



**Parish  
Profile**

**Christ  
Episcopal  
Church**

**Valdosta, Georgia**

**August 2013**



## Vision

To weave  
together  
diverse people,  
empowering  
all to share the  
love of Christ  
in the world

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## Welcome to Christ Church Valdosta!

God is calling a new rector for us, and we are ready to work with that individual to shine the light of Christ in our community, our state, and our world. This Parish Profile provides a framework of who we are at Christ Church, yet it represents only a snapshot. Our parish life more closely resembles a video which is always in motion.

In July 2012, our long-serving rector retired. An interim rector arrived in August 2012, and the Vestry appointed a seven-member Search Committee that began work in January 2013. The Search Committee conducted a series of parish-wide forums about our future and our needs which helped to surface several areas of concern. Small focus groups, a parish-wide survey, and other listening opportunities followed. The future growth and direction of the parish became and continues to be the subject of informal discussions among the many who are dedicated to Christ and his church. All agreed that we must attend to our most pressing issues now (as opposed to waiting for a permanent rector). So the leadership of Christ Church committed to moving forward to address those important concerns immediately.

The Vestry, interim Rector, and parishioners have all contributed new ideas and made a tangible commitment to enact needed changes while preserving the spirit that makes this church unique. Some of the changes included the formation of several new standing Vestry committees. The Stewardship Committee is preparing a campaign for the fall. The Worship Committee has experimented with different service times. The Hospitality Committee has committed to a church-wide gathering once per month and revamped Coffee Hour. The Technology Committee keeps our computer systems, wi-fi, website, and social media operational and current. The Communications Committee promotes our church online and through a series of attractive publications. As a congregation, we are working to become more systematic in greeting newcomers, sending out Eucharistic Visitors and strengthening Christian education opportunities. Another change at Christ Church has been the commissioning of lay Eucharistic Visitors to administer communion to shut-ins.

Consider shining your light at Christ Church to guide us and our missions to an exciting future!

Sincerely,

Members of the Search Committee - Michael Black; Allan Dear; Phyllis Holland, chairperson; Jeani Synyard, vestry liaison; Mike Tanner; Helen Tucker; and Nikki Yarbrough.

## What is distinctive about Christ Church?

Christ Church, Valdosta, is a parish of individuals and families holding diverse theological views who pursue multiple ministries within the church and the community. Our members consistently have held leadership roles in the community and within the Diocese of Georgia. Our parishioners serve on many diocesan committees, such as the Cursillo Commission and the Companion Diocese Commission to support the Dominican Republic. Our youth have a tradition of leadership at New Beginnings, Happening, and summer camps. The parish supports many individual and group ministries. Some of these ministries such as the local Habitat for Humanity chapter and the local food bank have been so successful that they are now self-supporting and self-operating. To build on this rich background, we seek a rector who will unite us in finding new opportunities to serve the spiritual and physical needs of others.

Christian education and formation opportunities have the support of the congregation, and our new rector is expected to oversee the broadening and deepening of educational activities. We believe all ages will be attracted by a greater variety of educational opportunities, whether those activities are on Sunday during the traditional Sunday School hour or during non-traditional times and through new delivery methods.

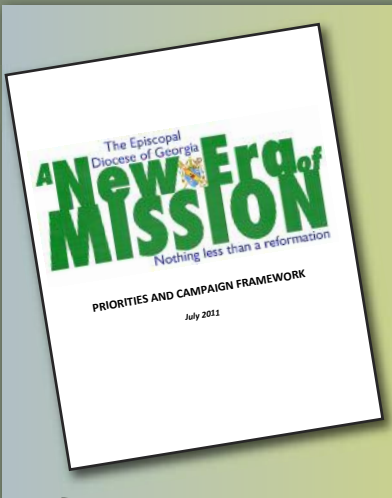
Worship is important to Christ Church. We have developed three different styles of worship including use of Rite I and Rite II. One service has no music, one has a choir and organ, and a third uses guitars and contemporary music. Our new rector should respect our styles of worship while engaging us through his or her instructional and inspirational preaching.

Personal spirituality is high in the congregation, and we are accepting of those who share other viewpoints. As individuals we pray, we study God's Word, and we seek opportunities for service. We also gather in groups to develop our spirituality. We seek a rector who will build on the foundation of individuals' spirituality and ministries and incorporate our enthusiasm into church-wide activities and worship.





The Rt. Rev. Scott Benhase



Congregational Development workshop

## The Episcopal Diocese of Georgia

The Episcopal Diocese of Georgia is one of two dioceses in the state of Georgia. Our current Bishop, The Right Reverend Scott Anson Benhase, was consecrated in January 2010 in Savannah. There are approximately 150 clergy residing in our diocese, including more than 30 non-stipendiary vocational deacons. Most of the clergy serve in parishes or missions; some serve as school, hospital, military or hospice chaplains.

Priests in the Diocese of Georgia are expected to participate in monthly convocational clericus meetings, semi-annual clergy conferences, and the annual diocesan convention. Clergy are also called to serve on various diocesan boards, committees, and commissions as part of their service to the larger church.

Currently in the early months of a \$24.5 million multi-year Campaign for Congregational Development, the Diocese of Georgia is said to be in a "New Era of Mission, nothing less than a reformation." Campaign goals include: Congregational Development, Clergy and Lay Leadership Development, and Formation of Youth and Young Adult Leadership. Each of these three-pronged goals include at least three specific goals, i.e. increasing membership in each of the 70 congregations and having half the clergy and lay leadership completed or enrolled in the Church Development Institute by 2016, just to name two of the nine. There is also a focus on making the Episcopal

Camp and Conference Center, known as Honey Creek, financially sound and even more meaningful in the life of Episcopalians all across the diocese.

A representative sampling of our diocesan ministries includes:

1. **Episcopal Youth and Children's Services** . . . providing need-based assistance for any individual under the age of 23, who is a member, or whose parents or legal guardians are members, of the Episcopal Diocese of Georgia.
2. **Kamp Phun (Peace, Hope, Unity, Now)** . . . a no-cost camp for at-risk children in grades 4-6 where the staff conducts the session with a special awareness of their emotional needs.
3. **Episcopal Church Women** . . . an organization for fellowship and service open to all women in the diocese.
4. **Cursillo** . . . a short course in Christianity, which has been recently reformatted and is a powerful instrument of renewal.
5. **Columba House** . . . an eleven-month young adult residential internship program. Once trained in the art of relational evangelism, they will spend time in places where other young adults gather, building authentic relationships and inviting them into the Episcopal Church.

Diocesan website: [gaepiscopal.org](http://gaepiscopal.org)



Summer Camp  
at Honey Creek



Summer Camp  
at Honey Creek





Preschool



Episcopal Youth Community



Shrove Tuesday  
Pancake Supper

## What do we want in a new rector?

To best serve Christ Church and the Diocese of Georgia, the new rector should

- Be spirit-filled and a seeker of God's will in order to lead us.
- Be a good preacher, able to deliver dynamic sermons that lead us to self-examination and growth.
- Be a shepherd, recognizing and embracing the need to make pastoral care a priority.
- Be a good administrator, well-organized and able to communicate effectively with the staff and parish, and an effective planner—and one who follows through with plans—for worship, for seasonal activities, for education and for the financial welfare of the church.
- Be an advocate for and involved with youth and young adults.
- Be warm and outgoing to personally engage people in the congregation, to lead in building community in the church, and to involve people in ministry according to their gifts.
- Possess a strong intelligence and exhibit a good sense of humor.



## Position Description

- Plans the worship services of the church working with the assistant rector, deacons, lay ministers, and musicians.
- Oversees the development of Christian education opportunities for all ages and stages.
- Presides at Vestry meetings, working in conjunction with the Senior and Junior Wardens to manage the affairs of the parish and maintain the physical facilities and grounds.
- Plans for pastoral care of communicants, assuring that they have access to clergy support at all times.
- Works with the Senior Warden and Treasurer to ensure responsible financial management of the church and that the church's resources are allocated effectively and in keeping with the priorities of the parish.
- Represents the Church in the community and in the Diocese by accepting leadership positions as appropriate.
- Supports individuals as they seek to develop spiritually, discern their ministries, and equip themselves for service.



Youth Sunday



Epiphany Pageant



Vacation  
Bible School



Knitting class in the Dominican Republic



Construction in the Dominican Republic



Stitchers of Love



Our mission team in the Dominican Republic in June 2013



The Rev. Tar Drazdowski, second from right, at the Encounter in Mission celebration in the Dominican Republic in April 2013



Stitchers of Love at a blessing of Special Olympic scarves

## Ministries

As an introduction to the Christ Church family, our ministries define who we are. Please follow the link (<http://bit.ly/18uQLe6>) to the publication, "The ABC's of Christ Episcopal Church Valdosta" to see the breadth and depth of our commitment.

### Dominican Republic Mission Trip

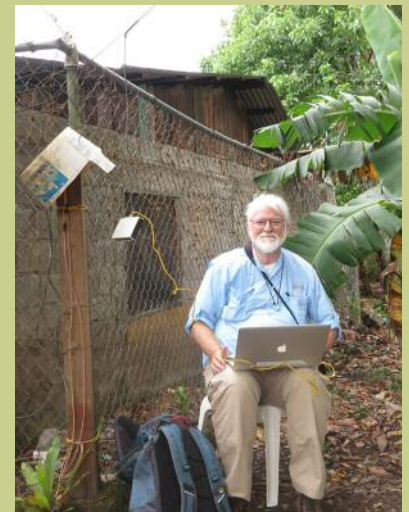
This year (June 15-22, 2013) marked the 12th year Christ Church led a mission trip to share our love, assistance and talents with our sister church in Christ at Campamento Monte de la Transfiguración in El Pedregal in the Dominican Republic. Seventeen people from nine different Episcopal and Roman Catholic congregations in Georgia and Alabama came together to form this year's team. Many of our Christ Church members share a love for these wonderful people, and have formed lasting friendships over the years. The Rev. Tar Drazdowski, assistant rector of Christ Church, chair of the Companion Diocese Commission of the Diocese of Georgia, and member of the Board of Directors of the Dominican Development Group, leads the teams.

### Stitchers of Love

Christ Church has a loving and caring group of people who come together in sharing ideas and talents by providing prayer shawls, blankets for newborns, lap blankets for cancer patients, knitted dolls, scarves for Special Olympics events and various other projects in the church and for other community organizations. In March 2013, the group contributed an overflowing basket full of hand-knitted bunnies and blankets to comfort the children at our local Children's Advocacy Center, which provides a child-friendly, safe environment for victims of abuse while cases are under investigation.



DR construction project homeowners with mission team leader



Communication from the Dominican Republic



Knitting class in the DR

### St. Francis Ministry to Animals

Many parishioners in the congregation have a love for animals. St Francis Ministry supports the rescue and veterinary treatment for abandoned animals by conducting a 5K fun run; ongoing note card sales featuring original art of cats, dogs, and playful mice created by parishioner Carmen Boatwright; and an annual Super Bowl Grill Fest, selling grilled chicken, pork tenderloin, or ribs. All proceeds from these sales help pay for the treatment of abused animals.

### Men in Blue

Christ Church members have a love for fun, fellowship and food. When the Men in Blue, who usually wear blue t-shirts and aprons, cook for the parish, there is always a huge crowd. There is a special bond among the men and women who enjoy great fellowship while cooking for the parish family. Women often provide the side dishes and desserts. The fare may be a fish fry, BBQ, or sausage for Oktoberfest. Our Men in Blue are always ready to serve.

### Episcopal Youth Community (EYC)

Asked to describe our youth, most parishioners respond, "fantastic and awesome." The wonderful group of young members give of their time and talents to share with one another and with our church family through Youth Sunday, work days, working with Vacation Bible School or whenever they are called upon to serve. Our youth have a real commitment to leadership roles in the Diocese





of Georgia through the Youth Commission, Happening, New Beginnings and Honey Creek camps.

### **Parents' Morning Out and Preschool**

Christ Church offers a parents' morning out program which provides temporary daycare for children while parents run errands from 8 a.m. - 12 noon, Monday through Friday. Our church is well known in the community for its excellent educational Preschool program which serves children from 2½ through 4 years old. The completion of our William M. Gabard Education Building in 2012 has been a tremendous asset to our youth as well as for future congregational growth.

### **Cooperative Community Ministries**

The latest endeavor in outreach ministry by our church is working with other community leaders to develop a local thrift store which opened June 14, 2013. The Community Depot is a non-profit retail center that accepts donated items and sells them in the store to benefit community organizations. The center has been named in honor of Joan Bailey, an active member of our church and former First Lady of Valdosta State University. The Helping Hands ministries, led by our deacons, assists with various needs in the community such as Adopt-a-Haven Family, Partnership for Health Clinic, and Pop Tabs for Ronald McDonald House. Our goal is to help these community agencies for the good of all in this struggling economy.

### **Annual Birdwatching at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge**

Fellowship is very important to our church members. Each year for the past twenty-eight years, a group of



Annual birdwatching trip



Christ Church website



Christ Church Facebook

parishioners and friends sets out early on January 1, rain or shine, for the annual bird watching and picnic at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in St. Marks, Florida. It's a great way to start the New Year with family and friends and all lovers of nature. Many also return in October for the Monarch butterfly migration.

### Campus and Young Adult Ministries

Brenda Keller is the Diocesan Campus Ministry Coordinator for VSU and uses Louttit Hall as the base for campus ministry. She is assisted as needed by the parish in her work with VSU students. Café Grace is a group of young adults in their 20s and early 30s who meet weekly in Louttit Hall to share thoughts, find God in everyday life and discuss theology.

### Social Media

Christ Church maintains an active website along with an online newsletter, a Facebook page, Twitter account, and an online set of photograph albums. The church's main Facebook page is supplemented by separate Facebook pages for the Senior EYC and Canterbury Club groups. The church office uses the Constant Contact program to facilitate email messages and a weekly bulletin to parishioners and friends. These social media links are:

Website: <http://www.christchurchvaldosta.org>

Newsletter: <http://christchurchvaldosta.wordpress.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ChristEpiscopalChurchValdostaGA>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/christchurchvga>

Online photograph albums:  
<https://picasaweb.google.com/christchurchvaldosta>



Annual butterfly trip



Relay For Life



Softball



Easter egg hunt



Preschool



Christmas children's service



Shantz organ console

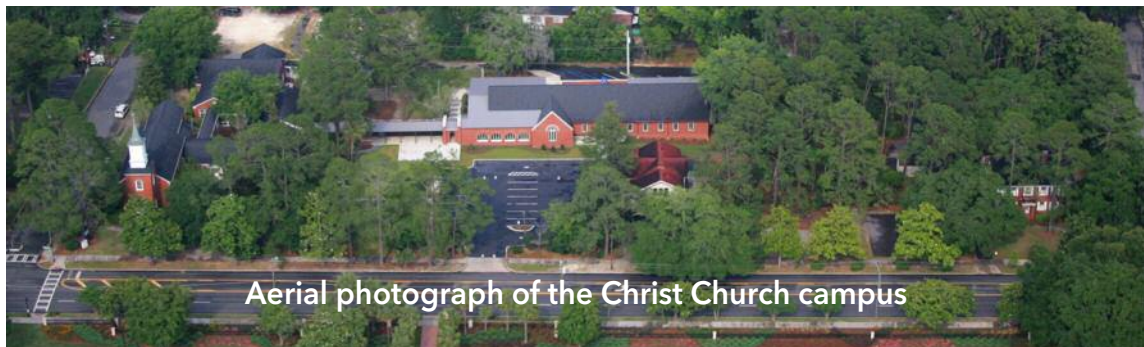
## The facilities of Christ Episcopal Church

The Christ Episcopal Church boundaries encompass approximately five acres. Located in Valdosta, Georgia, directly across the street from Valdosta State University, the church has 650 feet facing North Patterson Street. On this street are many examples of old southern architecture and style. Magnificent magnolias, giant longleaf pines and subtle white dogwood trees surround the church's six main buildings. Between 1983 and the present, the church leadership had a vision for the future and aggressively purchased the properties surrounding the sanctuary and offices. The appearance of the church campus has a simple grace that houses the people of God.



### The Sanctuary - a Bruton Parish Design

The main worship building is a design copy of Bruton Parish in Williamsburg, Virginia. The cathedral windows and brick construction adjoin the front bell tower, a landmark architectural characteristic of Bruton Parish churches. Inside are the traditional wood church pews with a center aisle leading to the raised altar and a pipe organ. The altar flooring is covered in blue carpet. Brass candelabra chandeliers light up the 20-foot tall ceiling. Overall seating for about 200 includes 4,000 square feet within the L-shaped nave area. The 1974 pipe organ, purchased from All Saints Episcopal Church in Atlanta and dedicated in 2004, is in excellent condition. It has 47 ranks, was manufactured by The Shantz Organ Company and installed by Robert I. Coulter - Organbuilders of Atlanta, Georgia.





### **The Parish Hall and Kitchen**

Separated from the sanctuary by accordion doors, the Parish Hall is the center of social life for the church. A multi-purpose room with 3,400 square feet that can be used for one to three separate meeting rooms or one large sit-down dinner for approximately 100 guests, it is often used for wedding receptions, Bible study classes, committee meetings and church socials, all having ready access to a moderate-sized kitchen and walk-in pantry. The hall is connected to the Gabard Education Building by a covered walkway.

### **The Administration Building**

The administrative offices are connected to the sanctuary by a covered walkway and small porch. This 3,180 square-foot building houses the parish administrator and bookkeeper, priests' offices, acolyte vesting room, a small conference room for up to 14 people, restrooms and two choir rooms. The choir room closest to the main church contains a piano, a 144 square-foot dressing room and music room for 20 members. There are four large offices for staff and clergy. Two contain private baths and closets. The church administrator has a reception area, office machines, computer, and copy equipment.

### **The Rectory**

One of the finest examples of colonial revival architecture on North Patterson Street, the Christ Church Rectory is known as the Carroll House, named for the late Jamie and Frances Carroll, lay leaders and benefactors of Christ Church. Set on a corner lot overlooking the main entrance to Valdosta State University, the rectory is two buildings away from the city of Valdosta's premier park and one block from the most complete library in South Georgia, the Odum Library at VSU. The rectory is 3,200 square feet of red brick, solid construction. The home even has a basement for all the mechanical equipment. The hardwood floors are original and in pristine condition. The floor plan has nine-foot ceilings, four bedrooms and two and one-half



baths. The recently renovated kitchen features granite countertops, new appliances and an island with additional countertop space. The home also has a large screened-in porch. The side yard is the Sarah Oliver Garden. The backyard is landscaped for privacy and includes a labyrinth formed with bricks, the Eagle Scout project of a church member.

### **The Sarah Oliver Garden**

The rectory and garden were originally named for our lifetime member Sarah Oliver. The Sarah Oliver Garden is full of classic and hybrid camellias, azaleas, pine trees, and dogwoods. The Valdosta Camellia Society recently rejuvenated the garden, adding seating areas and walkways.

### **The Norma Tomberlin House**

This building is named for the teacher who led our very successful preschool program for 29 years, Norma Tomberlin. Currently under renovation for its next ministry, this craftsman-style bungalow was home to our preschool program for over 20 years. The original building still has 2562 square feet with three baths and four bedrooms, a meeting room and small kitchen. The preschool program moved to the new Gabard Education Building in the fall of 2012. A vestry committee has researched the current highest priorities and best usage for this building and determined that for the time being, it can be used for student rental housing purposes.



### **Louttit Hall**

Named for the Right Reverend Henry I. Louttit, retired Bishop of Georgia, who was the rector at Christ Church for 23 years, this two-story country-style home with 2,800 square feet of interior space serves the college ministry of Christ

Church and our young adult ministry, Café Grace. The building has a typical family home floor plan that lends itself to small meetings and has a working kitchen.

### **The Gabard Education Building**

The building is named for the late Dr. William Montgomery Gabard, former member of the faculty at Valdosta State University where he served as professor, department head of History and founding director of International Studies. He and his wife Lougenia Gillis

Gabard have been faithful leaders of Christ Church for many years. His dedication to children and education led the Vestry to name our new 9,500 square-foot education building to honor him. It is the home of our church preschool with five age-specific classrooms and special children's bathrooms. The entire building is equipped with wi-fi. The multi-purpose room is suited for all ages and equipped with a large motorized video screen and a mobile projector. The building also includes a small kitchen, a nursery, infant rooms and four adult bathrooms, two with walk-in showers. The Senior EYC group has a large room with a kitchen, ping-pong table and television. New outdoor playground equipment has been added to complete the children's learning center. The cloister is lined with cathedral windows and floored with limestone tile that leads to a vestibule where small groups can meet in front of the huge picture window. The building is equipped to shelter hurricane evacuees and is also used by college students who come to Valdosta during Spring break to work for Habitat for Humanity.

### **Other Areas**

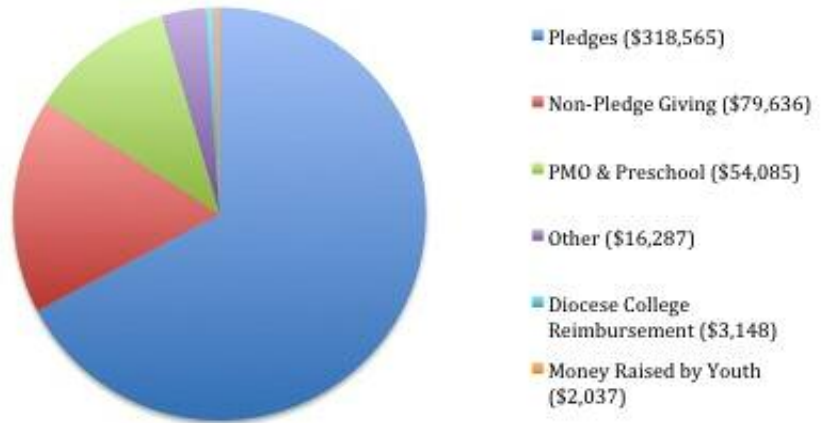
The church grounds are dotted with small memorial plaques and trees dedicated to loved ones from the past. There is a burial garden that is consecrated and dedicated to former members by their families and friends. A memorial plaque is mounted on the south wall of the sanctuary, and the area also includes a fountain.



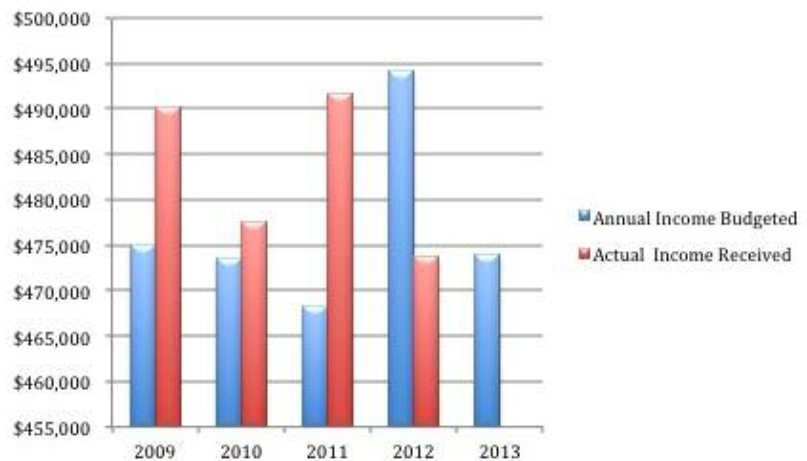
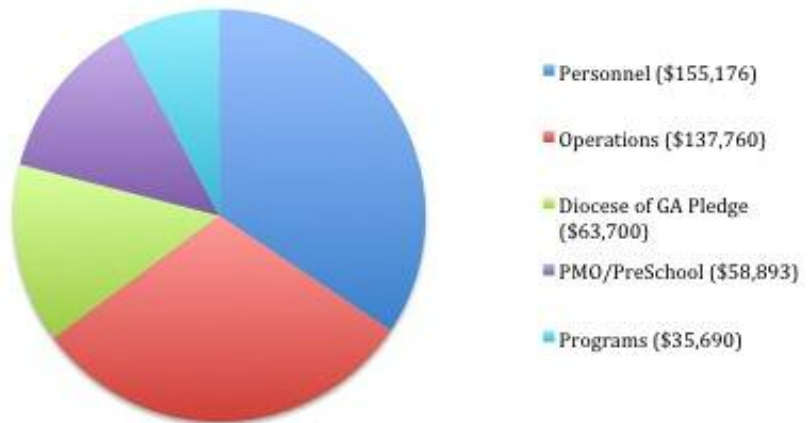


## Financial Status

### 2012 Income Sources (\$473,758)



### 2012 Total Expenses (\$451,219)



## Financial Status

The parishioners of Christ Church currently number 534 members among 190 households. This number has been relatively stable over the past few years, with a slight increase noted. The average household income among parishioners is \$107,239. In 2013 we have 103 pledging units. There has been a gradual decline in the number of pledges over the past 5 years from 123 pledges in 2009 to our current 103. Despite the drop in the number of pledges, the actual pledged amount has only decreased \$15,344 since 2009.

We recently improved our grounds with the addition of the Gabard Education Building. A capital campaign raised over a million dollars for the construction of this much needed facility. To help fund this building, Christ Church has a local bank loan totaling \$750,250.

The six-member Stewardship Committee will conduct the annual pledge drive beginning in September 2013 with a goal of meeting the needs of the proposed 2014 annual budget. The committee seeks to increase pledges to support competitive salaries for our new rector, full-time assistant rector, and full-time youth director for Christian education. In addition the budget should fund the top three priorities as described by the results of the parish survey: attract families with young children; reach and incorporate new people; and develop more opportunities for Christian education and formation.



# Parochial Report Statistics

## Average Sunday Attendance

2007 -	211
2008 -	204
2009 -	206
2010 -	207
2011 -	224
2012 -	192

## Households

190

## Revenue

2007 -	\$450,478
2008 -	\$520,596
2009 -	\$485,015
2010 -	\$465,740
2011 -	\$475,968
2012 -	\$462,093

Not including  
capital projects

Link to the  
Parochial Reports  
<http://bit.ly/13ke10e>

## Pledges

2010 -	119
2011 -	119
2012 -	108

## Communicants in Good Standing

2007 -	545
2008 -	525
2009 -	527
2010 -	538
2011 -	538
2012 -	534



# Survey Results - April 2013, from 90% of parish families

## Education

- 79% - college graduates
- 47% - graduate degrees

## Length of Membership of people who took the survey

- 2% - less than 1 year
- 5% - 1-2 years
- 6% - 3-4 years
- 14% - 5-10 years
- 10% - 11-15 years
- 13% - 16-20 years
- 50% - 20+ years

## Membership Age Demographics who took the survey

- 1% - Below 19
- 1% - 19-24
- 3% - 25-34
- 9% - 35-44
- 24% - 45-54
- 19% - 55-64
- 44% - 65 & older

Link to the  
Parish Survey  
<http://bit.ly/14LbKcN>

## Future Planned Giving

93.9% of survey respondents reported plans to give the same or higher next year. We are in the 84th percentile for planned giving of churches with similar profiles.

## Race & Gender

- 97% - white
- 61% - female



Parish Picnic in November 2011



Azaleas in bloom



The Crescent,  
an historical landmark

## Community: Valdosta and Lowndes County

Valdosta is the county seat of Lowndes County and is the 14th largest city in Georgia. It is situated in south Georgia, along Interstate 75, the major north-south artery between Atlanta and Tampa, Florida. The Valdosta Metropolitan Statistical Area includes a population of 139,588. Valdosta is called the Azalea City because the plant grows in profusion here; the city hosts an annual Azalea Festival in March. Valdosta has one of the highest retail pull factors in the state, attracting consumers from 15 -17 counties in South Georgia and North Florida. The Valdosta Regional Airport provides three Delta flights daily to Atlanta.

### Demographics

The U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 population estimate reported that 111,885 people reside in Lowndes County; 54,518 of whom reside within the Valdosta city limits. Total households were 38,358; family households of married couples numbered 25,490. Lowndes County is the 21st highest populated county in Georgia (of 159). By race, Lowndes County's residents are 59.2% white, 36.6% black, and 4.2% other. In addition to education, health care, and service jobs, agriculture and forestry continue to be large industries for our area, with 470 active farms in the county. Median household income (2010) was \$36,486.



## Education

Valdosta is the home of Valdosta State University, a regional comprehensive university in the University System of Georgia with over 12,500 students. For the academic year 2010-2011, VSU generated 5,055 jobs (direct and indirect), creating an annual labor income impact of \$208.7 million for the Valdosta Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Wiregrass Technical College is located a mile outside the city limits off Interstate 75 and a campus for Georgia Military College is within the city limits.

The Lowndes County School District supports seven elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school. The Valdosta City School District supports five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. The annual football matchup between the two public high schools, Lowndes and Valdosta High, is known as the Winnersville Classic.

Valwood School is an independent college preparatory school enrolling students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. Several Christian schools offering classes in grades kindergarten through 12 also operate in and near Valdosta, including Crossroads Baptist School, Georgia Christian School, Lighthouse Christian School, Open Bible Christian School, Highland Christian School, St. John Catholic School, and Victory Christian School.



Valdosta State University



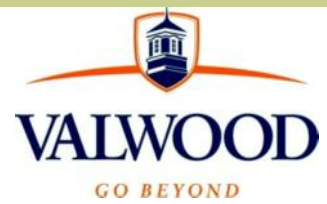
Wiregrass Technical College



Lowndes County Schools



Valdosta City Schools



Valwood School



South Georgia  
Medical Center



Valdosta City Park



Moody Air Force Base

### Moody Air Force Base

Moody Air Force Base is a United States Air Force installation located about nine miles northeast of Valdosta. The units stationed there execute worldwide close air support, force protection, and combat search and rescue missions in support of combat operations, national security, and humanitarian interests. The best-known units at Moody AFB are the 23rd Fighter Group (“Flying Tigers”) and the 347th Rescue Group (the “pararescuemen.”) Approximately 6,000 military and civilian personnel are stationed there, generating a \$447.6 million economic impact in the area in FY 2010. Established in 1941, Moody AFB has seen several changes in mission focus over the years, but remains a steady economic presence in our area.

### South Georgia Medical Center

South Georgia Medical Center is a not-for-profit, regional referral hospital dedicated to being the leader in improving the health, wellness and quality of life in the communities it serves. Located in Valdosta, Georgia, SGMC serves a multi-county area in South Georgia and North Florida. As an acute care hospital, SGMC provides area residents with broad services through a growing medical staff of more than 200 physicians and 3000 staff members.

In 2009, South Georgia Medical Center in Valdosta generated approximately \$601.0 million in revenue for the local economy according to a report by the Georgia Hospital Association, the state's largest hospital trade association. The report also found that during the same

time period SGMC provided approximately \$26.8 million in uncompensated care while sustaining more than 4,191 full-time jobs throughout Valdosta and the rest of the state.

### Arts and Culture

Valdosta has 27 public parks. Wild Adventures, a major commercial amusement park, is located south of the city. The Grand Bay Wetland Education Center offers an interpretive experience of the Grand Bay Wildlife Management Area, which includes the 18,000-acre Grand Bay/Banks Lake ecosystem, the second largest ecosystem in the state (after the Okefenokee Swamp). Restored historic buildings include the Barber-Pittman House, which houses the headquarters of the Chamber of Commerce; the former Carnegie library, which houses the Lowndes County Historical Society and Museum; the Converse-Dalton-Ferrell House; and the Crescent, a neoclassical structure owned by the Garden Clubs. Valdosta has four National Register Historic Districts: Fairview, Valdosta Commercial Historic District, North Patterson Street, and Brookwood North.

The Lowndes/Valdosta Arts Commission operates the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, presents exhibits in its galleries, and offers performing arts programs. Valdosta State University maintains a fine arts gallery open to the public with frequent exhibits. ArtSouth, Valdosta State University's arts outreach program, serves 46 counties in South Georgia and North Florida. The Valdosta Symphony Orchestra offers six concerts yearly, while the Valdosta State University



Peach State  
Summer Theatre



Valdosta Symphony Orchestra



Grand Bay  
Wetland Education Center



Turner Center for the Arts



Theme park



Lowndes County  
Historic Courthouse

Theatre and Dance program stages a wide range of productions between September and May. The Peach State Summer Theatre, sponsored by VSU, offers three musicals in rotating repertory in the months of June and July. A local amateur theatre, Theatre Guild Valdosta, performs plays throughout the year in the 'Dosta Playhouse, a former movie theater that opened downtown in 1941.

#### Sources

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lowndes\\_County,\\_Georgia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lowndes_County,_Georgia)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valdosta,\\_Georgia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valdosta,_Georgia)

<http://www.moody.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.aspx?id=19152>

[https://www.sgmc.org/about\\_sgmc.aspx](https://www.sgmc.org/about_sgmc.aspx)

<http://www.valdosta.edu/about/points-of-pride/points/economic-impact.php>

<http://www.valdostacity.com/Index.aspx?page=40>

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2212&hl=y>

<http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu/counties/185.pdf>

## Christ Church: an incubator for clergy

In 2011-12 our Vineyard newsletter featured a series of articles on priests who grew up at Christ Episcopal Church: the Rev. Leslie Hiers Chadwick, the Rev. Susan Louttit Hardaway, the Rev. Kevin Kelly, the Rev. Lonnie Lacy and the Rev. Reggie Payne-Wiens. There were others who went to college at Valdosta State University, attended Christ Church during their stay, then went to seminary: the Rev. Sonia Sullivan Clifton, the Rev. Charles Davis, the Rev. Tar Drazdowski, and the Rev. Jim Hines. Four members with secular careers who attended Christ Church have decided to become deacons: Deacon Stella Clark, Deacon Patricia Marks, Deacon Karyl Miller and Deacon Nancy Sartin. Two other adults with secular careers who attended our church have become priests in the last five years: the Rev. Jim Elliott and the Rev. Walter Hobgood. That's a total of fifteen since 1990.

Asked what makes Christ Church special, the Rev. Sonia Clifton said: "...genuine love and care for the other. Teens and young adults are regarded as real members of the church. They are challenged to think on their own and to discover and use their gifts."

The Rev. Charles Davis said, "Christ Church is special because you see the Christ in others more than they can ever see in themselves. It was the gift you gave me."



The Rev. Leslie Hiers Chadwick



The Vineyard, April 2012



The Rev. Sonia Sullivan Clifton



A baptism



Preschool



Musicians



Juggler at youth event

## Staffing

The Rev. Joye Cantrell is serving as our full-time interim rector. The Rev. Tar Drazdowski is our assistant rector in a three-quarters-time position. The Rev. Deacon Stella Clark and the Rev. Deacon Patricia Marks volunteer their time and ministry.

The Diocese of Georgia employs Brenda Keller as Campus Ministry Coordinator to work with the Valdosta State University community. She has an office in Christ Church's Louttit Hall.

Kim Dudley, the parish administrator, oversees the daily functions of the church office. Her duties range from answering phone calls and emails to keeping the official church records, and scheduling acolytes, lay readers and chalice administrators. This is a two-thirds-time position.

Amy Creasy, the bookkeeper, manages the daily financial responsibilities of the church. Her duties include accounts payable, recording tithes and other monetary gifts to the church as well as preparing payroll for the staff. This is a half-time position.

The Christ Church Preschool is staffed by three teachers and three teaching assistants. Our Parents' Morning Out (PMO) program employs one teacher and one assistant.

In addition, we employ a music director and a nursery attendant. We contract with external companies for building maintenance, computer maintenance, and landscaping services.

## The 2013 Vestry



Front row from left: Carolyn Eager, Jeani Synyard, Frances Guice, Sandy Sandbach, Lucy Tomberlin, Larry Wisenbaker, Phyllis Hiers, and Stefani Carroll.  
 Back row from left: Robin Coleman, Nancy Lutsko, Steve Roberts, Jeff Hanson, Karen Gunter, and Sparky Greneker.  
 Not pictured: Clinton Beeland, Bonnie Hanson, and Will Hanson.

## The 2013 Vestry

- Clinton Beeland (2013)
- Stefani Carroll (2013)
- Robin Coleman (2014)
- Sparky Greneker (2013)
- Frances Guice (2015)
- Karen Gunter (2015)
- Jeff Hanson (2014)
- Will Hanson (2015)
- Phyllis Hiers (2014)
- Nancy Lutsko (2015)
- Steve Roberts (2013)  
Junior Warden
- Sandy Sandbach (2014)  
Senior Warden
- Jeani Synyard (2014)
- Lucy Tomberlin (2013)  
Secretary
- Larry Wisenbaker (2015)

Ex-officio: Carolyn Eager, Treasurer  
 Bonnie Hanson, Assistant Treasurer

Three-year term expires December  
 of year in parentheses

## The Search Committee



From left, Michael Black, Allan Dear, Jeani Synyard, Nikki Yarbrough, Helen Tucker, Mike Tanner, and Phyllis Holland

## The Search Committee

- Michael Black
- Allan Dear
- Phyllis Holland  
Chairperson
- Jeani Synyard  
Vestry Liaison
- Mike Tanner
- Helen Tucker
- Nikki Yarbrough

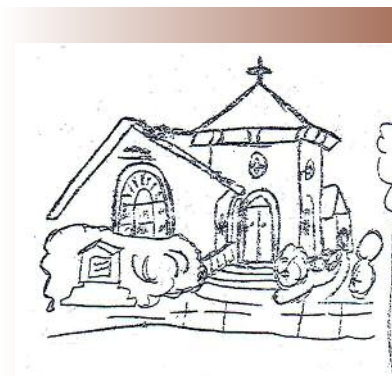
## A short history of Christ Episcopal Church, Valdosta

Episcopalians lived in Valdosta from the 1860's on, worshiping in private homes or the Lowndes County courthouse before construction of Christ Church at 309 East Central Avenue in 1885. The cornerstone was laid in November 1885, and Bishop Edwin Gardner Weed of the Diocese of Florida consecrated the building in 1887. Until deconsecration on December 7, 1947, the original Christ Church was home to local Episcopalians. From 1885 to May 11, 1954, it also was a mission church dependent upon the Diocese of Georgia for financial support.

Among significant developments at old Christ Church was the Rev. Gilbert A. Ottman's founding the first Vestry in 1900, with J.L. Staton as Senior Warden and Charles Thompson as Junior Warden. The choir originated in 1901, and at the same time, Charles Thompson, the organist for fifty years, sold the old reed organ and purchased a new one. In 1910, Christ Church built the first vicarage, often called the "Rectory," at 115 West North Street. The "Rectory" housed the Church's priests until the Vestry obtained 2200 Glyndale Drive from Dr. S.H. Story in December 1963. The Glyndale Rectory served through 1994, when the Rev. Henry I. Louttit, Jr. moved to Savannah to become Bishop of Georgia.

Communicants made many improvements to the old church building, including enlarging the structure twice, in 1912 and 1940. Other changes included installing electric lights in 1901, putting in another new organ in 1911 that lasted until 1940, and placing gas heaters in the church in 1935. A reredos went up behind the altar in 1938, and new electric lights replaced the old ones at that time. Vestry bought carpet for the floors in 1940 and acquired another organ that later went into the new church during its 1948-1949 construction.

Between 1885 and 1917, Christ Church had nineteen short-term vicars. The Rev. Joseph J. Cornish arrived as Vicar in March 1917 and remained fifteen years until retiring in



Central Avenue location



1932. Since the start of Fr. Cornish's tenure, Christ Church has had only nine full-time ministers. The first home-grown priest was the Rev. Clifton Huntington White, a professor at Georgia State Womans College. The nature of his clerical training is now unknown, but Vestry recommended him for ordination as transitional deacon on March 4, 1945, and he was ordained on April 29, 1945. Ordained priest on March 16, 1946, he succeeded the Rev. Thomas G. Mundy as Vicar on June 26, 1946. The last Vicar and first Rector was the Rev. Michael Joseph Kippenbrock, who was at Christ Church from May 1, 1953, until September 30, 1963. The Rev. Henry I. Louttit, Jr. had the longest tenure, from April 1, 1967, to December 31, 1994, when he became the Ninth Bishop of Georgia.

Christ Church was land-locked on East Central Avenue, and during World War II, Vestry tried to prepare for post-war expansion by acquiring an adjacent lot and agreeing to pay the landowner's asking price. The transaction apparently failed, so, after the war, Vestry decided to find "a new site for the Church itself. . . ." The outcome was the purchase from the J.F. Holmes family of a North Patterson Street lot directly across from Georgia State Womans College. Vestry soon sold the old church to Christian Scientists



Patterson Street location

for \$12,500. John Courtenay LeBay, eminent Savannah architect, planned the new structure, incorporating elements of Bruton Parish Church below the tower and basing the tower on a seventeenth century design by Sir Christopher Wren. Tinker Concrete Company of Macon, did the construction work and finished in time for the first service to be held on February 20, 1949.

To complete the project, Vestry borrowed \$15,000 from a Mrs. Simpson to pay for the Parish Hall, also erected by Tinker Concrete. The structure was smaller than presently and did not have the area now containing the kitchen, serving area, and first row of tables. In 1953-1954 Vestry borrowed \$9,000.00 from the American Church Building Fund Commission to construct a "Sunday School Annex" attached to the rear of the Parish Hall. Completed in 1954 and named Barnwell Hall by Vestry in December 1960, the Annex contained six rooms for Sunday School classes until major renovations in 1980-1981. The "new kitchen" then replaced Barnwell Hall and still serves.



The Rev. Michael J. Kippenbrock became Vicar on May 1, 1953, and led Christ Church through the Barnwell Hall project and through the process of reaching parish status in 1954. The request to become a parish was to be considered by the Diocesan Convention in May 1954 and, expecting its approval, Vestry voted to call Fr.

Kippenbrock as the first Rector. He accepted by letter on May 15, and confirmed that Convention had consented to parish status on May 11, 1954. Later, again needing Sunday School space, Vestry purchased 103 East College Street in December 1958. Named Stuart Hall by Vestry in December 1960, the building accommodated both a kindergarten and Sunday School rooms. In 1968, early in the term of the Rev. Henry I. Louttit, Jr., Stuart Hall underwent an extensive revamp, costing \$56,000, to create office space, new classrooms, and a cloister walk to connect the building to the Church. The last major development of Fr. Kippenbrock's tenure was renovation of the church itself in 1963 that gave the building the appearance that endured until the major alterations of 1980-1981. Soon after, Kippenbrock resigned and became Vicar of All Saints Church, Enterprise, Florida.

After a long search, the Rev. Brevard Williams became Rector on August 1, 1964, but remained only until September 1, 1966. Henry Louttit, formerly Vicar of Trinity Church, Statesboro, Georgia, began his long stint at Christ Church on April 1, 1967. Louttit was deeply interested in "liturgical renewal" and was associated with the creation of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. Christ Church, during the 1970's, participated widely in using the trial services that preceded introduction of the new prayer book. He was involved in the arrival of Cursillo in the Diocese of Georgia. In addition, Fr. Louttit saw considerable potential for a new Episcopal church to be established on the north side of Valdosta. To that end, he played a major role in founding St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in 1982, and many of its original members were previously communicants of Christ Church. Fr. Louttit was also instrumental in the move of an Assembly of God congregation in Valdosta, now Christ the King, to the Episcopal Church in 1989. After the closing of the original Christ Church Preschool program, he re-established the Preschool in 1983 and placed it in the Irene Miller House, bought in 1979 along with the Thomas Bray House (to add Sunday School rooms) and other space on North Patterson

for parking. In 1976, Christ Church had also acquired property on East College Street east of Stuart Hall. A major event was the 1980-1981 reconstruction that notably altered the appearance of the Church itself, opened new seating space on the south side of the Church, built a new kitchen in what had been Carswell Hall, and made various improvements to the Parish



The Rt. Rev. Henry Louttit

Hall. Also, the Sarah Oliver house on North Patterson Street became Christ Church's property, and while initially used as office space, it is now the Rectory.

Following Fr. Louttit's election as Bishop of Georgia and his consecration on January 21, 1995, a search for a new Rector brought the Rev. David Francoeur to Christ Church, but he stayed with us only a short time. The Rev. William Harris from



The Rev. Peter Ingeman

Tallahassee served as Interim Rector, and a new search re-introduced the Rev. Peter Lyle Ingeman to Christ Church as Rector on June 1, 2000.

Fr. Ingeman already was known here, having served as Assistant Rector in 1987-1989. He also had been ordained priest at Christ Church on June 6, 1987, by the Right Reverend Harry W. Shipps, Eighth Bishop of Georgia. During Fr. Ingeman's twelve years and two months as Rector, Christ Church acquired the house on North Patterson Street that is now Louttit Hall. An important administrative reform was the introduction of a new bookkeeping system and a new bookkeeper and the establishment of strong financial controls and safeguards. Fortuitously, an opportunity arose to purchase a great organ from All Saints Church, Atlanta, at a bargain price. This acquisition also required physical expansion of the Church eastward to make room for the pipes, which was done.

Significantly, a Vestry retreat on March 17, 2007, established a Facilities Planning Committee that worked for five years on expansion of the physical plant, which resulted in construction of the William M. Gabard Education Building. This magnificent structure was dedicated on the last Sunday in July 2012, Fr. Ingeman's final Sunday, providing a glorious climax to Fr. Ingeman's productive dozen years as Rector.



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