New Member Handbook

We seek to love God above all things and our neighbors as ourselves.
A Greeting from our Senior Minister

How glad I am that you are joining the Christ Church family! Church membership is an important commitment that leads to both personal transformation and the transformation of the world as we work together to extend the gospel message of restorative love. That may sound like an over-large agenda, but at Christ Church we concern ourselves with the things that matter most of all. For this reason I strongly encourage you to regularly join your new family for worship and study while actively discovering ways you can deploy your talents and abilities within the life of this wonderful congregation.

We are engaged in an exciting partnership of ministry. Remember to pray for Christ Church, that it will increasingly reflect the mind of Christ. Pray for your newfound sisters and brothers and for your pastors, for all of us need support, encouragement and companionship in our life journeys.

I look forward eagerly to the days and years ahead as we become better acquainted and drink deeply together from the wellspring of life.

Welcome! May God bless you beyond your wildest imaginings!

The Reverend Dr. Stephen P. Bauman
Senior Minister
Basement: Phillips Hall. Our large fellowship hall & home to Coffee Hour during the church year, as well as additional meeting spaces - the Stage Room and the Wesley Room.

Mezzanine: Restrooms.

Main Floor: The area where you enter from the front doors is called the Narthex. In addition to the sanctuary, the first floor contains the Chapel and the Duke Room (where coffee is served after the 9:00 service), as well as the music office.

Second Floor: The balcony for the sanctuary, the administrative offices, and the Vestry (a small room reached by going through the church office).

Third Floor: The Bowne Room, a large meeting room, men’s/women’s restrooms, and the office of Chad Gurley.

Fourth Floor: The Woolverton Room, another large meeting room, the office of Rev. Stephen Bauman, as well as the Studio, another meeting room on the west end of the 4th floor.

Fifth Floor: The Dale Room (meeting room), and offices of Rev. Bryan Hooper and Rev. Leslie Houseworth-Fields, and the Director for Children & Family ministries, Kathryn Carroll.

Sixth Floor: On Sundays, childcare, Sunday School, and Worship & Wonder. During the week the Christ Church Day School occupies the space.

The Roof: A fully furnished, outdoor playground, with restroom facilities.
Our Mission Statement:
We seek to love God above all things and our neighbors as ourselves.

Our Core Values:
- Worship
- Dynamic Hospitality
- Diversity
- Excellence

Worship is the core of our life.

Christ Church invites all who desire to worship. The people who engage in worship find Christ Church to be a place that actively encourages their relationship with God. Christ Church is known for its excellence in liturgy, preaching, and music, which includes a creative approach to honoring the best of the historic Christian faith and the diversity of the city. We offer two services on Sundays: our service at 9:00 a.m. takes place in the chapel adjacent to the sanctuary and offers an opportunity for Holy Communion each week. Our 11:00 a.m. service (10:30 a.m. during summer months) is in the main sanctuary, a space filled with beautiful mosaics and icons.

We live and practice Dynamic Hospitality.

At the heart of Jesus’ message was a radical welcome extended to all people to draw near to God and to one another. In our life together, we strive to emulate this radical call through dynamic hospitality, both spiritually and tangibly, to all who enter our doors.

We embrace and celebrate Diversity.

Jesus welcomed all who drew near to him. So do we. Given that our shared life takes place in New York City, one of the most dynamic and diverse cities in the world, we celebrate the diversity that is the human family. This means that we are not narrowly defined by class, race, ideological or theological orientation. We are defined by the love of God and neighbor, and that love takes many different forms and shapes. We celebrate that.

We strive for Excellence in all that we do.

Whether it is worship or program execution, serving or living lives of commitment, love is the foundation of excellence. This striving for excellence is not about perfection, but it is about love of God and neighbor, which requires our very best.
WORSHIP

“Worship is at the core of our life...all that we do and strive to become has its origins in the divine/human relationship...worship forms us as a community of faith...we discover no one falls outside of God's embrace.” - Christ Church Vision 2007

Worship is where our community is formed - it’s where we meet each other, the place that inspires our faith, hope, and connection, and the place where we are reminded of our need to participate in relationship with God. As you attend worship, we encourage you to consider volunteering your time to help make worship special for the entire Christ Church community. These are ways to participate:

Attend Worship: Each Sunday, worship services are offered at 9:00 a.m. in the Chapel and is an intimate, communion service. The 11:00 a.m. service (10:30 a.m. during summer months) is in the sanctuary and is accompanied by the choir and organ. It is followed by Coffee Hour.

Worship Music: Our Church Choir, comprised of professional and volunteer singers, is one of the most dynamic in the city. Our Parish Choir is a volunteer ensemble of singers that sing at designated times throughout the year.

Bell Choirs: Are you a musician looking to participate in the musical life of Christ Church? Do you miss performing in an ensemble? Christ Church’s adult and youth bell choirs are always looking for new participants. Consider being part of the bell choir that plays regularly throughout the church year.

Altar Guild: Volunteers are needed once a month to help prepare the altar, light candles, and make other necessary worship arrangements.

Communion Bread: Christ Church makes a special effort to bake its own communion bread. This is a great task for families and individuals in small groups. Pick up all the supplies and recipe from church, then deliver the bread to church to be used at all of the communion services for the month.

Ushers: Ushering is one of the most important Sunday morning volunteer activities. Please consider being an usher one Sunday per month. Couples and friends can sign up to serve together. The importance of ushers is growing as the size of our worship service grows. This is the perfect opportunity for new members, for it offers the chance to say hello to everyone and for everyone to say hello to you!

If you are interested in serving in any of the above ministries, please contact the Dr. Steve Pilkington at spilkington@christchurchnyc.org.
CONNECT

We hope that you have felt hospitality throughout the process of becoming a new member and trust that your sense of belonging will increase and deepen as you connect within the Christ Church community. A large part of dynamic hospitality is connecting with other members of Christ Church through fellowship, spiritual formation, and service.

The Connect Ministry is made up of programs for women, young adults, children and families, affinity groups, and the church community as a whole. While these activities are opportunities for participation and involvement, they are also opportunities for serving and volunteering.

Some examples of activities that the Connect Ministry has initiated: Women’s dinners; 20s/30s programming; Fall Fest; Social gatherings.

**Connection Groups:** Connection Groups at Christ Church gather together to grow spiritually, pray faithfully, and serve compassionately. Through these groups, members increase their capacity to love God above all things and their neighbors as themselves. There are opportunities throughout the year to form or get connected to a Connection Group. It is our hope that you will find opportunities to use your talents and gifts while pursuing the things that interest you most.

**LGBTQ Fellowship:** Christ Church is a Reconciling Church, a commitment that grows out of our mission and core values. All are indeed welcome at Christ Church. This fellowship meets monthly for lively fellowship and mutual support.

**Greeters:** Greeters offer dynamic hospitality every Sunday morning by welcoming all who enter the doors of the church. Greeters are also available to help people navigate through the building and answer questions they may have. If you enjoy meeting and greeting people, please consider becoming part of this ministry team.

**Coffee Hour:** Another important activity that extends dynamic hospitality every Sunday morning is the Coffee Hour ministry. Volunteers are needed to either coordinate or contribute food. Please consider being a part of this important ministry, whether it is a regular serving commitment or just a few times a year.

If you are interested in being a part of any of these areas, please contact Chad Gurley at chad@christchurchnyc.org.
At the heart of our work is fostering growth - growth in love, growth in knowledge, growth in service, growth in community. From our youngest members - to those who just recently decided to explore the Christian life - to those who have spent a lifetime in the church, our hope is to create environments, occasions, and opportunities where people learn the richness of our tradition, ask honest searching questions, and find in one another fellow companions on the journey of life and faith. The following are examples of current offerings:

**Christian Formation Courses**: Courses on the Bible, theology, Christian art & music, spirituality, and history & comparative world religions are offered throughout the year.

**Adult Forum & Lecture Series**: Topics of our Adult Forum & Lecture Series range from Christian scripture, faith & work, contemporary theology, and other themes related to our living faith. These are led by Brian Pinter on Sundays at 9:45 a.m. during the church year.

**Pilgrimages and Retreats**: Throughout the year, both locally and internationally, Christ Church members are invited to embark on organized pilgrimages or attend retreats.

**Children & Families**: See the information on page 8.

**Youth Ministry**: Middle and high school students gather monthly for study, fellowship, and community building, often including retreats, social outings, and mission trips.

Why not create space where your spirit can be nurtured and strengthened by taking advantage of these opportunities? Contact the Reverend Leslie Houseworth-Fields for more information at leslie@christchurchnyc.org.
Our members find multiple opportunities to express their love of God and neighbor through meaningful, fulfilling service. Our ongoing service programs/projects include:

**The Sunday Sharing Table:** Volunteers make and provide a hot meal to all who come to our door on Sunday evenings.

**Manhattan Day and Night School Tutoring Program**

**El Nido:** Christ Church’s ministry, El Nido, is designed to support parents with 0-3 year old children in the Washington Heights/Inwood area of Manhattan. Visit and support this important work at elnidonyc.org.

**Methodist Home for Nursing and Rehabilitation Ministry:** Volunteers serve the aged by visiting and providing special programs at Riverdale’s facility.

In addition to these weekly and monthly programs, we have developed a sustained relationship with the Colombian Methodist Church. Christ Church has also sent teams to Biloxi, Mississippi and New Orleans, Louisiana, to aid in the recovery from Hurricane Katrina, as well as worked extensively with Habitat for Humanity in West Africa and New York City.

Everyone is invited to participate in these programs/projects. Contact Chad Gurley for more information at chad@christchurchnyc.org.
Children and Families

While we subscribe to the philosophy that parents are their children’s first and best Christian guides and models, we welcome the opportunity to partner with parents and others in our church family in the development of children and their family’s spiritual formation and growth. Our Sunday morning programs are the cornerstone of our education opportunities for children. Parents have the comfort of knowing that their children’s minds, bodies, and spirits are being well cared for by dedicated and well-trained laity and professionals.

On the first Sunday of each month, children are included in corporate worship when we celebrate the Eucharist in the 11:00 a.m. sanctuary service. All children (Kindergarten and older) come to the sanctuary after the sermon to receive communion with their families. Additionally, the children’s choirs help lead worship by singing once per month in the 11:00 a.m. sanctuary service (10:30 a.m. during summer months).

Our time with the children is experiential, instructive, and tailored to each child’s level of readiness and ability. We celebrate their young, unobstructed capacity to love and be loved by facilitating their articulation of these gifts in our Sunday School lessons and activities.

We also strive to support parents in their personal faith journeys by offering programs and opportunities specific to parents and families. Please be alert to bulletins, newsletters, and emails for information on programs and events for parents.

Several family events are planned throughout the calendar year, including a Christmas Pageant and a weekend Family Retreat in the Spring. One of the easiest and most logical ways parents and other adults can model and live out their faith is by being present at church programs via participation, leadership, and/or offering a helping hand.

Because of our objective to support families, we value your input and want to hear of your interests and needs (and availability to help). Please do not hesitate to contact Kathryn Carroll at kathryn@christchurchnyc.org or any of the other children’s program leaders. We would love to hear from you and would like to heartily welcome you to our shared life at Christ Church.
Giving
Frequently asked questions about pledging

What is a pledge?

Our mission at Christ Church is to love God above all things, and our neighbors as ourselves. As we all know, fulfilling this mission takes dedication - of our time, talents, prayers, energies, and our financial resources.

Every year in the fall, we launch a stewardship campaign to fulfill the church’s financial needs for the coming year. When you fill out a pledge card, you agree to contribute a designated amount to the church’s annual operating expenses, from staff salaries and mission programs, to tuning up the organ and filling the coffee cups.

But pledging is much more than just a way of paying the bills. As Christians, we are called upon to be good stewards of the resources God has given us, including our time, our talents, our health and our paychecks. Giving generously sends a powerful message of thankfulness, praise, and humility to God for the blessings we have been given.

A generous financial commitment to the church acknowledges God as the source of all things. It helps us avoid the traps of materialism and selfishness that alienates us from one another and cuts us off from the peace and joy God wants for us. Most of all, it reflects a desire to be in partnership with God to advance God’s mission on earth - and in our own lives.

Why should I pledge, instead of just contributing to the offering on Sundays?

At its most basic, a pledge is a dedicated commitment to giving. It makes gratitude and generosity a regular part of our lives. That’s what gives it the power to transform us. And that, first and foremost, is why we urge you to participate in it. Filling out a pledge card also announces that, “Yes, I am a part of this community. I want to share in the amazing work that God is doing here. I want to help my friends and neighbors. Their mission is my mission. Count me in.”

On a practical level, pledges are also enormously helpful to the staff in setting priorities for the year and allocating resources for our increasingly diverse, growing range of ministries. Knowing how much money they can count on helps them prepare the budget and arrange expenditures wisely and faithfully throughout the year.
How much should I pledge?

At Christ Church, a dedication to excellence is evident in everything we do: our worship, music, hospitality, outreach, fellowship, study, mission work. As Paul urged his followers in 2 Corinthians 8:7: “See that you also excel in this grace of giving.” Prayerfully consider a pledge that feels excellent to you.

Pledges at Christ Church range from $100 to more than $100,000. If you have been pledging for years without an increase, consider whether it is time to step up your contribution. The church needs our support now more than ever. The bottom line is to pick a number that is both generous and meaningful - one that reflects your commitment to this community and to advancing its mission in our city and our world.

How does pledging work?

Once you have decided on a pledge, if you would like to pay in weekly installments, simply divide your pledge by 52 and send it in or drop it in the offering plate every week. If you wish to pay monthly, divide by 12. You may also elect to have your pledge deducted in installments from a credit card. Each quarter, you will receive an update from the church office reconfirming your pledge commitment and listing the contributions you have made toward it throughout the year. It's a handy way to check your progress and make up for any payments you may have missed, and it also serves as a record of your charitable contribution for tax purposes.

How is the money used?

Your financial support of Christ Church enables us to genuinely live our mission. It supports inspirational worship services, a breathtaking music program, wide-ranging courses for spiritual growth and vital outreach programs for the poor. It helps maintain a sanctuary of beauty and tranquility in the midst of a city that often confronts us with ugliness and chaos. It helps attract and retain the best ministerial and support staff in the country.

Your generosity also makes possible our growing ministry to children and their families, and helps us build a stronger sense of community and commitment to one another. And it provides us with the capital to expand our ministry into the future, wherever God should lead us.

Our shared life is rich and joyful, full of wondrous opportunities for growth, connection, mission, and love. Our pledges help ensure that the best is yet to come. Thank you!
Christ Church Day School Admission Guidelines

The Christ Church Day School (CCDS) recognizes the importance of diversity in its student body and also seeks balance in each classroom in terms of gender, age, and personalities, in keeping with school licensing guidelines as established by the New York Department of Health. To this end, it welcomes children of members and non-members of Christ Church United Methodist of all racial, ethnic, religious and other backgrounds. However, in accepting candidates for admission the School will give application preference to siblings of CCDS children and to children of active members of Christ Church (who joined the Church at least one year prior to October 1 of their application year).

“Active” membership will be confirmed by a member of the pastoral staff and means:

1. Regular participation in more than one of the Church’s ministries: Worship, Community Building, Spiritual Growth, and Outreach; and
2. A timely, meaningful financial commitment and fulfillment of annual commitments.

Moreover, it is the expectation that church members will maintain this level of commitment while members of the Day School community.

In every instance, admissions decisions will be made by the Day School admissions staff to preserve the best interests of the students and the quality of their educational experience as individuals, as members of a particular class, and as members of the student body as a whole. Therefore, while application preference will be given to siblings and children of active church members, preferential consideration will not guarantee admission.

Please note that the Independent Schools Admissions Association of Greater New York (ISAAGNY) allows schools to inform “preferential treatment families” of their status earlier than the general notification date established by ISAAGNY. All families who qualify for early notification must notify the school the first week in January that they would like to participate in early notification. The school will then inform those families who have elected early notification in late January about their status regarding admission to the school. Families who commit to CCDS via early notification and are accepted are expected to withdraw their applications to other schools once they receive a CCDS acceptance. Contracts will be due to the school sometime in early February. Families who do not choose early notification waive their preferential status, and their application is placed in the general pool of applicants, and is subject to the general ISAAGNY notification dates.

Although this represents the current policy of CCDS, it is subject to change at any time.
RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Minister: Friends, we welcome you in God’s name. In joining Christ Church you renew our life, you open us to a wider world, and you bring us new insights and energy. You are a gift from God. From the beginning, believers have continued in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers. Will you commit yourself to this life?

Candidate: I will, with God’s help.

Minister: Today you join a church family whose mission is summarized by Jesus’ great commandment: We seek to love God above all things and our neighbors as ourselves. Will you commit yourself to this mission, and be open to the renewing power of Christ in our shared life?

Candidate: I will, with God’s help.

Minister: Worship is the core of our life, through which we extend dynamic hospitality to all, celebrate the great diversity of people and experiences God has brought together in this place, and strive for excellence in all we do. Will you commit to strengthen these core values among us as you accept the call to follow Jesus Christ in your daily life?

Candidate: I will, with God’s help.

Minister: The Christian life is a shared life. It cannot be pursued in isolation, but is faithfully lived in Christian community. Will you commit to strengthen Christ Church by regular worship, bold service, spirited giving, intentional learning, and engaged community?

Candidates: I will, with God’s help.

Minister: Members of the family of God, We welcome new friends, who I commend to your love and care. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope and perfect them in love.
The Christ Church Staff

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