

## Parish Profile

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Trinity Episcopal Cathedral Parish  
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Diocese of Arkansas  
Office of Transition Ministry  
Parish Profile  
February 2015

*NOTE: The following Parish Profile tells a story of Trinity Cathedral Parish through the aggregation of collective responses by members of the parish to a series of questions posed by the Office of Transition Ministry. Also provided here is statistical information on worship attendance and Christian formation (classes). Information on the Little Rock metropolitan area, provided by the Greater Little Rock Chamber of Commerce, has been included as an addendum.*

### Q&A

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

There are a number of examples:

Trinity Cathedral Parish has been in a great renewal and rebirth process over the last two years. The parish has grown closer with and learned much about each other through various activities and gatherings, one significant event of which was the planning and celebration of "Bliss." Bliss was a parish and community fund-raising event where parishioners were encouraged to donate items for auction that brought them joy or bliss. Funds from the auction were dedicated for the benefit of parish ministries. Another Bliss is planned for this fall.

The parish has recently enjoyed the revival of two beloved activities, "Dinners for Eight," a series of dinners hosted in the homes of parishioners for parishioners, and the performance of Dean Higgins's Christmas Pageant, a 50-year-old tradition at the Cathedral. Facilities have also been the home of several incubator businesses that have become thriving contributors to the downtown neighborhood where Trinity is located, and to the community at large. In addition, the parish has reached out into the greater community by actively participating in the Little Rock Marathon, cheering on and blessing participants as they ran the marathon route, which passed by the Cathedral grounds.

Achieving a significant outreach, Trinity negotiated a successful partnership with a local charter school, Little Rock Preparatory Academy (Little Rock Prep), incorporating the school into the Cathedral campus's available facilities. The parish is currently working on other opportunities to support the work of that organization. This educational outreach is in addition to the success of the parish's Early Childhood Education Program on the campus of the Cathedral, which provides care, activities and instruction to children 6 weeks to 4 years old. This program provides services for working families in the downtown Little Rock area, and beyond.

The greatest success and fulfillment for the parish recently has been taking the initiative to seek out an Interim Dean and Rector who could lead the parish in a growing and renewal process. With the appointment of the Interim Dean and Rector, the parish has worked to welcome and demonstrate to the community the many opportunities available at Trinity Cathedral.

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

The Rt Rev'd Henry Niles Pierce, founder of Trinity Cathedral, set high liturgical standards. In the years since its establishment in 1884, the Cathedral has come to represent the best of what might be called "Broad Church," incorporating elements of both High-Church and Low-Church traditions.

The sermons heard here are sound in their scriptural basis. Our clergy celebrate the Eucharist in Eucharistic vestments, observing great reverence, without being "ceremonious." The presentation of the liturgy is done not just by the clergy, but also by lay representatives of the congregation. Services utilize the ministries of lectors, intercessors, Eucharistic ministers, choristers, acolytes, vergers, flower guild, altar guild, ushers, and hand bells. Sanctus bells are used regularly at the 9 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Sunday services. Incense is generally used at some, though not all, services on High Holy Days, such as Christmas and Easter. As a result, our Sunday morning services are regularly festal in nature.

All services use the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. Hymns are taken from The Hymnal 1982. The Sunday service schedule consists of a 7:30 a.m. service called "Early Church," which is a said Rite I Eucharist. An organ prelude serves as the musical offering at this service. No hymns or anthems are sung. This is followed by a 9 a.m. service called "Big Church," which has the largest regular attendance. The service is a choral Rite II Eucharist with music by The Cathedral Choir, supported by organ and additional instrumentalists. The Psalm is said at this service. The congregation takes an active part in the service music, singing the Gloria, Sanctus and Benedictus, and Angus Dei (or other Fraction Anthem). Sunday School/Christian Formation follows at 10:15 a.m., with a full brunch served in the parish house, known as Morrison Hall.

The 11:15 a.m. service is known as "High Church," which is a choral Rite I Eucharist, with music by a sextet of choristers and supported by organ and additional instrumentalists. The sextet and congregation at this service sing the Psalm. The sextet regularly sings different settings of the Mass/Communion Service. Each Sunday's fourth service is at 5 p.m., called "Late Church." It takes place in the nave of the Cathedral using a portable altar placed in the crossing. Usually one priest leads this last offering of the day. In the past, this fourth Sunday service has utilized Enriching Our Worship as the liturgical text. The midweek service held in Pierce Chapel on Wednesdays at 5:15 p.m. is a said Rite II Eucharist, which is also a Healing Service. The diversity of the Anglican tradition is well represented at Trinity Cathedral Parish.

3. ***How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?***

Trinity Cathedral has many opportunities for incorporating parishioners into ministry. Lay leaders guide many activities including Eucharistic ministers and visitors, an altar and flower guild, ushers, greeters, Cathedral tour guides, and a well-recognized All Saint's Guild, serving as a respectful and helpful funeral-response team. In addition, Trinity has a dedicated group of vergers, youth acolytes, and a choir, incorporating choristers from local high schools and colleges. There is also a very active Needle Point Kneeler Guild that is gradually replacing plain, worn kneelers in the Cathedral and Pierce Chapel, with new themed kneelers reflecting our life as a cathedral. Leading the pastoral care team are the Cathedral's Sub-Dean and a volunteer layperson that coordinate Eucharistic visitors to shut-ins and those in the hospital.

When the Cathedral returned to three Sunday morning services in September 2014, a successful "ministry scavenger hunt" was conducted for additional Eucharistic ministers, ushers, lectors, intercessors, and Altar Guild personnel. In the spring or fall of each year, a Ministry Fair is conducted to present ministries of the Cathedral through exhibits explaining their function and requesting additional volunteers. Even Newcomers Classes include presentations by the various Cathedral guilds explaining their function so newcomers are aware of how they can become a part of and involved in

the life of the Cathedral. The Vestry has also reinstated a Cathedral Life committee structure that includes separate committees composed of parishioners in the areas of Cathedral connections, family life, communications, and music and liturgy.

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

Children and adult formation have been a high priority for the past year. Although programs have always been in place, special emphasis on the quality of children's programs and activities, as well as spiritually intellectual offerings for adults, have been offered on a regular basis. The programs are varied and are offered on Sundays, as well as Wednesday evenings. Along with clergy, a full team of trained and licensed Eucharistic visitors are active, tending to the pastoral needs of the congregation through administration of the sacraments in private homes, hospitals, rehabilitation and nursing centers, and assisted-living centers. The visitors are on a rotating schedule and visit long-term shut-ins, as well as parishioners experiencing health issues temporarily preventing them from attending.

A pastoral care team, which includes lay ministers and clergy, is updated throughout the week on the status of members who have special needs. In addition, one of the clergy team has completed certification as a spiritual director and offers that ministry to individuals seeking spiritual guidance. Parishioners are encouraged to add names of individuals to prayer lists for the weekday Morning Prayer services and Sunday services. A Centurion's Guild was added this year. The guild incorporates a parishioner who is given the name of an individual to lift up in prayer throughout their day and in worship services. Morning Prayer is offered daily and the Cathedral's doors remain open for all who seek space for quiet contemplation. Individuals in discernment for Holy Orders are sponsored and encouraged by the Cathedral.

The Cathedral also houses an Arkansas Diocesan program, Iona Initiative, for those who are selected by the Commission on Ministry to prepare for the priesthood or diaconate.

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

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral sits in the center of the oldest, most historic part of Little Rock. As an inner-city church, the parish recognizes that the church community does not necessarily represent, for the most part, the needs beyond our doors. The parish participates on a bi-monthly basis with another downtown denomination to feed the hungry at lunchtime. The program is called Stew Pot. Trinity has been part of this vital ministry since its inception in 1978. The Sub-Dean meets at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) on a monthly basis to provide spiritual support to health care workers. The Cathedral's main campus also hosts weekly meetings for AA, and HIV Recovery and Friends. A community drama group uses the parish's facilities on Saturdays. The financial structure of the parish helps underwrite St. Francis House, a relief and support group for the homeless and for veterans, by placing the program in the annual budget, and occupying a seat on the St. Francis board of directors. Trinity founded and sponsors Feed the Hungry, a daily breakfast program for the homeless located in the train-station area of the city. Further, youth and adults have rallied in quick response to help victims of natural disasters, including victims of a recent devastating tornado, by donating immediate supplies and by joining other churches in helping to rebuild the affected community long after the storm was over. Also, because the Cathedral represents the Diocese of Arkansas, parish volunteers often visit and take communion to hospitals for out-of-town Episcopalians.

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

As the Cathedral church of the statewide diocese, Trinity Cathedral Parish is pleased to offer its facilities, talents, and influence to our diocesan family, the people of the immediate community, and the state. On a diocesan level, this is accomplished by hosting the Annual Diocesan Convention,

providing a site for ordination ceremonies, and providing facilities for members who hold diocesan offices and serve on diocesan boards. The Cathedral itself has been the place of historic "state occasions," such as the inaugural gubernatorial prayer service, the funerals of high-ranking judicial officials, and the funerals of community philanthropic leaders. The Cathedral has also been a venue of choice for marriage ceremonies and christenings for Episcopalians throughout the diocese. Tours of the Cathedral for various groups, state and diocesan wide, take place regularly. Many from the metropolitan area attend the fourth Sunday of Advent's evening service of Christmas Lessons and Carols, and Christmas Eve's midnight mass.

The parish supports the historic neighborhood in which it is located by being the central event venue for the Quapaw Quarter Spring Tour. The Cathedral itself has often been a tour site for this occasion. The parish also enjoys a sister relationship with Bethel A.M.E Church, which is located within blocks of the Cathedral's front door. A neighborhood basketball group uses the gym facilities weekly. A Hispanic basketball league has also used the gym facilities.

Trinity participates in the wider community of Little Rock by hosting large and small concerts of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra. A local community theatre group meets in Morrison Hall, the parish house space. A local support group for people with AIDS meets on the Cathedral grounds, as do varied support-based AA groups, including AI-Anon.

Christian formation classes, including a widely well-regarded lecture series led by the Interim Dean, as well as other instructional events presented by assisting clergy, have brought people from throughout the community to Morrison Hall. The Cathedral organization, and volunteer parishioners have worked in collaboration with the Little Rock Prep charter school, (which leases the space formerly housing The Cathedral School), to establish a Wednesday afternoon fine arts program for students at the school. Parishioners are also involved in many of the area's philanthropic and arts endeavors, serving on boards, chairing events, and underwriting community efforts. Members of the congregation have served the church as delegates to the General Convention, the boards of seminaries, as well other national church organizations. Trinity youth have been involved in Mission Palooza, while Tower Bell members have hosted change-ringing festivals, which bring people from Great Britain and various parts of the United States to Trinity Cathedral.

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

Within the last year, Trinity Cathedral has embarked on an exciting partnership with a K-4 public charter school, Little Rock Prep, housed on our campus (see above). Two years ago, the parish continued to own and service two empty buildings, which once accommodated The Cathedral School. After much deliberation over various uses for the buildings, the charter school presented itself to the Rector as a potential leaseholder. From the beginning of the relationship with the school, the Vestry was impressed with the mission of the school to serve students who are traditionally underserved in our public school system, and serve those students from the central Little Rock area, in which the Cathedral is located. The relationship has progressed to the point where an arts outreach program has been organized within the parish, representing an authentic partnership between the school and church family.

The foundational principles upon which the school was formed emphasize the strong academic skills students will need to succeed in the world. All of the students are eligible for free-and-reduced lunches, representing families who struggle economically. As a consequence of the strong academic curriculum needed to bring students to the level of their peers, students were not being offered an arts curriculum. The Trinity congregation has rallied to provide art classes once per week, infused with meaningful art education field trips. With the collaboration of the staff from Little Rock Prep and

Cathedral volunteers, orientation and training is now in place. For more information about the partnership, please contact the office of the Interim Dean and Rector, special assistant Jordan Butler, or volunteer coordinator Linda Brown.

8. ***How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?***

Trinity has been preparing for the future by implementing Cathedral Life, a new committee structure to involve more parishioners and enhance fellowship and sense of community. Also, through partnering with Little Rock Prep, better utilization of campus resources and to meet the needs of the community are being accomplished. For future facility needs, parish leadership has been planning and completing various maintenance and enhancement projects (some on-going) on the historic campus. Realizing that the existing website for the Cathedral is in great need of upgrading, the Vestry has done research and formed a working group to get the best proposal in place. In addition, although Trinity is a parish, the leadership and active members of the congregation are very cognizant of the need to strengthen the important role of Trinity as the Cathedral of the Diocese.

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

After the controversial closing in 2011 of the 54-year-old Cathedral School, membership and pledging income was adversely affected. Concerted stewardship efforts in 2013 for fiscal year 2014 produced the first increase in several years in total pledge income. However, a deficit budget was still projected for 2014. In November 2013, the then Dean and Rector resigned after 4½ years of service to accept a position in another state. The newly appointed Interim Dean and Rector began service and leadership in January 2014, and immediately understood that initial efforts must be focused on stewardship and finances in order to prepare a firm foundation for the Cathedral to call, within two years, a new Dean and Rector. The Interim Dean and Rector and the Vestry initiated an Easter Gifts program designed to lift giving by parishioners in order to eliminate the projected deficit. This program was immensely successful, doubling its goal, resulting in a balanced budget for the year and providing additional funds to begin significant repairs and renovations to campus facilities.

With strong lay leadership, the stewardship drive for 2015 has produced similar results, with increased pledging not only exceeding an initial goal but also meeting a stretch goal of \$1 million. The Vestry and parishioners are also well aware that giving must increase again for 2016 in order to provide a smooth transition for a new Dean and Rector.

The increased pledging is allowing the Cathedral to initiate long-deferred building repairs that will help ensure continued operation of the Cathedral for another 130 years. In other areas, the Cathedral has formed a Planned Giving committee that hosted a well-attended national church office seminar in 2014 for the Diocese of Arkansas. Other efforts by this committee will include a 2015 Lenten series program focusing on planned giving. The Cathedral also has a modest endowment fund overseen by an experienced and knowledgeable board. The Cathedral does utilize a portion of the growth income from the fund in accordance with the fund by-laws. A major goal of the new Planned Giving committee is to grow the endowment fund through various types of parishioner bequests. This focus and openness regarding the financial needs of the Cathedral have increased the awareness of the diverse worshipping community, and brought parishioners closer together in the knowledge of what will be needed to call a well-qualified and well-matched new Dean and Rector for Trinity Episcopal Cathedral Parish.

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

Trinity Cathedral, like any large community with a long history, has weathered many conflicts. The Cathedral School, a 54-year-old parish ministry for Pre-K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, closed in May 2011. The

school had been an integral part of the parish, and many parishioners were alumni or had sent their children to the school. The Cathedral School was long a resource for the parish, and helped to support family and children's programming. The school faced challenges regarding sustainable financing and a drop in enrollment, but school leadership and church leadership could not reach consensus on the best way to address the status or future of The Cathedral School. It was felt by many that the school was unsustainable. Distrust was fostered with the influence of social and print media, leading to a strong sense of doubt and misgivings within the church community. Sincere and honest communication was lacking among all parties. A number of families with children in the school, or with other connections to The Cathedral School, left the parish. Loss of income and reduced programming for the parish resulted. A counselor met with the Vestry, and several Vestry members gathered in homes with small groups of disenchanted members, to listen to concerns and opinions. Others contacted members through emails, phone calls, and lunch visits. But negative and distrustful feelings persisted.

The parish has attempted to provide restoration and progress since the closing of the school. However, many feel lingering issues have not been resolved, and wounds have been slow to heal. Despite the differences, the Holy Spirit keeps working, and our commitment to finding solutions is making progress. A new Dean and Rector who has a collaborative spirit, a listening heart, and a transparent management style can continue that progress.

11. ***What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well?***

We experienced a change in leadership in late 2013 with the resignation of our previous Dean and Rector. The Vestry demonstrated unity and singleness of purpose, working collaboratively for the selection of an effective Interim Dean and Rector who was chosen for, among other qualities, a long-time association with the Cathedral. To be sure, the Interim Dean and Rector has done an outstanding job of working with both parish and Vestry to set and reach new goals, effectively preparing the Cathedral for its call of a new Dean and Rector. The parish's financial house is in good order, as well. And the parish is slowly growing (with four baptisms on a recent Sunday), and the needs of the physical plant are being addressed. Through all that has occurred in the last four years, Trinity Cathedral, as a family and community of parishioners, has learned there is a need to improve communications, through greater transparency, resulting in a more unified parish family. Happily, many people have stepped forward and taken on new responsibilities to continue to build the parish. The interim period has gone exceedingly well.

In relation to the broader social changes in American society, the Cathedral has broadened its views in step with the Episcopal Church at large. Generally the position has been neither at the forefront nor the rear of progressive initiatives, minding George Herbert's admonition to be neither too stiff in resisting change, nor too eager in embracing it. Accordingly, a new Dean and Rector will find the Cathedral to be inclusive as to sexual orientation (gay and straight), and diverse as to political persuasion (progressive Democrat, conservative Republican, and independent).

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

- Pastor
- Theologian/Spiritual Leader
- Resourceful Administrator
- Community/Diocesan Liaison

### **Sunday Service Attendance**

**Time / Attendance / Services / Avg. Attend.**

7:30 a.m. / 816 / 52 / 16

10 a.m. / 6,563 (Jan.-Aug.) / 35 / 188

9 a.m. / 2,305 (Sept.-Dec.) / 17 / 136

11:15 a.m. / 1,557 (Sept.-Dec.) / 17 / 92

5 p.m. / 905 / 52 / 17

**Totals / 12,146 / 173**

Average Sunday Total Attendance: 234

*\*Palm Sunday attendance of 265 with three services; Easter attendance 603 with three services*

### **Weekday and Special Services Attendance**

**Service / Attendance / Services / Avg. Attend.**

Wed., 5:15 p.m. / 905 / 52 / 17

Morning Prayer / 325 / 179 / 2

Parkway Village / 62 / 11 / 6

IONA / 225 / 18 / 13

Funerals + Committal / 2,023 / 23

Weddings / 2,185 / 11

Holy Week / 227 / 6

Thanksgiving Day / 300 / 1

Christmas / 652 / 3

Misc. Services\* / 645 / 7

**Totals / 7,549 / 311**

*\*Ash Wednesday, Episcopal Collegiate School Baccalaureate, Blessing of Chalices, Burning of Palms, Ministration at Death*

### **Adult/Christian Formation Average Class Attendance**

- Wednesdays in Lent with Dr. Keller: 80-100
- Newcomers/Confirmation with Canon McLain: 15
- Fall Lecture Series with Dr. Keller: 80
- Living the Questions with Robert Johnston: 8-10
- Summer Cathedral Camp Week with Dr. Keller: 20
- Advent Prayers with Dr. Smith: 10
- Dreams with Rev. Susan Sims-Smith: 20

### **Church School**

- Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School: 20
- Number of Students for Children School: 283
- Number of Teachers/Leaders for Teen/Young Adults School: 2
- Number of Students for Teen/Young Adults School: 67
- Number of Teachers/Leaders for Adults School: 5
- Number of Students for Adults School: 32

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**Community Information**

The City In Which We Live

Little Rock Overview