- The Golden Rooster is a thrift shop that provides us with funds to support Christ Church. The GR shop is operated by a group of volunteers who have been working together for several decades.
- We provide space for the members of several AA groups, an important ministry in the community.
- We also provide space for two other Christian Ministries for their weekly worship.

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### **QUESTION 4: As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being?**

In our worshipping community, our congregation at Christ Church, Stratford, CT, we principally care for our spiritual needs by meeting together twice on Sunday mornings to pray together, receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and to praise and celebrate Almighty God and his son, Christ Jesus, our savior.

The emotional needs of our congregation are met with fellowship, love and support for one another, always relying on the teachings of Christ and with joy and happiness, the gift of the splendid Sacraments of Marriage and Baptism. When sadness and death occur we look for comfort and strength in the reassuring rites for the sick and the burial of the dead and the promise of eternal life.

After our spiritual and emotional needs, the physical well-being of our church community is extremely important in planning and priorities. The Episcopal Church is justly known of its celebrations of the “Pot Luck Supper” and “Coffee Hour” where members, friends, and visitors are warmly greeted, and each visitor’s physical and spiritual well-being is welcomed and nourished by fellowship and friendship.

### **QUESTION 1: Describe a moment in your worshipping community’s recent ministry that you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.**

Though the topic calls for a single moment of success and fulfillment in our worshipping community, here are actually two—one focused on the past and the second on the future. In both, we as individuals and as a corporate body seek to be a part of God’s restoration and reconciliation of the world.

On a crisp autumn Sunday in November, 2007, we celebrated the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Christ Church. On that day we “sang the praises of famous men, our ancestors. . . whose names live on generation after generation.” (Ecclesiasticus 44: 1-10, 13-14) Those “saints” from our congregation’s past mirror the course of our nation’s history. In the face of a Puritan theocracy, Anglicans elected a vestry here in 1707, thus making Christ Church Stratford the first Anglican church in the Connecticut colony. Dr. Samuel Johnson led the first church. He is considered the “father of Episcopacy” in the colony as he played a vital role in the formation of parishes along the Connecticut coastline. His son, William Samuel Johnson, was a framer and signer of the Constitution of the United States. Some fifty years later, our rector Reverend George Shepherd and church organist Asa Curtis led the Stratford Anti-Slavery Society. The Johnsons, as well as Rev. Shepherd and Asa Curtis, sought to liberate people from constraints imposed by others. Now as their spiritual descendants, we continue to seek our own way to unity with God and each other in Christ.

For much of our long history we have been a vibrant, resilient, and self-sustaining pariah. However, over the past years, our congregation has aged and diminished. With approval and encouragement from Bishop Ahrens, the vestry and parish as a whole, we are embarking on a new course that implements changes in worship, music, evangelism, and hospitality in a focused effort to restart our parish.

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On a warm September Sunday of this year (2011), we launched with great anticipation our new contemporary worship service. The service is designed to be child- and family-friendly. While not completely unfamiliar, keyboard, guitar and percussion instruments were not the norm for worship music. A somewhat revised liturgy was definitely not the usual either. As the musicians began the opening hymn, the congregation joined in. The new energy in both was palpable. It was surprisingly wonderful how the music appealed to so many generations. Smiles and praise afterward were delightful to hear. That initial start was a success on a road to fulfilling our parish mission to reach out in love and service to those in Stratford and beyond.

Restart Sunday was a fulfillment of much hard work and a hope for the future. It is the first of many steps we take into our fourth century together to be the hands and feet of God in his mission of restoration and reconciliation.

### **QUESTION 5: How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?**

Our worshipping community participates in numerous outreach projects. We have an outreach commission that aids these projects such as St. Johns (Bridgeport) Community Suppers, Spooner House Homeless Shelter, Sterling House Christmas Toy Drive, Sterling House Food Pantry, and the Toy Closet for Yale New Haven Children's Hospital. We help provide Back-to-School supplies to children who are less fortunate in the Town of Stratford. There also is the "Lord's Kitchen" sponsored by the Stratford Clergy Association, which provides free meals to any who are in need. The Outreach Commission also raises funds to provide scholarships for two students in Haiti, one to Holy Trinity Elementary School and the other to Le Bon Samaritain. They also support Smile Train and The Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child. Our worshipping community also comes together at different times when there is a special need in our community as well as special needs in time of crisis around the country and world.

### **QUESTION 8: How are you preparing yourself for the Church of the future?**

A major reason that Christ Church has been in existence for 300 years is that we have prepared for the future. While these preparations may not always have been necessary nor timely, they were what has gotten us where we are today, and for that We Thank God. We find ourselves in interesting times both for the Episcopal Church as a whole and Christ Church in particular. Since our search for a new rector has begun we have made many changes as we prepare to begin our next chapter.

This past September we have changed the 10:00 Sunday Service to a more contemporary format. The choir has expanded its repertoire and size, and the overall service has been made more family-friendly. We are trying to bring the Good News to a younger generation. If as a church we are to prepare for the future we have to continue to reach out to our young families and youth, and this change is a major step in that direction. Christ Church has also restructured the Sunday School to reflect the changes to the service. In addition, our deacon and interim pastor have taken on the important task of leading our Youth Group in the push for attracting a younger base.

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With the economic downturn, we have increased our outreach to the local community. This last year we have sponsored The Lord's Kitchen (suppers) every Wednesday, which has grown from serving five people to more than 55 at our last meal. We also continue to sponsor a meal once a month at St. John's Soup Kitchen in Bridgeport. For our older members we have to continue our outreach to the homebound. We have lay Eucharistic ministers to bring Holy Communion to shut-ins and a visitation committee. More needs to be done to improve communication with these important members of our history so they can be a real presence in our future.

Our website ([christchurchstratford.org](http://christchurchstratford.org)) has recently been updated, and we continue to use new technologies in our communications and worship.

Despite the recent economic downturn, our giving levels rose 20% in 2011. The wardens and vestry held two parish meetings to plan for the future rebuilding which in all likelihood will take from five to ten years. The consensus from the meetings was in order to assure adequate operating income in our call for a new rector, the Vestry should look into the possibility of liquidating endowed funds, property, or a combination of both. The Vestry has voted to unrestrict a portion of the endowed funds if it becomes necessary to use them in the future. Without the burden of worrying about short term expenses the focus of the new rector can be on growing the church and giving levels.

Christ Church has been actively planning for the future by making changes to our outreach, youth ministries, and Sunday worship. We are looking for a new rector who brings the enthusiasm necessary to continue the changes needed to transform and grow to bring God's mission to Stratford for our next 300 years.

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## CONNECTIONS

Your worshipping community's website: [www.christchurchstratford.org](http://www.christchurchstratford.org)

You may provide the media links to your worshipping community: none

You may provide links here to other sites where you might be found:

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Christ-Episcopal-Church-Stratford-CT/140929602639654>

Stratford Patch link: <http://stratford.patch.com/listings/christ-episcopal-church-20>

Languages significantly represented in your parish/institution (approximate # of people)

Languages: English # of people: all

Provide worship or classes in the following languages: English

## REFERENCES

Please provide contact information for the following references:

- 1. Bishop Name:** Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian T. Douglas  
**Bishop Contact Information:** 860-233-4481, X 111; [itdouglas@ctdiocese.org](mailto:itdouglas@ctdiocese.org)
- 2. Diocesan Transition Minister Name:** Rev. Harlon Dalton  
**Diocesan Transition Minister Contact Information:** 860-233-4481, X133;  
[hdalton@ctdiocese.org](mailto:hdalton@ctdiocese.org)
- 3. Current Warden/Board Chair Name:** Judy Kurmay  
**Current Warden/Board Chair Contact Information:** 203-378-8025;  
[pkurmay@att.net](mailto:pkurmay@att.net); 45 Alexandra Dr., Stratford, CT 06614
- 4. Previous Warden/Board Chair Name:** Karl Agan  
**Previous Warden/Board Chair Contact Information:** 203-375-8770;  
734A Quinnipiack Ln., Stratford, CT 06614
- 5. Search Chair Name:** Bruce Blanchard  
**Search Chair Contact Information:** 203-380-8012; [bblanchard5@optimum.net](mailto:bblanchard5@optimum.net)  
182B Apache Ln., Stratford, CT 06614
- 6. Parish/Institution Leader Name:** Rev. Mary Canavan  
**Parish/Institution Leader Ministry:** Interim Rector  
**Parish/Institution Leader Contact Information:** 203-375-4447;  
[Interimrectorcc@aol.com](mailto:Interimrectorcc@aol.com); 2000 Main Street, Stratford, CT 06615
- 7. Local Community Leader Name:** Mayor John Harkins  
**Local Community Leader Relationship to Parish/Institution:** none **Local Community Leader Contact Information:** 203-385-4001; [townofstratford.com](http://townofstratford.com);  
2725 Main Street, Stratford, CT 06615