



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Apr 12, 2021)

|Christ Church Riverdale, New York

5040 Henry Hudson Parkway West, Bronx, NY 10471, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 05/17/21.

CCRTransition@gmail.com

Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA)	Number of Weekend Worship Services	Number of Weekday Worship Services	Number of Other per Month Worship Services
170	2	1	
Current Annual Compensation	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position	Housing Available for	Pension Plan
			We're in compliance with CPF requirements.
Healthcare Options	Dental	Housing Equity Allowance in budget	Annual Equity Amount
Full family	Yes	Yes	
Vacation Weeks	Vacation Weeks Details	Continuing Education Weeks	Continuing Education Weeks Details
One month, including 5 Sundays (standard)		2 (standard)	
Continuing Education Funding in budget	Sabbatical Provision	Travel/Auto Account	Other Professional Account
\$501-\$1000/year	Yes	Yes	

We are calling a Rector, compensation & benefits according to diocesan guidelines.

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Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

A major expression of love, inclusion and acceptance by our parishioners was shared during the full-fledged welcome of our past rector. Shortly after his arrival, we performed our first same sex marriage for him and his partner. Our full house and exuberant choir brought incredible joy to an already joyous occasion. The ceremony was topped off with a sumptuous reception in our parish hall. The contributions of many volunteers at the altar, in the choir and in the kitchen made this a successful and fulfilling event for all. Our annual Festival of Carols during Advent has also been a source of joy. The event brings together musicians from the parish and community, with the choir, organ, and additional instruments sitting front and center. Programming includes narration, soloists, choral singing and the whole audience standing to sing seasonal favorites. Evergreen garlands and tall white pew candles decorate the nave. The Festival drew phenomenal attendance by 2019. People arrived an hour early to secure a seat. Seeing the community fill the church with music and the joy of Christmas made this truly a fulfilling event. Events of 2020 eclipsed plans to offer two performances.

How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?

Our vision of the church of the future is based on the recognition and understanding that religious entities such as the Episcopal Church cannot be mired in their established traditions but must be flexible and open to understanding and satisfying the spiritual and social needs of an evolving population. The format and content of worship services may require modification to keep our parishioners engaged as well as to attract membership without altering the fundamental Christian message. We expect the demographic of our congregation to continue to change and consequently the style and focus of worship must adapt. This includes continuing the hybrid form of worship developed as a response to the COVID epidemic, providing in person and virtual services as options for participation. It may become necessary to adopt a flexible schedule of worship services modifying the timing and number of Sunday services as well as providing additional weekday opportunities for worship based on congregational needs. We must be cognizant of the non-religious, cultural and social issues that are important to a changing congregation and develop programs to support and enhance involvement in these matters.

Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

Preaching. Spiritual Leadership. Pastoral Care. Administrative Leadership.

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Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services provided by your community.

Christ Church Riverdale strives to provide parishioners and visitors with a variety of worship opportunities to satisfy a mixture of needs for everyone who enters our doors. Traditionally, prior to the COVID-19 shutdown, we performed a contemplative, spoken mass at 8:30AM every Sunday. We celebrated a longer liturgical service at 11:00AM with glorious music and liturgical chant, for the full Episcopalian experience. During the summer months we combined the two services for a 10:00AM service offered inside the church or outside on nice days, affectionately called "Mass on the Grass." Our relationships with surrounding congregations is strong. In the past we shared worship with Riverdale Presbyterian Church in July and August. Our warm relationship with the Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale included a Jewish-Christian dialogue for a number of years, and Congregation Tehillah occasionally holds special services here.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

At CCR, we strive to find a place for anyone who wishes to serve and encourage those who are hesitant to serve. Some will volunteer; others will need the idea to germinate and take root over time; and others prefer to quietly come and go. Foremost are children, who may serve as acolytes, lectors or ushers as early as they feel comfortable. They take pride in stepping up in these roles of responsibility. At certain points, one monthly service became "All God's Children Service" where young people would serve and also gather at the altar for the sermon and an up-close view of the sacrament the Eucharist. Children have shared their musical talents with us during services, as soloists or instrumentalists, with or without the choir. In recognition of our different heritages, we traditionally incorporated multiple languages into our Pentecost Service. We found that there was a strong desire to continue this during the year, using mixed languages for readings or common prayers. We remind one another that we are a part of a larger world and honor the many cultures that form CCR.

As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

Our bulletin at CCR reminds us that at communion, all are welcome at God's table. Through our worship, we strive to foster a connection to God. Through fellowship, we strive to connect our community by bringing God's love to each other. Our enthusiastic "sharing the peace" could have carried us to coffee hour, if allowed. Committee leadership recognizes that fellowship events are not necessarily the same as fundraisers. We have enjoyed children's Easter decorating, a spa day, a summer jazz series on the lawn and salsa dance instruction. A highlight of the year is our International Dinner, a feast highlighting foods from Africa, the Caribbean, the South and many regions of Europe. In addition to connecting at CCR, many outreach activities foster connections to our larger community, adding to the purpose members find in their lives. Physically, the well-being of our community has been fostered by our beautiful buildings and grounds, signaling that one has entered a special place. A labyrinth in our parish hall had candlelit evenings, where anyone could drop in for contemplation. In our new Reflective Garden individuals can sit and take solace in the peaceful surroundings.

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How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

One of our long-standing traditions has been providing pastoral care to residents of neighborhood assisted living homes. The involvement includes a prayer service with administration of the consecrated host. Visitation and prayer are offered to any who wish to receive them, not solely CCR members. At the request of one elderly resident recently, a lay visitor from CCR arranged for our rector to baptize her in the art studio of the Hebrew Home. Visiting presents an opportunity to meet some of the emotional needs of the residents, and is also offered to homebound parishioners.. A tradition of recent vintage is best described by its title "Ashes to Go". As the name suggests this occurs on Ash Wednesday morning and involves our Rector and Deacon supported by parishioners traveling to local train stations and imposing ashes on anyone requesting them. We have gained members through this event, but more importantly, reminded the commuters of the importance of Ash Wednesday. A simple sign of pastoral care, literally, has been our banner in front of the church announcing that all are welcome. Several parishioners count this open invitation as the reason they walked in the doors.

Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.

Our worshipping community has broad involvement in numerous external ministries. Through our Social Justice Ministry, we have affiliations with the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, participating in marches for prison reform and racial justice. Regional Martin Luther King and Absalom Jones church services include our choir members. Our Daughters of the King chapter sponsored a fundraising project for the Exodus Transitional Community which supports persons affected by the criminal justice system. We also support local food justice initiatives including a local food pantry and neighborhood fridges. Individual parishioners have worked with visitations and providing the Eucharist for area residents unable to travel. Our Altar Guild works actively with the New York Altar Guild. Christ Church is a stop on the Sacred Spaces tour sponsored by the NY Landmarks Conservancy. We have hosted a chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous for over 70 years and serve as a home for the Riverdale Choral Society for their rehearsals and concerts. We hold joint services with Riverdale Presbyterian Church and the Church of the Mediator for Easter Vigil on special occasions.

Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?

For the past three years, Christ Church has operated its Jones Center for Educational Support, extending welcome and academic support to recently-arrived immigrant high schoolers enrolled at ELLIS, a NYC specialized public school for older English Language Learning (ELL) immigrants. With a grant from Episcopal Charities, a membership rich in retired educators, and a history of activism on behalf of immigrants, Christ Church created a novel program of community outreach. The program embeds volunteers in classrooms, counsels in college and internship applications, and offers supplemental financial aid to ELLIS students accepted to college. The Center is sustained by the Jones Endowment Fund at Christ Church, created by a bequest from the late Robert Jones, PhD, professor of French at MIT and a child of the parish. Volunteer teachers are both members of the congregation and neighbors. Through the Jones Center, Christ Church has heightened its profile as a community partner. Volunteers teach at least two hours per week, virtually during COVID, returning to in-person in September 2021. Many also donate to the scholarship awards. Please contact Kathy Valyi, Kathy.valyi@gmail.com.

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What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

Christ Church Riverdale has embedded stewardship as a ministry of communal nurturing. We often use the in-flight analogy: we must don our personal oxygen mask before we can help others. Without protecting our financial foundation, we cannot worship, serve, teach, sing, maintain buildings, or hire staff. We make explicit the intertwined relationship of the material and spiritual. This message is delivered through mailings, testimonials, adult forums in which we invite pledges annually. We thank members in our Sunday bulletin, with handwritten notes, and in emails. We report transparently on our finances. At the same time, we set a standard of personal generosity proportionate to a family's means and do not publicize "giving societies" that might reveal the level of pledges by individuals. We keep the collective number of pledgers and total dollars pledged visible throughout the pledge campaign season. In addition, we seek to strengthen the financial health of the parish through endowment built by legacy gifts. The endowment is managed through the Episcopal Church Foundation/State Street Global Advisors and overseen by an independent Endowment Management Committee of parish members.

What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

A recent event tested our community's tolerance of conflict and ability to manage a difficult situation. In late 2019, a longtime member of the parish was investigated for sexual abuse of a child, unrelated to CCR. With guidance from the Diocese, the vestry and rector met to proactively determine next steps. How do we protect the parish while preserving presumption of innocence? How does the church maintain the trust of its members, particularly parents and survivors of abuse? A difficult but honest letter went out to the community. The letter asked for prayers of healing, forgiveness and strength for the victim, the alleged perpetrator, and the parish. The vestry required that the man accused have an escort on church property. Some members felt that until this man was charged and found guilty, actions were both premature and harsh. Others recognized that waiting was indefensible. Over this incident, the parish lost some members and some pledges from those who believed the man had been treated unfairly. However, overwhelmingly the congregation appreciated having strong, faith-filled leadership in a difficult time.

What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

When COVID struck, our community shifted quickly to remote worship and fellowship opportunities. For services, we experimented with different approaches, starting with Facebook live, then Zoom, finally settling on a pre-recorded video format. Lectors and our then-music director sent recordings of their contributions, which were edited by a gifted parishioner with the video of the rector. Bulletins and service links went out by email. However, as if COVID wasn't enough, we faced the departure of our rector in July and our music director in November. Again, strong leadership was essential in engaging interim talent for both roles. In November, we resumed in-house worship in conjunction with our remote model. We learned the importance of having a point person for various efforts and assigned vestry roles for each ministry interface. Having a committed, paid office assistant has greatly facilitated communications. Change does not go as well when roles, responsibilities and accountability are poorly defined, or if there is too great a dependence on a single individual. Our adoption of social media has been uneven and will need support from a well-defined strategy.

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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Rev. Andrew G. Butler	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2014-08	2020-06

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Rev. Patrick Ward	Interim	2012-04	2014-07

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Rev. Robert Lamborn	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2004-08	2012-04

The below numbers for Sunday/Church School are Pre-COVID. Caregivers and our Children's Ministry Coordinator are trained, compensated and professional staff. The Sunday School uses Simply Loved curriculum, which can adapt to an online format.

Church School YES	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School
	4	14

Number of Teachers/Leaders for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Students for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Adults School	Number of Students for Adults School
		1	8

Day School	Number of Students for Day School	Number of Teachers for Day School	Number of Total Staff for Day School
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Worshipping Community Web site: <http://christchurchriverdale.org>

Media Links:

> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qc5aP3fhFnE>
> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpQKoQXr7zg>

Online References:

> <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQnvAKoCTzZDsyU163RojMg>

Languages Significantly Represented:

English, Spanish

Provide Worship or Classes in:

English

References

Bishop:

Diocesan Transition Minister

Current Warden/Board Chair

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader