



Parish Profile 2017



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Who We Are

Founded in 1845, Christ Church Detroit is a diverse, inclusive community which, through its lively worship of Jesus Christ and witness in His name, serves the Christ in all persons. Our mission is to be a "Beacon of Hope in the Heart of Detroit."

Many have been first attracted to CCD by the beauty of the service, the excellence of the music, and the warm welcome. We have stayed not only because we found that the commitment to meaningful worship and hospitality was sincere, but also that the community is dedicated to serving others through outreach programs and supporting spiritual growth.

We hold a variety of political and theological ideologies but lean toward liberal, having been the first parish in the diocese to bless same-sex unions over 30 years ago. We come from different ethnic and social backgrounds, and we draw membership from every geographical zone within the Detroit metropolitan area. Of the 120 families that contribute regularly, 30% live in the city of Detroit, and 70% come from the suburbs -- most from the near suburbs but some from 30 to 40 miles away. Many of these members choose CCD for its integration and diversity.

African-Americans and other Blacks comprise almost 25% of our community. Third, fourth, and fifth generation Syrian-Americans make up another 30%. The remainder are Caucasian. If you see us on the night of the *Hafli* (our Middle Eastern party), however, we are all Syrian!

We are predominantly a middle to upper-middle class parish, with lawyers, professors, engineers, teachers, and doctors well represented, but we also have artists, short-order cooks, city employees, and even one urban farmer. We all appreciate the joy of worshipping together, the challenge of strong preaching that connects scripture with our daily lives, skillful music that inspires, and our sense of community that is restored each Sunday.

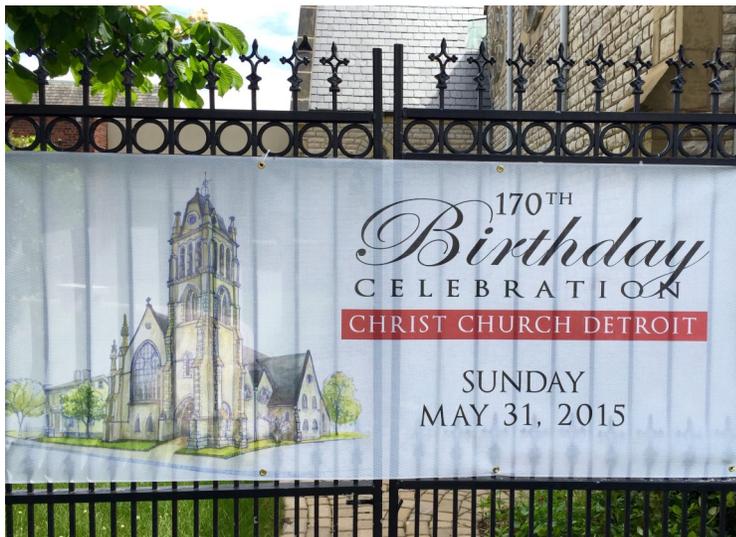


In contrast to many other churches of a certain age within the city of Detroit, our lovely sanctuary is “right-sized,” i.e. not cavernous, which no doubt contributes to the family feeling that members cherish at Christ Church. The light-filled atrium, completed in 2007, successfully ties together all of our church structures.

Like many parishes these days, we are faced with an aging demographic. Over half are retirement age, and of those who remain, except for the children, only a handful are under 39. We are, however, a vibrant community who want to share what we have with our neighbors, and amazingly, for the first time in a hundred years, our neighborhood is expanding as two large residential developments near us reach completion. With support and funding from the city for green space, infrastructure, and improved traffic flow in the immediate area, our location near the Detroit Riverfront is quickly becoming a major plus.

Because Detroit is re-surging in a way most of us did not expect to see in our lifetime, we at Christ Church want to take hold of this opportunity. We have always valued warmth, availability, and intelligence in our clergy, and at this particular time in our history, we are also looking for a creative, community-minded pastor. Our newest neighbors will be mostly young people and empty nesters. While it may be true that young people don’t want to go to church these days, being more “spiritual” than “religious,” we believe that everyone desires a community that cares.

We want to be that community. We can do that by inviting new people into our established ministries -- such as choir, Centering Prayer, breakfast teams, and outreach activities at Gleaners or the Reading Camp for Detroit children -- as well as to our newer efforts, like Fishing the River, Sunday Outdoor Art Camps, and community choral offerings. These are all ways to get to know each other, to understand the needs in our neighborhood and how to care for each other. We are determined to respond to these opportunities and to be a beacon of hope in the heart of Detroit for another 175 years.





Our Mission and Ministries

Sunday Worship Services

Christ Church offers two Eucharists, both Rite II, each Sunday throughout the year. These services are supported by trained lectors and Lay Eucharistic Ministers who read scripture and the Prayers of the People, assist at the altar, and help administer Holy Communion. Altar Guild volunteers prepare the chancel each week for Sunday worship.

The 8:15 am spoken Eucharist service meets in St. Elizabeth's Chapel. Ten to twenty parishioners faithfully attend and know each other well, with newcomers heartily welcomed. The fellowship continues afterward, joining choir members before their rehearsal, for breakfast served in Ledyard Hall.

At the 10:30 service, our worship is more formal, but not stuffy. Designated greeters welcome each person, the passing of the peace is warm and extended, and announcements are easy-going. The Prayers of the People always include the saying together aloud the names of ill or grieving persons, those who have died, and those having birthdays that week -- a custom that serves to bring us together. Our young people participate in Family Services on a regular basis, and through the Acolyte Program, they are also trained to assist at the 10:30 worship.

The choir is in full force September to June, leading hymns and responses, and providing special music. Our music director chooses a wide variety of songs (including selections from both the *1982 Hymnal* and *LEVAS*) and anthems that enhance the lectionary readings and liturgical seasons. Many parishioners stay to listen to the Postlude before joining the conversation at coffee hour in Ledyard Hall.

It's not unusual for a few homeless persons to worship with us. While they may enjoy the music and peaceful atmosphere, they also come to get some breakfast or snacks.



Music Ministry

Excellent music has always been a hallmark of Christ Church Detroit. It is often the reason why people come to visit in the first place and, frequently, why they stay. Our choir is comprised of about 25 men and women, including several paid section leaders. The repertoire varies from early and classical music to contemporary and spirituals.

Our music director and organist, Dr. Edward Maki-Schramm, started his position with us in February 2016. He has brought not only his lively talent and great skill, but also a depth of community connections resulting in choral festivals and concerts with guest choirs in our sanctuary.

The later Christmas Eve service begins with a full half hour of special music, and the noon Good Friday liturgy is centered around an appropriate choral piece, such as the Faure *Requiem* or Durufle *Requiem*.

Our instruments include a 70 rank Cassavant organ with a separate antiphonal organ in the balcony; a smaller tracker organ in the nave for early music; and a grand piano. We also have a set of handbells, and a group of ringers perform on special occasions through the year.





Christian Education

Christian Education is offered between the services. For adults, a strong Bible Study class has been meeting for the last 15 years at 9:30 am on Sundays. Led by a physician with theological training, the group studies scripture and related texts in depth.

The Sunday School program for children, pre-K through high school, is currently run by a dedicated group of volunteers. It provides an engaging curriculum and enjoyable events throughout the year. Our successful Journey to Adulthood program has sent our youth on incredible pilgrimages to destinations such as Greece, Spain, and England. The current group will be traveling in June 2017 to Italy, walking in the path of St. Francis of Assisi.

Though the enrollment of the Sunday School is at an all-time low, the activities continue to be well attended. Christ Church has a long-standing tradition of supporting its young Christians and successfully educating them through the Christian Education program. The teachers and volunteers are looking to involve strong leadership to help grow the Sunday School so that it continues to thrive. This is necessary not only for those who are currently enrolled so that they will have a class to attend, but for any family in Detroit who is looking for an excellent Sunday School for their children.



Other Spiritual Ministries

Trained healing prayer ministers are available on the second Sunday of each month at both services for those who wish prayer and anointing for strength, grace, and healing in body, mind, and spirit.

A strong corps of Lay Eucharistic Visitors regularly take consecrated bread and wine to the homebound. LEVs meet with the priest every two months to share Eucharist together, review their visits, and discuss a variety of pastoral care issues. Our Lay Eucharistic Visitors have initiated the Elder Interview Project to record the stories of our most senior parishioners. See the accompanying story to learn more.

There is also a ministry that blesses and offers hand-knitted lap robes and prayer shawls to give to anyone who is ill or going through a hard time.

The Centering Prayer group has been meeting every Tuesday morning for six years. With rotating lay leadership, the group practices both silent and intercessory prayer, after which there is a reading and sharing.



ELDER INTERVIEW PROJECT

Desiring to capture the remarkable history and memories of our senior members, the Lay Eucharistic Visitors of Christ Church Detroit birthed the Elder Interview Project. A videographer started filming this spring. At 95, Mary doesn't get out too much, but she has a sharp memory and engaging manner. On the day of her taping, Mary has chosen her clothes carefully, with her hair piled high. She tells stories of her strong faith and of her large extended family including her great-uncle Robert Taylor, an illustrious architect chosen to be on a US stamp in the African-American series. Another elder, Merle, projects a regal bearing and has the natural instinct to pause thoughtfully before she answers a question about a memorable piece of advice. She says that her mother told her as a youngster, that the service we provide to others justifies our place in God's creation. A third senior and life-long CCD member, Miriam, speaks soulfully of her Syrian grandfather's arrival in America -- how he settled on the east side of Detroit near Christ Church, how her family became part of the community, how the rector baptized Syrian-American children, including herself -- and how those children grew up to be leaders of the church and eventually serve on vestry. Looking back on this rich heritage, Miriam observes that the work of the church is to build community and grow people in love. All these stories connect the past to our present, and provide lessons for the future of how a strong and adaptable church functions.



OUR SYRIAN REFUGEE FAMILY

After fleeing Syria and living for 18 months in a refugee camp in Jordan, our family of five came to Detroit, where they were placed in a house furnished with exactly one sofa. Christ Church members, in partnership with the small Jewish congregation that meets in our building, had been preparing for this event. They arrived at the house to unload a truckload of furniture, appliances, linens, and food -- everything needed to make a home. While waiting for the delayed moving van, one volunteer, a retired managing director of a prestigious law firm, showed the Syrian boys how to mow the lawn, while others figured out ways of communicating with Mother and Father. A Christ Church elder of Syrian descent, Rosemary, served as translator, through hand gestures also went a long way towards communication. At one point, Rosemary was urgently summoned to the kitchen for what she thought was an emergency. Instead, she found a lively group tasting session to figure out the secret ingredient that Mother used in making her rice pudding. (Answer: rose water.) Since that eventful day, the family has expanded to eight, with three extended family members arriving. Volunteers help them sort through their medical and social work forms, and drive them to ESL classes, doctors, health clinics, grocery stores, and the mosque. Over the months, a lot of mutual learning has taken place. Our family faces daily the task of adjusting to their new home, while we witness their courage, their love for family, and their willingness to trust strangers with the most personal parts of their lives.

Outreach Programs

Serving others has long been a vital part and defining quality of our congregational life -- from the time over a hundred years ago when Christ Church welcomed its Syrian immigrant neighbors, to today as we extend friendship, shelter, food, and fun to others in a variety of ways.

For more than 25 years, Christ Church has housed about 40 homeless men and women for one week, as part of the rotating shelter program sponsored by Cass Community Social Services. This project involves almost 100 parishioners who prepare breakfast, lunch, and dinner, plan activities, and strive to provide our guests with a measure of dignity and hope. On fifth Saturdays, we prepare a soup lunch and serve homeless guests at Spirit of Hope Church, a combined Lutheran-Episcopal parish on Detroit's near west side. Our congregation also regularly contributes canned and boxed items to help stock the food pantry at Crossroads, a social service outreach agency of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, and we sponsor an "Advent Diaper Drive" for Crossroads clients, collecting over 7,500 diapers in a month for this cause.

Our unique history with Syrian immigrants came full circle when we decided to sponsor a Syrian refugee family in the fall of 2016. We did this under the guidance of Samaritas, a Lutheran social service agency with a long history in refugee settlement, and in cooperation with the Reconstructionist Congregation of Detroit (a Jewish congregation that meets in our building). We rejoice that an Episcopal parish and a Jewish congregation together welcomed and housed a group of Muslim refugees. Please see the accompanying story for more about our relationship with the family.

Using the gifts of the teachers among us and wishing to share our love of books, we held our first Reading Camp in 2013. The accompanying story gives more detail on this lively week in our parish life.

Christ Church regularly serves as a distribution center for the holiday Meals on Wheels program at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter; sends occasional work crews to Gleaners Community Food Bank; and each week hosts both Alcoholics Anonymous and Gamblers Anonymous groups.

In addition to these hands-on activities, the Outreach Committee reviews various requests for funding. In one sample year, Christ Church contributed financially to Song and Spirit (care packages for the homeless), Freedom House (refugee assistance), Samaritas (social services and refugee relief), Detroit school children (coats and school supplies), the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund, and more.



READING CAMP

Reading Camp is a program that serves 30–40 elementary children from Detroit's Franklin Wright Settlement for one summer week. It began as a way to share a love of books, introduce children to our parish, and offer them a meaningful summer experience. Each year a theme and related books are chosen, and volunteers gathered. Children enjoy Bible lessons, songs, crafts, and some great lunch food. Special guests have included jugglers, African-American storytellers, and musicians. A recent theme, "Grow in Detroit," featured the book *Rooting for You*, best described as the plant version of *The Little Engine that Could*. This book and the lessons of camp taught how a tiny seed grows into a plant and compared the plant's experience to a child's uncertainty of growing up in the world. At the end of the summer, we follow up with the kids by giving them backpacks before school starts. The camp draws more church members and friends as volunteers (50 last year) than there were campers! Parishioner Christine Galli, one of the creators of the program, says that camp "is just as much for the members to experience as it is for the kids."



Parish Community Life

Besides all the activities related to Outreach, there are many events that bring together the whole Christ Church community -- and most seem to revolve around food! Examples are a summer worship and BBQ at a local park, the opening Sunday School picnic, our grand Epiphany feast and revels, Lenten season's weekly soup suppers/book discussion, the Maundy Thursday lamb dinner, Father's Day Fish Fry, and the Detroit Fireworks party. There are also the popular women's spirituality programs with excellent speakers -- Advent by Candlelight and a spring brunch.

The event most anticipated by the whole congregation is the *Hafli*, our Syrian celebration that occurs every two or three years. The accompanying story gives a glimpse of what the evening is like.

On a week-to-week basis, breakfast after the early service, and coffee hour after the later service, build community and welcome newcomers. We are currently making an effort to support more sign-ups and involve more volunteers for these, as they are easy entry points for a newcomer. On special occasions, such as following Evensong on Saturday of the Detroit Marathon weekend, we may host a popular high tea, and it's not uncommon for a substantial Sunday brunch to take the place of Coffee Hour to honor a special anniversary or birthday. We are blessed with several professional chefs among us.

We are also looking to re-establish a once vigorous program that partners potential new members with long-term members.

HAFLI

On an early November evening, 2016, Ledyard Hall is filled with 180 members and guests of all ages, ready to feast on Middle Eastern food and celebrate a unique slice of Christ Church history. This is our *Hafli*, a Syrian party, but much more than that. It began over 35 years ago as a fundraiser, and presently benefits our Journey to Adulthood pilgrimage, with the young people hosting and serving. At our tables are many people we haven't seen at church for a while, but 90-year-old Salma or slim handsome George would not miss this homecoming. After dinner, the center space of the hall is cleared. Accompanied by a live band, our church matriarch, Aunt Jo, takes the floor all by herself, dancing the traditional *dabke* steps. Her grace and beauty hold us. We are sad that Alec is no longer with her, but soon many others join in, both Syrians and non-Syrians. We love it when a line of women or guy teens sync their footsteps, arms interlocked, or when Mr. Lamar in his Ghanaian tunic strikes a pose. Appreciative onlookers throw money at their "favorites" as part of the tradition and fun. Children dart among the dancers, collecting dollar bills for the cause. Perhaps best of all, our newly arrived Syrian refugee family is with us tonight, making this *Hafli* particularly poignant and satisfying.





FISHING THE RIVER

One Sunday last spring, the choir members at breakfast were surprised to see an unfamiliar 6-year-old boy in Ledyard Hall, holding a fishing pole and a bucket. They were even more surprised to see a large fish in the bucket, and to learn that he had caught it himself much earlier that morning. This was Max, a new resident in the area who was attracted to our first-ever Fishing the River program. Max was now waiting for his instructor, Mr. Phil, to emerge from early service in order to figure out how to get the fish from the pail into the frying pan. A CCD member since childhood himself, Phil began the fishing classes as a way to share his passion while reaching out to neighborhood youth. He recruited both CCD members and non-church fishing buddies to help. They started with an instructional session for the 7 young anglers and their 5 parents, followed by several 6 am fishing dates at the Detroit River, within walking distance of the church. The grand finale was a Father's Day Fish Fry for the whole congregation. These days, Max is attending Sunday School, and his artist mom has helped with Christmas Pageant costumes and is the creative mind behind our Sunday Outdoor Art Camps.



In The Neighborhood

As people gradually come to live in the new homes going up in our church neighborhood, we will continue to distribute our "welcome bags" which we put together in cooperation with two nearby congregations: the Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue and Saints Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church. Included in the bags are brochures about all three places of worship, some handy items, coupons, and a lot of information about the area. Over 250 of these bags will be distributed in total.

With our neighborhood growing, we have a clear call to think outside the box, that is, outside our church walls. Fishing the Detroit River was designed to answer that call and will conclude its second successful year with Fishing Graduation at the Father's Day Fish Fry in June. (See the accompanying story to learn more.) Another new program to start in 2017, is Outdoor Art Camp, on four summer Sundays, in our side parking lot. We hope the unique art activities will engage children and adults, both from our church and from the neighborhood.

We feel good about starting these programs whose aim is to make Christ Church Detroit more visible in the community -- basically, letting people know we are here and active. There is much more that could be done, and ideas such as holding exercise or other kinds of classes for the general public and experimenting with different kinds of worship have been floated. While many members of the congregation see the great potential at this time in our parish life, we also feel the need for pastoral leadership to assist us in discerning our path and focusing our energy. Frankly, as Detroit rebounds and our area re-populates, attracting new members is unfamiliar territory. We know that there will be successes ahead as well as doubts and setbacks. We look forward to having our new priest explore the map, help us set our direction, and walk with us on this journey.

Parish Staff

Christ Church's paid staff currently includes a full-time interim rector (The Rev. Maryjane Peck) and our parish administrator (Dawn Esse), as well as a part-time assistant to the rector for music (Dr. Edward Maki-Schramm) and a facilities manager (Richard Rubens). Cleaning, parking lot management and security, and grounds maintenance are provided by contract with various vendors.

Our parish has long enjoyed a tradition of strong lay involvement, which is diverse, well-educated, and reliable. Our "permanent" volunteers include an office assistant, volunteer coordinator, a producer of pamphlets/weekly email blasts, and a treasurer/ bookkeeper who tracks parish income and expenses. Generally, parishioners can be relied upon to populate committees or step up to serve for short periods of time to organize an event or complete a project.

LAY INVOLVEMENT

Over a few months in the summer of 2015, our music director and rector both announced they had accepted new positions, and by October, they were gone. We also hadn't replaced our Christian Education director whom we lost the year before. Into the gap stepped many lay people. Parent volunteers continued running the Sunday School, and a choir member led the choir through the fall, Advent, and Christmas seasons, until our new director arrived February 1. Our senior warden, office manager, and volunteers coordinated various guest priests through the same period, including 4 funerals. We asked advice of retired clergy and the diocese, held a Missions and Ministry fair, and learned what it meant to run a church until, thankfully, our interim arrived in late January. Meanwhile, the Outreach Committee was exploring the idea to sponsor a Syrian refugee family. In the summer of 2016, more than fifty members showed up to clearly express their desire to move ahead with the plan, even though we were facing a new rector search. We found we were resilient, hard-working, and patient through these many changes. We also learned how important it is to act on the Spirit's leading, since if we had waited until 2017, political changes would not have allowed us to sponsor a refugee family.





Parish Properties

Christ Church Detroit has occupied the same location on Jefferson Avenue since 1846, starting as a small wooden frame building. Our present stone structure, designed by English architect Gordon W. Lloyd, was built in stages from 1861-1864. It's a fine example of American Gothic architecture and is both a State and National Historic Site. The bell tower, completed in 1863, holds the oldest set of chimes in Detroit. In 1903, the chancel was enlarged and lengthened.

The church interior is warm with carved wood, stained glass of various styles (including two from the Tiffany Studios), mosaics, icons, and memorial plaques with an interesting mix of both Syrian and old Detroit names. Installed in 1992, a columbarium is located in the baptistry. It's not unusual to see members stop there as they return from communion to "visit" family and friends. Needlepoint cushions and altar carpet, stitched by parishioners, adorn the chancel and chapel.

Ledyard Hall, built in the 1920's, houses the kitchen, our assembly room for fellowship, rest rooms, and, in the lower level, Sunday School classrooms. Originally, Ledyard was built as a gymnasium, and its utilitarian nature and girded height remind us of the days when it was an active neighborhood sports center. A small extension to Ledyard Hall, built in the 1950's, now holds a nursery and Cary Lounge, which we use for small group meetings.

Another important church structure is Sibley House which directly faces Jefferson Avenue. It was built in 1848 by the widow of Solomon Sibley, the first mayor of Detroit and the first federal judge in the state of Michigan. It is the oldest standing frame house in Detroit. The church offices and some rental space are now housed in Sibley.

In 2007, the church completed major construction that successfully joined our four buildings by creating a new atrium entrance from Woodbridge Street, as well as allowing for barrier-free flow into the sanctuary and all other parts of the facility. The Christian Education spaces were renovated at the same time.

The church has a parking lot on the west side of the building and a larger parking lot across the street behind the church. The latter, when not being used for church functions, is currently rented to the University of Detroit/Mercy School of Law for their students. A small but lovely garden, tucked in between the church buildings, is used for picnics, summer play space, and outdoor events such as the Blessing of the Animals.

We enjoy our beautiful worship space but are also aware of the responsibilities for maintaining an historic building and the challenges of adapting space to meet today's needs. A study for the construction we undertook in 2007 identified additional projects, some of which have been completed. In 2015, Sibley House received new roofing, insulation, window restoration, and exterior refurbishing. A major donation has restored our nine bells so that they ring and play hymns again on the hour, plus the children are now able to manually pull the bell rope for the 1864 "Children's Bell" to announce the beginning of the 10:30 service. A multi-year project is underway to renew Cary Lounge. Many members would love to renovate our well-used kitchen, but that and other items remain on the to-do list.

Parish Finances

The Christ Church Detroit congregation has consistently responded to appeals for financial support when the goals have been clear and well understood. Our last capital campaign, which ran from 2005 - 2007, raised \$1.8 million for substantial improvements to our church buildings (construction completed in late 2007). From late 2012 through 2015, we raised \$190,000 towards needed maintenance and repairs to the historically significant Sibley House where our business offices are located (work completed in 2014). Most recently, in the summer of 2016, within weeks of deciding to sponsor a Syrian refugee family, our goal of \$30,000 cash was quickly raised with broad support, including in-kind gifts of furniture and household goods donated to establish a home.

Our operating budget, however, is a work in progress. Prior to the 2008 financial crisis, Christ Church had for many years relied on its endowment to meet up to one-third of its operating budget. The financial downturn, along with a rector who made it his goal to get us on a more solid financial footing, forced us to face facts and start living closer to our means.

Some of the subsequent spending cuts were clearly needed while others were less obvious. Slowly over the last several years, we have decreased our expenses (including staff reductions) and have increased revenue sources -- the latter mainly through parking lot fees. This belt tightening has reduced our reliance on endowment withdrawals to 14% in 2016, of which 12% was covered by earnings on investments. Pledge and plate contribution income have been relatively steady during the interim period. As of Dec. 31, 2016, our investment in the Diocese's Growth & Income Fund was about \$1.5 million. A recent bequest has increased the endowment to a little over \$1.6 million. We are coming close to our goal of relying only on a "prudent draw."

However, we are faced with the reality that new member pledges do not usually make up for those we have lost due to retirement, relocation, or death. In 2016 we had 81 pledging units, although a number of parishioners make regular non-pledge contributions, which we also budget. Furthermore, two families account for almost 15% of pledge and plate revenue. We have learned that we spend like a large congregation but attend and give like a mid-size one, with average pledges below our peers. We have generous contributors for specific projects, but many members do not pledge, or pledge only modestly, and have not embraced percentage giving. Clearly, there's room for improvement.

Our fall 2016 stewardship campaign included a presentation regarding these financial realities. The information was well-received, with a subsequent 7% increase in pledges. Our issues have not been solved, but we have identified, and are addressing, them.

Overall, Christ Church Detroit's financial position is more stable at this point than it has been for many years. We are determined to continue decreasing our reliance on the endowment to balance the budget, and we realize that this will take disciplined cost management and increased financial commitment on the part of members. Our then-treasurer closed his report on 2016 with these words, "2017 will be the year that we choose a new rector and welcome hundreds of new neighbors. Both of these matters will require some increased expenditure of resources, time, and energy. Let us remember that we can accomplish amazing things as a parish, so long as we have a common vision to unify and motivate us."





The Detroit Metropolitan Area

History

From its start, Detroit has been a multi-ethnic community, dependent on its waterways and boom-and-bust industries.

In 1701, Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac arrived from the French Canadian north to build a new hub for the fur trade. In the midst of Odawa and Ojibwa settlements, he chose the most narrow section of a chain of lakes and rivers (between Lakes Huron and Erie) to build his fort. In French, it was called “Le Detroit,” which means the “strait” or the “narrows.”

Over the centuries, those “narrows” have shaped the city’s history. Detroit was one of the prime stops on the Underground Railroad, with freedom in Canada just on the other side of the river. Prohibition here was marked by a mini armada of private boats smuggling booze. Today, the privately owned Ambassador Bridge is a major artery for trade between the U.S and Canada, while the Windsor Tunnel is the preferred route for passenger cars, including those bringing worshippers from Windsor, Ontario, to Christ Church Detroit.

In the nineteenth century, the Great Lakes’ natural resources of lumber, copper, and iron ore were brought south by ship and railroad. These raw materials were used in the Civil War and afterwards, to build railway cars, lake vessels, carriages, and engines, laying the groundwork for what became the city’s signature industry: automobiles.

To meet Detroit’s labor and professional needs, additional workers were recruited from Europe, the Middle East, and the southern United States. Peaks in economic cycles periodically created labor shortages, which allowed racial and ethnic minorities (and, in World War II, women) to obtain better jobs in the auto and service industries of the city. High wages provided the Detroit metropolitan area with one of the largest racially and ethnically diverse upper middle class populations in the entire United States. With that prosperity and the inevitable downturns, though, other problems arose.

After World War II, stable neighborhoods were severely divided, or entirely wiped out, in favor of building freeways that eased commuting to and from the suburbs. Unemployment, racism, white flight, and class segregation (including the 1967 riots, also known as the ‘67 Rebellion) created a large urban underclass within the City of Detroit. Numerous financial and housing crises left many homes vacant, and vast areas of this sprawling city remain blighted by urban decay. In the latter half of the 20th century, Metro Detroit became persistently and racially divided with the population about 85% Black in the city, and about 85% White in the suburbs.

Current status of the city

From the 1967 riots/Rebellion, to the 2008 bankruptcies of General Motors and Chrysler, followed by the historic bankruptcy of the City of Detroit itself in 2013, it seemed that the Motor City could never recover from its downward spiral. The population plummeted from a high of 1.8 million in 1950 to an estimated 677,000 in 2015. Schools and factories closed, and only one assembly plant still builds vehicles inside the city limits.

Yet, against all odds, in 2017, we can say with confidence that the city is rebounding. Having emerged from bankruptcy more stable and with a proactive new mayoral administration, Detroit is once again experiencing growth and vitality. The available land and housing stock, a relatively low cost of living, and a lively arts scene are all highly attractive to entrepreneurs, creatives, restaurateurs, gallery owners, millennials, and retirees. Interestingly, Detroit has also emerged as a leader in urban farming, and of course, decades of difficulty have never lessened Detroit as a magnet for musicians, whether Motown, gospel, hip-hop, techno, or jazz.

The first areas to see renewed residential and commercial development are downtown, mid-town (near Wayne State University and the cultural district), and the East Riverfront. Christ Church Detroit is the only church within the boundaries of the latter district.



East Riverfront Area

A decade ago, the East Riverfront had been home to decaying light industrial buildings and parking lots. The Detroit River Conservancy began the renewal of the riverfront by building an attractive walking path and new park along a section of the Detroit River. The project has expanded so that more segments and parks will all eventually combine as a continuous pathway from the Ambassador Bridge to Belle Isle, over five miles. Today, the River Walk and Eastern Market are among the most integrated, active scenes in the city. Final plans for the development of this prime area were announced in March 2017, and RFP's on two parcels will be advertised soon. One 248-unit housing project has already begun leasing, and another new apartment development will open in early summer in nearby Lafayette Park.

Two other developments will affect accessibility to Christ Church. The northern boundary of the East Riverfront Development is Jefferson Avenue, a nine-lane thoroughfare that extends to the near east suburbs of the Grosse Pointe communities. Decades ago, this main street and I-375, a freeway spur connecting I-75 and the downtown district, managed to isolate CCD from downtown to the west, and Lafayette and Elmwood Park to the north. In 2017, Jefferson Avenue will be reduced to two outbound, two inbound, and one turn lane, with other lanes reserved for busses and bikes. Pedestrian crossings will be made safer, which should result in Jefferson being a less intimidating barrier to the East Riverfront Area. Because some of the new housing developments are north of Jefferson, making it easier to cross the street should bring those new residents more within our "territory." Christ Church Detroit, which has not been a neighborhood parish for a long time, now has an opportunity to notably increase the portion of its membership that come from nearby. A map of the area can be accessed at yourdetroitriverfront.org

The second development in the area is more uncertain, both in its execution and potential impact. Within the next ten years, the Michigan Department of Transportation may decide to eliminate all or part of I-375. Several plans have been floated, but the most advantageous one for CCD would be to eliminate the curve in Jefferson Ave. and bring I-375 to the current street level, thus reintegrating us back into downtown Detroit.

Detroit is still the Motor City with a strong reliance on cars, yet bike lanes are appearing along major arteries, pedestrian traffic is increasing, the Dequindre Cut (an extensive rail to trail initiative) is a hit, and the new Woodward Avenue Q streetcar line has just opened from Congress Street to East Grand Blvd. All of these make it easier for urban residents to become aware of the Christ Church presence in the community. The church's location is within walking distance of both the Detroit River Walk (detroitriverfront.org) and the Renaissance Center, a major complex of five skyscrapers that include General Motors' world headquarters, other offices, and a Marriott hotel.



Detroit Attractions

A bit farther afield, but still (mostly) within walking distance, are the following, listed generally in order of proximity to Christ Church Detroit:

- *Greektown* -- shops and restaurants www.greektowndetroit.org
- *The Civic Center* -- a complex of buildings which house businesses and the city and county governments.
- *Hart Plaza* -- site of numerous concerts and events in the summer, such as the Detroit Jazz Festival, the nation's largest entirely free jazz festival.
- *Campus Martius* – a park in the center of the city, the highly successful result of a public/private sector partnership between the City of Detroit and the Detroit Conservancy. It has quickly become a space where all come together to relax, enjoy, play, and celebrate Detroit. In the summer, the park hosts concerts, movies, and a sand “beach,” that converts to an ice skating rink in the winter. www.campusmartiuspark.org
- *Cobo Center* – Southeast Michigan's primary convention center.
- *Eastern Market* – site of wholesale food suppliers, restaurants, and a year-round popular retail Saturday farmers market. <https://www.easternmarket.com>





Four blocks to the west of CCD is Detroit's "main street," Woodward Avenue. Most of Detroit's cultural and educational institutions have developed along this major artery and are more accessible than ever with the opening of the new Q rail line. They include:

- Wayne State University -- recent expansion, including a push to increase resident students, has attracted new businesses and housing.
- The Detroit Institute of Arts -- a world class art museum. www.dia.org
- Orchestra Hall -- an acoustically perfect building, home of the excellent Detroit Symphony Orchestra. www.dso.org
- The Detroit Opera House -- home of the Michigan Opera Theatre, one of the finest regional opera companies in the country. www.michiganopera.org
- The Detroit Medical Center -- home to the largest medical school on one campus (Wayne State University) and to several health care facilities.

Other venerable institutions on or near Woodward Avenue are the Main Public Library, the Museum of African-American History, the Detroit Historical Museum, the Children's Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, the International Institute (which celebrates the life of new and old immigrants), the Detroit Science Center, the Motown Museum, the Fox Theatre, and Music Hall.

All of the major sports venues are less than 15 years old and are within walking distance of the Woodward corridor:

- *Ford Field* -- home of the Detroit Lions
- *Comerica Park* -- home of the Detroit Tigers.
- *Little Caesars Arena* -- new home of both the Detroit Red Wings and Pistons, and set to open in the fall of 2017. This major complex will also include mixed commercial and residential buildings, creating a new area dubbed the District.

All these and more are within the city. In 2015, Detroit was the first city in America to be named a UNESCO City of Design (see its winning video entry at detroitc3.com). Zagat named it as one of 2016's hottest food cities, and the *New York Times* placed Detroit on its list of 52 places to go in 2017. Besides all that, there are many other great destinations to explore just outside Detroit, such as the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, and well beyond, as in "up north" to Traverse City or Mackinac Island, or to Michigan's beautiful Great Lakes shores, Erie, Huron, Michigan, and Superior.



Reality and Hope

The national, and even international, interest in Detroit these days must be tempered with the sobering reality of the problems here: 9.5% unemployment, illiteracy rates at 45%, underperforming schools, and homelessness. Many residential neighborhoods have seen little benefit from the city center's comeback. Yet the city's resurgence is visible and exciting. These times in the life of Detroit provide a tremendous opportunity also for Christ Church Detroit, both in terms of growth and service.