

PARISH PROFILE

ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH ALBANY, NEW YORK

WINTER 2023

Weaving Together...

Mission Statement

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church is an inclusive community affirming God's Grace, open and growing in heart, mind, and spirit, called to love and serve all in Jesus' name.

Statement of Affirmation

We, the people of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, believe God's love and embrace are unconditional and that all people are worthy of respect and honor. All are created in the image of God, and we strive to welcome and include all religious seekers without regard to age, culture, difference in ability, economic circumstances, ethnic background, family configuration, gender, gender identity and expression, nationality, political philosophy, race, or sexual orientation. Christ calls us to be in unity with God and one another.

St. Andrew's – A Congregation Weaving Together

For the past 125 years, St. Andrew's has been weaving together a spiritual tapestry made of individuals at different stages in our lives and faith journeys but united in the belief that God's love is for all. As an inclusive, progressive congregation in a famously conservative diocese, we attract parishioners from a large area in search of a spiritual home that reflects their values. Some are firm in their faith and others still questioning. Some engage in many ministries while others find comfort in the music and liturgy. Some are "cradle Episcopalians," and many have come from other denominations. Grounded in the joy of worship, the warmth of fellowship, a strong pastoral support system, and an active outreach program, we continue to weave together a community that is compassionate, healing, accepting, and open to God's grace.



Weaving Together, we are...

...a beloved community that connects the parish to the neighborhood, the nation, and the wider world through our outreach ministries.



Being God's hands in the world is a core aspect of St. Andrew's identity. We have several longstanding outreach ministries, while others evolve in response to parish and community needs. Since 1979 we have operated The Shop, a thrift store that is open twice a week. The Shop is a popular spot in the neighborhood and a favorite of volunteers. Besides being a source of affordable household goods and clothing for college students, immigrants, and longtime neighbors, The Shop generates funds to support the parish and our outreach projects.

Each year St. Andrew's gives out thousands of dollars in grant money to organizations that support our endeavors to grow "The Beloved Community." Outreach monies have gone to support ministry to domestic violence victims, youth film projects, school music programs, support for women transitioning from prison, the Damien Center for people with HIV/AIDS, and Episcopal Relief and Development.



Our parish partners with The Capital Area Council of Churches, where we support the Overflow Homeless Shelter and the annual Crop Walk for hunger. St. Andrew's is an associate member of the Focus Food pantry board dealing with food insecurities in the Albany area. We host a free *Love Thy Neighborhood* Dinner once a month for the community, which is essentially a party for our neighbors. We have an Alzheimer's Care Team that works to give respite to caregivers.

For several years we ran a monthly Laundry Ministry where once or twice a month, St. Andrew's volunteers would provide detergent and quarters at a local laundromat and fellowship with the patrons. For twelve years during the AIDS epidemic, The AIDS Council used our kitchen facilities to serve a weekly dinner.



We reach out to students at UAlbany by supporting their Cornerstone Campus Ministry. We provide dinners a few times a year, lead worship, and help support their mission trips.



Looking outside our borders, we partner with St. Paul's Church in Albany. Together we support Christ the King School, church, and clinic in La Hoye, Haiti. We also partner with St. Paul's in supporting a Daughters of the King chapter.

Weaving Together, we are...

...a strong and engaged lay leadership passionate about worship and formation.

At St. Andrew's, leading worship is not limited to clergy and staff. Many individuals lend their unique gifts to co-create worship and formation experiences that are traditional while also responsive to the faith needs of the congregation.



The Worship Committee meets monthly to assist the rector in planning for each of the liturgical seasons and special Sundays, adding context and texture to our Worship Services. Services are led by the rector and other lay ministers who serve as Acolytes, Altar Guild, Flower Guild, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, Lectors, Door Stewards, guest lay preachers, and Choir members.

Our worship is centered on the Holy Eucharist, other services from the Book of Common Prayer, and other approved rites such as Enriching Our Worship. St. Andrew's uses Rite II for most of our liturgies. We strive to welcome



all to worship and take note of guests and newcomers, inviting them to join us in any way they feel comfortable. Currently, we have one Sunday Eucharist at 9:30 am, which includes music. The service is videoed, and then posted on YouTube the following day for parishioners who are unable to attend in person.

Prior to COVID, we offered a Sunday Service at 8:00 AM without music and a 10:00 AM service during which children would attend Sunday School and then rejoin their families at the sharing of the Peace. We hope to return to this practice.

On Tuesdays, we have a service at 6:30 PM alternating between Eucharist and Evening Prayer. Healing Prayers and anointing with oil is offered one Tuesday per month and on the first Sunday of the month. Lay Eucharistic Visitors are also trained to make home visits taking Holy Communion and the prayers of the congregation to those who are homebound.



St. Andrew's has a strong tradition of beautiful music. The Director of Music and the Choir work together to provide music from a variety of sources both traditional and contemporary. We use the Hymnal 1982, Wonder, Love and Praise. A recent addition is the hymnal Lift Every Voice and Sing II. We have a beautiful organ that was dedicated on Trinity Sunday, 2007. There is also a grand piano in the Nave. A music fund exists to enhance the music programs of the parish.



Weaving Together, we are...

...stewards of beautiful and accessible, historic and contemporary facilities and grounds.

St. Andrew's has three conjoined buildings which provide gracious and accessible worship spaces, room for parish activities, and multiple spaces for community engagement. Built in 1931, the church itself is a stone edifice of Gothic design, adorned with stained glass windows, flagstone floors, and wooden pews. It is modeled after St. Albans Cathedral in England. The church, with a seating capacity of 250, contains a small chapel, sacristy, rector's office, and parish office. In 1991, St. Andrews built a columbarium, designed to match the church's original woodwork, outside the chapel door directly beneath the Ascension Window.



A short interior ramp leads to the Parish House. Built in 1957, the two-story building with a large basement is a hub of church activities. The main floor includes wheelchair accessible restrooms, a library, our fellowship hall, and a kitchen. The Library, in addition to being a meeting space, functions as a true lending library. The large Fellowship Hall and kitchen are used for weekly coffee hours, church events, AA meetings, and the monthly Love Thy Neighborhood dinners. It is also rented out for use by community groups. The second floor holds several classrooms of various sizes used for Sunday School, childcare during worship, and office space – one office is currently rented by a women's foundation. We also have a Children's Chapel, which is currently used as a meeting and retreat space.



In 2017, a two-story addition was built, with an elevator that makes the second floor of both buildings, and the Parish House basement fully accessible to all. The first floor of this addition is home to “The Shop”. The second floor is a large skylit space used by Shop volunteers to sort, tag, and store the many items which are donated by our parishioners and members of the community. Equipped with a fully accessible bathroom, this space was designed for multi-purpose use.



Finally, the large lawn outside the church and parish house is also a site for church activities. Fronting a busy city street, the lawn is often used for coffee hour in the warmer months, where passersby can join and chat with members of the church. The lawn has a labyrinth, constructed by a local Eagle Scout, that community and church members alike use for contemplation. A Peace Pole, gifted by an anonymous donor was erected in 2022.



Weaving Together, we are...

...a progressive congregation with a strong tradition of bearing witness to the Gospel's demands for justice and compassion.

From the time of our founding, when other churches were charging rents for the privilege of sitting in the pews, St. Andrew's began with the vision and charism to welcome everyone, so that all people could find a home. Thus, pew rent was eliminated. This gift of the Spirit – to act in ways that honor the Christ in all persons even when doing so goes against the grain or makes some uncomfortable -- is central to St. Andrew's witness in the Episcopal Diocese of Albany and beyond. This same Spirit moved our then Rector to speak out against the Vietnam War from the pulpit early in that conflict.

We were one of the first churches in the Diocese to publicly support ordaining women to the priesthood. In 1970, St. Andrew's elected the first woman warden in the Diocese of Albany. Around the same time, a member of St. Andrew's became the first woman Lay Reader to be licensed. Another member became the first woman deacon to be ordained in the Diocese. St. Andrew's has long been a welcoming and supportive congregation for the LGBTQ+ community. LGBTQ+ parishioners have been visible leaders in the church, serving as Wardens, Vestry members, leaders of ministries, and staff. St. Andrew's participates in the annual Pride activities and has consistently and publicly advocated for full inclusion of LGBTQ+ people in clergy and access to marriage rites. In 2015, after the 78th General Convention approved marriage rites for same-gender couples, Bishop Love prohibited the use of those rites locally. St. Andrew's issued a public letter to the Bishop requesting that the Albany Diocese make provisions for our parish to use these rites through our DEPO (Delegated Pastoral Oversight) relationship with the Diocese of Central New York. Although our request was denied, raising the issue maintained our visibility as a congregation willing to speak out for what we believe.



St. Andrew's has taken many public stands on racial justice issues, including criminal justice reform, Black Lives Matter, and other social justice issues. In 2021 we embarked on the Sacred Ground program, part of the Episcopal Church's commitment to racial healing, reconciliation and justice in our lives, the church, and society. A group of St. Andrew's parishioners participated in the first series of the Sacred Ground program, which we believe is the first one held in the Diocese of Albany. At the 2022 Diocesan Convention, members of our parish presented a workshop about the Sacred Ground program and its impact on our lives. We hope to continue this and other programs as part of our Faith Formation ministries.



Weaving Together, we are...

...a progressive and prophetic voice within the Diocese of Albany that also strives to be in communion with the Albany Diocese

St. Andrew's has been a part of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany (DOA) since our inception. The Diocese of Albany came into being in 1868 when it became separate from the Diocese of New York. The Diocese is currently in an active search for a Bishop following the resignation of The Rt. Rev. William Love in February 2021.

Our congregation is proud of our leadership positions and reputation in the Diocese as a progressive parish. St. Andrew's has always aligned itself with the broader Episcopal Church, while DOA has not. In 2012, St. Andrew's was one of four congregations in the Diocese allowed to receive spiritual leadership from the Diocese of Central New York via DEPO, which was originally established by the Episcopal Church in 2004 to allow theologically conservative churches based in liberal dioceses to partner with more conservative-minded dioceses. In this instance, we used it in the reverse.



Several St. Andrew's parishioners are members of the "Concerned Episcopalians of the Albany Diocese" (CE) – a group of progressive clergy and laity from both progressive and conservative parishes formed to provide a focal point for those in the Diocese wanting to rebuild the bridges between the Diocese's parishes – and between the Diocese and the Episcopal Church (TEC).



As a starting point, CE brought resolutions to Diocesan Conventions in 2021 and 2022 to eliminate the Diocesan Canons forbidding same-sex marriages and defining marriages as only between a man and a woman. In 2021, consideration of these resolutions was stricken from the Agenda. In 2022, they were brought to the floor of the Convention. To the surprise of most, in a vote by Orders, both resolutions passed by significant margins in the lay order and failed by only two and six votes respectively in the clergy order.

In the Diocese of Albany, when there is a vote by orders, the lay delegates from a church receive only one vote. Even though lay delegates outnumber clergy in real numbers, in this case, the clergy vote prevailed. We are encouraged by this level of support. The Standing Committee's official position that although these canons "remain on the books", they are not enforceable. Further, the Diocese has embarked upon a "Communion Across Differences", a program initiated by TEC. Its purpose is to bring conservatives and progressives together despite their differences and to embrace what we have in common rather than focus on what divides us.


While it is our hope and desire to be more connected with the Diocese of Albany, we also recognize we are not in control. We are optimistic that the election of a new Bishop will have a positive impact. We now focus on doing what we can to bring the resolutions to fruition.



Weaving Together, we are...

...proud and privileged to be a part of an area where we can share our weavings

St. Andrew's is in the Pine Hills neighborhood of Albany, the capital of New York State. Three miles from downtown Albany, Pine Hills is a racially, ethnically, and economically diverse and active neighborhood with a mixture of single-family homes, small apartment houses, churches, and businesses. In the immediate vicinity is the liberal arts College of St. Rose, a restaurant row, drugstore, banks, a local movie theater, Albany High School, a supermarket, and a public library. The church is on two bus lines. Albany is in the wide geographic area that includes the nearby cities of Schenectady, Troy, and Saratoga Springs, often termed the "The Capital District". The region's primary employers include the state government, two major teaching healthcare systems, and numerous universities and colleges. Graduates from these schools are continually launching new technology firms in our area.



The Capital District boasts a vibrant cultural scene that includes the Albany Institute of History and Art, the Albany and Schenectady Symphony orchestras, the New York State Museum, the Empire State Plaza, Proctors Theater, and the Saratoga Performing Arts Center (summer home of the New York City Ballet and the Philadelphia Orchestra). Less than 40 miles away, in the heart of the Berkshire mountains, is Tanglewood in Lenox, Massachusetts, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Local points of interest include the Governor's Mansion, Johnson Hall (the nation's only baronial mansion), the State Capitol, Olanna (19th century painter Frederick Church's magnificent estate), and the Saratoga Race Course (the nation's oldest thoroughbred track). Popular local sports teams include the Albany Empire (arena football), Albany Patroons (basketball), and the Tri-City Valley Cats (baseball).

The Capital District sits in the foothills of the incredible beauty of the Adirondack Mountains (the nation's largest public park). It is located conveniently near the Catskill Mountains, New England, New York City, Boston, Montreal, and the Finger Lakes. These and many other attractions are reachable by car, Amtrak rail service, and/or the Albany International Airport.

Weaving Together, we are...

... committed to sound Stewardship of our financial resources.

As a Christian community, we hold a stewardship vision that affirms that everything we have is from God and that we are called to offer joyfully a portion of our time, talent, and treasure back to God. This vision informs all the St. Andrew's ministries and individuals who keep the church going: the leaders who serve on the vestry and parish committees; enrich the parish's worship experience, make the parish hospitable to newcomers; strengthen the fellowship of our community; deepen our faith; maintain our church buildings and grounds and project the light of Christ and the giving spirit of St Andrew's externally to others.

Stewardship also involves a substantial commitment of funds for an annual operating budget to support staff, facilities, and programs.

Our annual operating budget for 2022-2023 is \$483,700.

This includes:

STAFF:

Clergy:

- \$115,000 (including benefits) - funds a full-time Rector

Staff:

- Office Manager/Finance Administrator (part-time)
- Facilities Superintendent (full-time)
- Director of Music/Organist/Choir Director (part-time)

Principal sources of Revenue:

- Pledges/Plates/Gifts (37%)
- Endowment interest (33%)
- The Shop (11%)
- Other (19% - e.g., interest, rentals, outreach)



We have been encouraged that, notwithstanding normal attrition as well as the challenges and adjustment related to COVID, our pledge and gift income has increased over the past three years. The number of pledge units also increased. As an endowment dependent parish, pledge and gift income is perhaps the most significant challenge facing the parish in the near term.



Leveraging our 125th Anniversary year, the 1897 Legacy Society was inaugurated. It is a formal program for planned giving. During this same period, a list was put together of items and projects needed by the parish which are not necessarily included in our annual budget. The idea is that if parishioners are made aware of these needs, there will be an incentive to donate. Indeed, many such donations were made, examples being the Peace Pole and the Lift Every Voice and Sing hymnals.

In addition, proceeds from the parish's thrift shop increased significantly and show promise of continuing for the foreseeable future.

Our most recent financial challenge has been to weather a substantial reduction in the market value of our endowment, a professionally managed asset, in 2022. The current market value of the endowment is approximately \$1.7 million (down from \$2.2 million). This number reflects market losses as well as withdrawals to cover operating shortfalls in 2022.



Weaving Together, we are...

... facing our challenges openly yet looking at them as opportunities.

The most pressing challenge is seen in the size and demographics of the parish. Although its investments provide the funds necessary to augment pledge income sufficient to support a full-time rector, long-term projections emphasize that increasing membership is key to fulfilling its Mission. In addition, the range of potential new and/or expanded programs is limited by the number of volunteers available to staff and manage them.

Internally, parishioners have expressed a desire for increased opportunities for social interactions, a crucial area due to the wide geographic spread of this Parish.



Externally, the parish needs to begin discussions on its role in the expanding faith-based Social Justice efforts, now focused on active anti-discrimination programs. Additional programs that need to be considered include combatting poverty, violence, homelessness, and other societal ills. In both areas, we need to more fully utilize the digital revolution to spread The Word.

Our property requires significant investment over the next three to five years to protect the current building usage and allow future program expansion. We are blessed with an active and engaged Buildings and Grounds Committee and a part-time Building Superintendent who perform regular checks, do some of the work needed themselves, and keep the Vestry well informed.

Our Next Rector - Weaving With Us

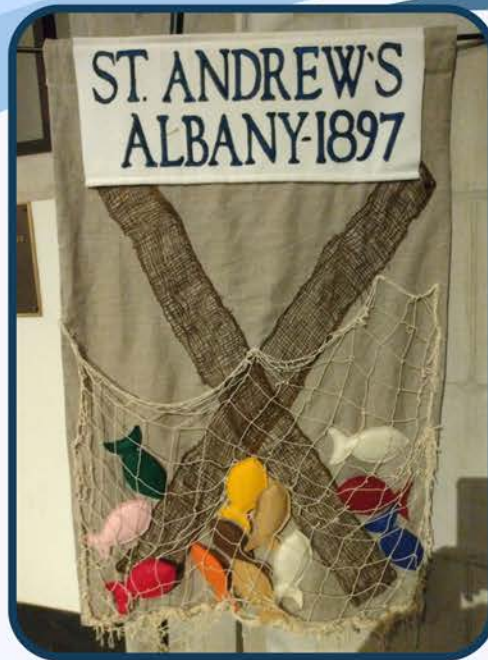
St. Andrews wishes to continue its tradition of ministry that enables parishioners both lay and ordained, to identify and fulfill their unique ministries in a God-centered way. Our rector will be warm, caring, with a sense of humor, oriented to family and community, and committed to inclusivity and social justice.

We are looking for someone who is deeply spiritual and places a strong emphasis on scripture and the central role of Christ in our lives. They must be able to preach with clarity and make the Gospel relevant in people's lives.



Our rector will be able to care for people so that they are nurtured and challenged for growth within the community of faith. They must possess the ability to respond to people at significant points in their lives - birth, sickness, trauma, success, dying, and death. They should be available to persons facing problems or decisions and deal compassionately with difficult situations.

Our rector will be a teacher who will help persons of all ages understand and live the Christian faith by implementing comprehensive Christian education programs, with the help of the laity. They must be able to inspire our youth and incorporate them into the full life and ministry of St. Andrew's. Together with the congregation, the rector will identify creative approaches for making St. Andrew's worship experience inspiring for families and children.



Our rector will plan and lead inspiring liturgical services, will have the ability to demonstrate an understanding of how the Bible is relevant in our lives, and be able to convey their perception of God's activity in the world.

Our rector will be a strong leader with the ability to manage the parish. They will encourage and support our staff and active lay leadership.

Overall, our next rector must be an individual excited by the prospect of guiding and ministering to a congregation of committed and motivated Christians continually searching for ways to expand their ministries and share their faith.



**ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
10 N. MAIN AVE.
ALBANY, NY 12203**

Website:

<https://standrewsalbany.org/>

APPLICATION PROCESS

For more information about our parish, contact our Senior Warden, Barbara Wisnom, bwisnom@nycap.rr.com

For the formal application process, please contact the Transition Minister of the Albany Diocese, Mother Elizabeth Papazoglakis, mother.elizabethp@gmail.com

