



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated May 22, 2025)

The Church of the Holy Innocents, Highland Falls, New York
401 Main Street, Highland Falls, NY 10928, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 07/31/25.

transitions@dioceseny.org

Weekly Average Sunday
Attendance (ASA)

32

Number of Weekend
Worship Services

3

Number of Weekday
Worship Services

1

Number of Other per Month
Worship Services

Current Annual
Compensation

Cash Stipend

Housing / Rectory Detail

Utilities

SECA reimbursement

Compensation Available for
New Position

Housing Available for

Pension Plan

Healthcare Options

Dental

Housing Equity Allowance in
budget

Annual Equity Amount

Vacation Weeks

Other

Vacation Weeks Details

Continuing Education Weeks

2 (standard)

Continuing Education Weeks

Details

Continuing Education
Funding in budget
up to/including
\$500/year

Sabbatical Provision
Yes

Travel/Auto Account
Yes

Other Professional Account

Calling a Priest-in-Charge (part-time), 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.

For our congregation, success manifests in our ability to survive despite the struggles we have faced in recent years. We are resilient when we face upheaval and change. We continue our ministries with faithful volunteers who find fulfillment in the work.

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

We strive to remain relevant to a constantly changing community and parishioner demographic. We livestream our service to maintain connection with those unable to attend in person, even as we acknowledge that this can reduce financial support for the parish. We are streamlining administration to the extent possible. We continue to partner with the Town of Highlands Clergy Association as congregations across our local faith communities face similar challenges, believing that this kind of cooperation is integral to the future of the church. Our ministries have become adept in assessing and adapting to rapidly changing community and logistical needs, but not without strain on our volunteers and resources. Unique to Holy Innocents is the flood that occurred in July 2023, which caused immense damage to our buildings and property, affecting every aspect of our ministry. The future that is easiest for our congregation to focus on is immediate damage remediation and repair, and cooperating with organizations who will provide the resources needed to rebuild. At the same time, we are supporting our volunteers to prevent burnout, so we can continue our ministry into the future.

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

Scripture-focused preaching/teaching. Self-aware and emotionally intelligent. Inclusive. Responsive to marginalized populations. Sensitive to the military and our community.

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

Our liturgical style overall is relatively informal and completely open and accessible to worshipers of all ages and at all places in their personal faith journeys. The feeling is warm and inviting, and children are welcomed to participate in all aspects of the service. We use the Children's Worship Bulletin that is geared to the Gospel of the day. Our main service at Holy Innocents at 10am on Sundays is a complete Eucharist, generally Rite II service, open to all in the community, including cadets and residents from the United States Military Academy nearby, and is live streamed to our online community. A service at 5pm on Sundays is 30 minutes and interactive. The 8:30 am service at St. Mark's is similar to the Holy Innocents Sunday morning service and provides a complete Eucharist to our Fort Montgomery members. An informal Eucharist is celebrated at Canterbury Club meetings on Tuesday evenings for cadets on the campus of the military academy. During summer cadet basic training, we offer Eucharist for Episcopal cadets at the Sunday Protestant service at the Cadet Chapel. We also go into the field to meet summer cadet training participants with communion where they are.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

People of all ages and abilities volunteer in our ministries, regardless of their church attendance. Both the thrift store and the food pantry continue to rely on the volunteers from our wider community, including military families from West Point. Missionaries assigned to the local Church of the Latter-Day Saints are faithful to volunteer as well. The West Point-Highland Falls Rotary supports our food pantry pick-up and distribution. Cadets from the military academy are welcomed and provided with transportation to attend services and other events, such as working in the Soup Kitchen at La Iglesia El Buen Pastor Episcopal Church in Newburgh. At the midpoint of Cadet Basic Training new plebes are invited to an afternoon social event in private homes, a welcome break from strict military protocols and challenging training. At a late summer Canterbury Club retreat primarily for the new plebes, we welcome them and give them an opportunity to connect with leaders and with one another. A late winter retreat is open to all Canterbury Club members, focused on fellowship and relaxation.

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

We value our time of worshipping together and intentionally fellowshiping in coffee hour after our services. The ability on Sunday mornings to gather and spend time with God and with each other, with no other demands on our time at that moment, is healing for us as a congregation. Because we are a small group, we are always at risk of overtaxing ourselves and burning out with the work that needs to be done, and gathering together to rest and catch up with one another is important. We are looking forward to an expanded presence with a new priest to invest in our spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being.

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

Our beloved ministries are the primary way we represent Jesus's hands and feet to our community and do the work He has called His followers to do. Our thrift shop strives to care for creation by providing donated clothing and housewares at a reasonable cost to the community. Twice a month, the food pantry provides food for about 100 registered low-income families in our community, many of whom do not speak English. As members of the Town of Highlands Clergy Association, we participate in and often host community dinners that are free and open to all in the community. Once a month, parishioners and cadets from the Canterbury Club at West Point travel to La Iglesia El Buen Pastor (Church of the Good Shepherd) Episcopal Church in Newburgh and volunteer in the Shepherd's Kitchen ministry.

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

Holy Innocents is an active and enthusiastic member of the Town of Highlands Clergy Association and regularly hosts community events organized by the group. Our senior warden sits on the diocesan Standing Committee and the Race and Reconciliation committee, and also co-organizes the annual Absalom Jones service at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in February.

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

In 2022, our church began sponsoring the local Scouting America (formerly Boy Scouts of America) Troop 4023, which consists of young people from West Point, Fort Montgomery, and Highland Falls. The troop currently has a brand new girl troop, started in 2024, and a boy troop. We provide a safe meeting space for both troops, as well as storage space on our grounds. Both troops are very active in the local community. Carla Burns is the primary point of contact between the troops and the church, although we have parishioners whose children participate in the troop as well. In response to the shutdown measures placed upon our community by federal and state mandates, our church began livestreaming our services. The online option remained as Covid protocols eased, and still continues today as an option for worshipers who are unable to come in person. The service is generally viewed over 100 times during and after the service. The last 5 years has seen our church face the challenges of a worldwide pandemic followed by a devastating flood locally. We have deliberately chosen to focus on maintaining our current ministries in the face of the community needs.

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

Our focus is on being grateful for God's abundant gifts to us, being good stewards of our resources, and using our time and talents to be God's hands in the community. Highland Falls is not a wealthy community; our food pantry and thrift shop serve our needy members as well as neighbors, especially the working poor. We conduct an annual pledge campaign; members make a pledge commitment and give what they can. As part of our annual pledge campaign, we ask members to commit their time and talents in addition to financial resources. In 2024, our pledge income exceeded the amount pledged, as members recognized the need to increase their giving as they were able.

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

Our vestry, a combination of longstanding members and relative newcomers, was asked this question. We had to go back 30 years to find a serious conflict event (a priest who was ultimately defrocked), and don't feel that it would represent our current parish to discuss it. However, there is a sense that the trauma of that event made the parish more determined not to falter because of one person's behavior. We work hard together to maintain the parish and do God's work. Our current interim observed that we listen respectfully to one another, apologize when wrong, and conflicts are resolved. Our challenges have come from external forces, over which we have no control – such as devastating floods in July 2023, from which our property, buildings, and people are still recovering. But even during such a stressful time, the focus is on getting back to normal and any conflicts have been managed in a healthy way.

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?

The rector who retired nearly three years ago did almost everything for the twenty years she served the parish. During that time, members became accustomed to not taking appropriate responsibility for managing the parish. Our challenge in the last three years has been to once again take ownership of different aspects of our parish life and find our voice. Through this search process we have come to understand that we hope to find a pastor who will come alongside and encourage lay leaders to continue to develop their skills and work together with the new priest to lead the parish.



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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Rev. Jan W. Nunley	Interim	2022-07	

Rev. Judith Ferguson	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2001-09	2022-07
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Rev. Douglas Fisher	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	1998-09	2001-07
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Church School		Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School
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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
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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: <https://holyinnocents2.wixsite.com/hihf>

Media Links:

Online References:

Sermons are shared Facebook: >

<https://www.facebook.com/holyinnocents.church>

Thrift Shop: > <https://www.facebook.com/holyinnocentsthiftshop>

Languages Significantly Represented:

English

Provide Worship or Classes in:

English, Spanish

References

Bishop:

Diocesan Transition Minister

Current Warden/Board Chair

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader