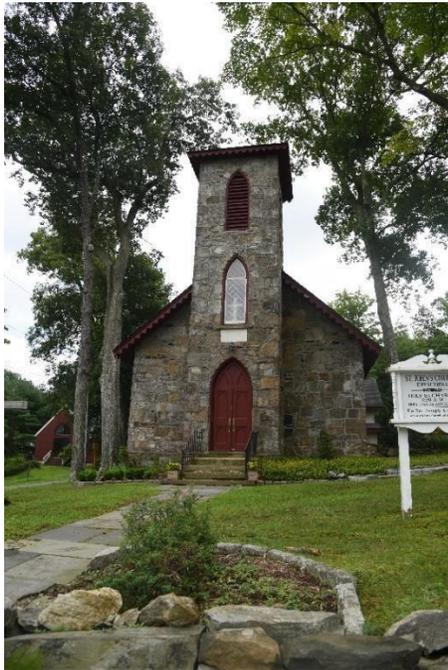


St. John's Episcopal Parish Profile



St. John's Church



St. Paul's Chapel

Two Churches: One Community

www.stjohnsepiscopalparish.org

Our Vestry



**Left to Right: Ronald O. Ross, Narissa Joyner, Veronica Skrelja,
Top Row: Stephen King, Kathy Delaney-Donnery, Shannon Hume, Claudia Nerreau,
(Missing from Photos: Amy Blumenfeld and Heather Wilson)**

Who We Are/Who We Were

Our History has made us Strong

St John's Parish has been a church community for the past 263 years. The first Rector of Salem, Epenetus Townsend, was imprisoned for his loyalty to the Church and King of England. He later fled and was drowned at sea with his entire family. Since that tumultuous beginning, we have experienced many highs and lows, but with God's help and our strong determination, we have always found a way to survive. We continued to prove our resilience and tenacity over the past two years of the Covid pandemic. Our prior priest and choir director recorded a weekly YouTube service for in-home worship in the early months of Covid. In the warm weather, we held services outdoors while practicing social distancing. Our priest retired six months ago and since then, we have continued to worship with Supply priests and parishioner-led services. We remain strong in our faith, our love of God and each other.

We are Family

Our Parish consists of two facilities with somewhat different worship traditions. St. John's Church in South Salem celebrates Sunday morning Eucharist, complete with Sunday school for children, an organist and choir. St Paul's Chapel, five miles away in Vista,

celebrates a Saturday evening Eucharist with guitar accompaniment. We currently alternate Eucharistic services between the two churches when we have a supply priest and we plan to continue the practice with a shared priest. Parishioners lead morning and evening prayer when no priest is available.



The vast majority of parishioners believe that we are a warm, loving, and supportive community. Most of us have made life-long friends at St. John's Parish. We support each other in times of personal setback. We have a men's group and a women's group who continued to meet occasionally during COVID and are beginning to ramp up again.

We are always responsive to a challenge. Our priest of 9 years has retired, and our organist has accepted a full-time position at another parish. We gather in faith and always find ways to worship together.



A parishioner recently shared, "Sunday mornings at St. John's may not always include a priest and a sermon but they have become a very precious, deeply personal experience for me. In addition to readings, reflection, and expressions of gratitude, we hold each other up in prayer as we share our intentions. We are small in number, but we have created a powerful bond"

We Value our Children

We run a thriving nursery school and summer camp, the Early Learning Center (ELC), staffed by three caring and dedicated professionals. The ELC operated on Zoom during the COVID shutdown and continued to contribute annual income to our budget.



Committed parent volunteers run our Sunday school which ran continuously through COVID. Twelve children performed in this year's Christmas pageant with story, songs, guitar duets and a solo guitar performance. They were excited to rehearse together and perform at a Sunday service. It is our joy to worship with children of all ages. One parent noted that she and her "two noisy children" were immediately made to feel welcome when she first came to St John's Church and, for that reason, she never left. Another said "From our young babies and toddlers waddling up to the altar or assisting with the collection, our youth from tot to teen are an integral part of our parish".



In the past, our Youth Group has participated in volunteer projects such as The Midnight Run and the Appalachian Service Project. This year, the young children collected donations to purchase gift cards for mothers, incarcerated at the Bedford Women's Correctional Facility, to give to their children as gifts. They also support *Food for the Poor* by doing chores, collecting and contributing money. At Christmas, they donated 20 chicks, 100 pounds of rice, a month's worth of food for a family, a fruit tree and a waterproof backpack. Their donations continue year-round.

Presence in the Community



A strong presence in the community is essential for our survival and we recognize the need to expand our efforts and encourage more people to join us. We continue to support community activities such as the Lewisboro Pride Day, the annual Lewisboro Library Fair and the Festival for our Future. We attend the annual Anti-Racism Workshop and applied to the Episcopal Futures Program in partnership with local Episcopal churches. In the past, we held a number of successful fundraisers each year and contributed a percentage of the profits to local charities such as the *Endeavor Therapeutic Horsemanship Program* for special needs children, *Doctors without Borders*, the *Northern Westchester Community Center* and the *Lewisboro Ambulance Corps*. An annual Christmas drive on behalf of the *Friends of Karen* provided holiday gifts for terminally ill children and their families.

We are blessed with two beautiful church buildings and properties which provide opportunities for community events. St Paul's Chapel has nature trails and Stations of the Cross. St John's Church has an outdoor fire-pit with seating around it. Both churches have kitchens and meeting space in their undercroft. Before the Covid shut-down, we ran a food pantry at St John's Church on Mondays, when no other pantry was open.

We hope to host our annual Labor Day Race again this year. This event attracted many residents of the surrounding area as well as runners from all over the State, in pre-Covid days. We provided a barbeque for all attendees as well as activities for the children. It was always a joyous occasion and a successful fundraiser as well.



Music is Important to us

Our parishioners value music as part of our worship. Both churches have wonderful acoustics and organs. Although we recently lost our Music Director and organist, we sing a cappella or accompanied by piano and guitars. We always make it work!

Before Covid's arrival, we held annual Christmas sing-alongs at St. Paul's Chapel which attracted over 100 community members. We look forward to resuming this event, as well as other concerts and activities, in 2022.



Challenges and Opportunities

As might be expected, our membership and pledges are down significantly (almost 43%) since 2019. However, we are in the process of selling twenty eight acres of land behind St Paul's Chapel that will provide significant funding for the ongoing maintenance of our

Parish facilities. The prior sale of a property across from St Paul's Chapel allowed us to establish the Priest's housing fund which is maintained in an investment account.

Although we project a balanced budget for 2022, we recognize that we need to grow our Parish and income stream in the near future. We must attract more young families with children, who we see as our future. On the positive side, we did welcome some new parishioners recently and are delighted to have baptized four children this year. We look forward to attracting more new members to our church community and seek a priest who will help us create a welcoming presence.



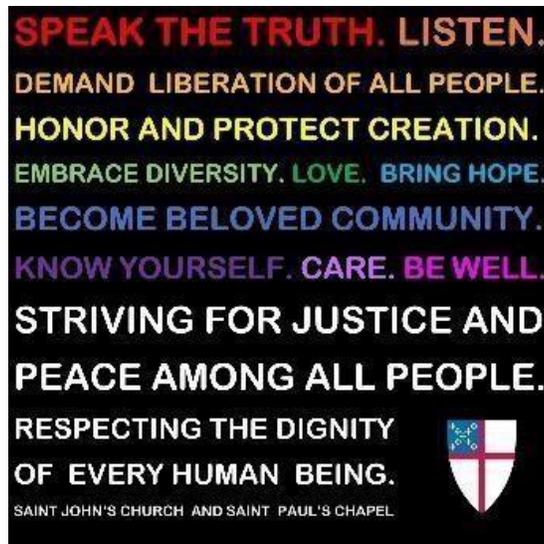
We acknowledge that we have many challenges ahead, but we know that we will emerge stronger than ever. We want to continue to make a difference in our own lives and that of the community. We seek a Priest-in-Charge who will collaborate with us to grow our presence and our ability to do God's work in the Lewisboro community.

Who We Want to Be

The two banners we display on our website, and have ready to install on our two properties, speak to the loving and welcoming community we strive to be. Their images are below.



All People are Welcome Through Our Doors
"for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28



As our banners attest, we commit to being more inclusive of all members of our community who seek to know God. Our goal is to embody the Episcopal Church's "Radical Welcome" so that every person who enters our doors feels at home. We hope to expand our church community without losing the "feels like family" closeness we share. We seek to grow in our ability to serve God and to be better Christians.

We plan to utilize our facilities to better serve the community and have begun discussions with The Lewisboro Land Trust to offer hiking, camping and related activities, utilizing the trails behind St Paul's Chapel. Once we are able to resume indoor events safely, we intend to use our indoor spaces as community gathering centers for classes, lectures, performances and community service activities.

We also see a need to develop the rich resource we have in our youth. We must do a better job of incorporating young children in our worship services and preparing the teens for leadership roles in the Church by involving them in a variety of internal and outreach projects.

We want to increase parish activities such as bible study, adult forums and book clubs etc. that will strengthen us as a Parish and attract people from the greater community.

In order to be a vital and thriving church community, we must strengthen our finances. We believe that by growing our parish through active engagement in, and outreach to the community, encouraging the active role of children of all ages in our worship services and returning to fundraising activities, we can achieve this goal.

What We Seek in a Priest

There is nearly unanimous agreement in the ranking of duties we most value in a Priest. The top three are:

1. A Preacher, Liturgical and Spiritual Leader who will inspire us with his/her understanding of scripture and who God calls us to be. The preacher will be an effective communicator who can connect with young children as well as teens and adults. This leader will assist the Vestry in enhancing the parishioner-led services to make them as spiritually fulfilling as they can be in the absence of a Eucharistic mass.

Specific tasks include:

- Plan and perform Eucharistic services; oversee preparation for church holidays and special occasions.
- Plan and perform special services such as Confirmations, Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals.
- Interpret lessons and gospels to make them relevant to current times.
- Consult with the Choir Director (or Musical Accompanist) and lay readers to create services that resonate with the congregation.
- Conduct training and oversee plans for parishioner-led services.

2. A Pastoral Leader who is optimistic, warm, compassionate and nonjudgmental of members of the congregation and makes him/herself available to deliver sacraments and consolation to the sick and homebound and to counsel those in need. The leader must be warm and welcoming of all those who enter our doors. He/she will work with the Vestry and usher/greeters to get to know new families and establish a welcome protocol.

3. An energetic Outreach Leader who will maintain an active presence in the community to help foster growth of our congregation, especially with young families. This work is to be done in concert with the Vestry and congregation by attending community events, as well as Parish-sponsored activities at our two locations such as concerts, the annual 5K race and other initiatives as determined by the priest and vestry. A unique opportunity to attract young families is through ongoing engagement with the young children (and parents) who attend the year round programs at the Early Learning Center (ELC) and summer camp, located on the St. John's grounds and sponsored by our Parish. Several of our active young families have been recruited to our parish through the ELC.

Other Important Duties:

In addition to the above, we value:

Christian Education: A number of survey respondents indicated an interest in participating in Bible Study. A small but regular group attended weekly bible study classes in the recent past. The Priest is also expected to consult with the Church School and Youth Group Directors to develop meaningful, age appropriate instruction and activities. Since these are often small groups, Bible Study, Youth Group and Confirmation classes are opportunities for joint activities with St James Parish and we welcome the potential synergy of those collaborations.

Youth Programs:

Every survey respondent agreed that youth education and programming are vitally important to the health of our Parish. There is an active group of volunteer parents who run Sunday school every week, whether in person or via Zoom. We seek a Priest who will collaborate with us in finding ways to make our church services appealing to, and enriching for, these young families. He/ she will relate well to young children and teens, make them feel welcome in church and actively include them as participants in worship services. Since young families and their children are our future, we envision a comprehensive joint effort among Priest and congregation to attract additional families to join our community.

The Qualities we seek in a Priest

If only we had all the qualities we desire in a priest! With deep humility, we describe our ideal candidate.

You are a strong spiritual leader who will deliver thought provoking sermons which will reach all ages of the congregation. You are warm and engaging, open and approachable. You relate well to young children as well as teens and adults. You are charismatic, enthusiastic, joyful, optimistic, open minded and flexible. You are a good listener and an effective communicator.

Since we are in need of building back from the loss of parishioners that we experienced over the last two years, due to Covid, we are hopeful that you will not only help us keep the parish going but will also assist us in building back our congregation. We value someone who will help us build a more diverse community and we are open to hearing ideas of new ways of achieving that goal. This rebuilding effort may also be done in concert with St James since we both have this same need.

Where We Live

Our Town

St John's Parish is located in Northern Westchester County in the Town of Lewisboro, fifty miles north of Manhattan. Our Town consists of 6 hamlets: Goldens Bridge, Cross River, Waccabuc, South Salem, Lewisboro and Vista. St. John's Church is in South Salem and St. Paul's Chapel is in nearby Vista. We border the Town of Ridgefield, Connecticut. It is a beautiful area with open green spaces, parkland, recreational facilities, clean air and quiet nights. A range of services, community activities and volunteer opportunities are available.

Government

These are links to learn more about our Town and County:

[Town of Lewisboro](#)

[Westchester County](#)

Schools

[The Katonah Lewisboro](#) School District consists of three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Utilizing data from the U.S Department of Education, NICHE rated the District 21 out of 11,774 in the Country for Safety and 71 out of 10,772 for best school district in America in 2021.

There are many options for preschool, most notably our own [St. John's Early Learning Center](#), along with the [South Salem Nursery School](#), [Country Children's Center](#), [Thistlewaithe Learning Center](#), and the Ridgefield Montessori School.

Independent Schools: [Harvey School](#), [Ridgefield Academy](#), [Rippowam Cisqua](#), and the [Kennedy Preparatory School](#) **Outdoors:**

Hiking/nature trails – [Ward Pound Ridge Reservation](#), [Mountain Lakes Park](#), [Woodcock Nature Center](#), [Leon Levy Preserve](#), [Onatru Farm](#) and more.

[Town recreation](#) facilities include ball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, a swimming pool and cabana. A playground for children of all abilities is being constructed this year at the Town Park in South Salem. Town teams exist for tennis, softball and basketball, among other sports.

Nearby skating rinks include the [Winter Garden Ice Arena](#) in Ridgefield, the [Brewster Skating Rink](#) and the [Evarts Rink at The Harvey School](#), in nearby Katonah. Horseback riding lessons are offered at Echo Farm and JT Farm which are both in South Salem.

There are public golf courses in northern Westchester and in neighboring Connecticut.

Additionally, there are County parks, hiking and biking trails, numerous lakes, the Long Island Sound and Hudson River. Nearby mountains with skiing round out the sports and recreational opportunities.

Sports

[Lewisboro Soccer Club](#) ages 4 and up, and an adult league

[Lewisboro Baseball Association](#) first grade and up [Bedford](#)

[Bears](#) offers ice hockey for children ages 5 and up

[Brewster Hockey](#) offers ice hockey ages 3 and up, and an adult league ***Skiing***

[Thunder Ridge Ski Area](#), [Catamount](#), [Mohawk](#), [Sundown](#) ***Community Organizations:***

Lewisboro is proud of its many civic organizations which welcome participation by people of all ages and interests. Scouts, Lions Club, Volunteer Ambulance Corp, the Lewisboro Seniors and Volunteer Fire Departments are some of the most active organizations. The town sponsors a Memorial Day Parade, Fourth of July fireworks and seasonal activities and classes for all ages.

Business and Shops:

The nearby towns of Katonah and Mount Kisco, as well as Ridgefield and New Canaan in Connecticut offer a variety of shops and small businesses. Within 30 miles, the choices are many, including White Plains as well as Danbury, Stamford and Norwalk in Connecticut – all offer large indoor shopping malls and mega stores.

Dining and entertainment:

There are many restaurants to choose from in Lewisboro and the surrounding towns. The closest restaurants are listed here by name, but there is a wide range of dining experience to be found in the immediate area.

Links: [Bacio](#), [the Horse and Hound](#), [La Vista](#), [One Twenty Three Restaurant](#), [Haiku Asian Bistro](#), [La Familia Pizza and Pasta](#).

[Caramoor](#), a world-famous center for classical music and summer music festivals is located in Katonah as is the highly regarded [Katonah Museum of Art](#). Ridgefield offers a variety of cultural opportunities including a Symphony Orchestra, the [Ridgefield Playhouse](#), the [Keeler Tavern](#) Museum, and the [Aldrich Museum](#), which is dedicated to contemporary art. The [Ridgefield Theater Barn](#) and [Ridgefield Guild of Artists](#) offer a variety of programming and classes.

Nearby, in Katonah, is [Muscoot Farm](#), the only working farm in Westchester County, which is open year-round and very child friendly. White Plains, thirty minutes away, is home to

the [White Plains Performing Arts Center](#) which produces and presents Broadway and off Broadway favorites as well as children's programs.

Transportation:

Lewisboro is conveniently accessed by car, train and air. Interstate 684, a north-south limited access highway in the north and I-287 and the Hutchinson River Parkway in the south. The Harlem Line of the Metro North Railroad links Katonah, Goldens Bridge and northern points with Grand Central Terminal in New York City. Westchester County Airport, a short drive away, serves northern and southern Westchester County and Fairfield County, with direct and connecting flights nation-wide. The Westchester County Beeline bus service connects the various towns and villages of Northern Westchester with White Plains and points south.

In Conclusion

The people of St. John's Parish are energized and optimistic as we plan for our partnership with St James Church and our new Priest-in-Charge. We are confident that, together, we can revitalize our Parish and become an even greater force for good in our community.