October 2026



PARISH PROFILE

CHRIST CHURCH
PORTOLA VALLEY & WOODSIDE



Welcome

Our parish has the solid foundation of a caring and committed Christian community with traditions of excellent liturgy, music, and vibrant ministries, and we seek to call a rector who will build on these traditions to grow our congregation into the future. We are fortunate to have had good spiritual leadership in the past, adequate funds over the years and a dedicated core group of parishioners. We search for a new and inspiring leader to move us together in building a better Christian community for our time and place.

Our Mission Statement

The mission of Christ Episcopal Church, Portola Valley and Woodside, California, is to build Christian community in the Episcopal tradition by ministering to individuals, the parish and society, and working together to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God in tangible ways.



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Portola Valley, Woodside, & Nearby Communities

We are located on the San Francisco Bay Area Peninsula in the small towns of Portola Valley and Woodside, which have no traffic lights, and are among the only places in the San Francisco Bay Area that retain a rural character. Yet we are also located within six miles of Stanford University and the City of Palo Alto and between the vibrant cities of San Francisco and San Jose. We can drive to the Pacific Ocean and the San Francisco Bay within 25 minutes. San Francisco Airport (SFO) and San Jose Airport (SJC) are both about 30 minutes away.

Portola Valley is a residential community of approximately 4,353. Woodside, bordering Portola Valley to the north, has 5,287 residents. Both towns are home to well-educated professionals.

Our church is tucked between redwoods and orchards on Portola Road adjacent to the Portola Valley Town Center. The Town Center has sports fields, town offices and the library. A path between the town center and Christ Church allows the town staff to utilize our parking lot. A Presbyterian and a Catholic church are within a block of Christ Church and Ladera Community Church is nearby. The original 1909 one-room school house is adjacent to Christ Church to the east and is officially recognized on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Our parish boundaries encompass the towns of Portola Valley and Woodside; both enjoy a Mediterranean climate.

Half of the Portola Valley residents aged 25 or older have post-graduate degrees. Many of our families have two professional working parents, and many residents work in the technological research industries of Silicon Valley. About 10 residents of The Sequoias, one of the best life care communities in Northern California, belong to our parish and many participate in services each Sunday. For those who are unable to attend services, we offer ongoing pastoral care and monthly services at The Sequoias, which is a two-minute drive from our church.

Our home prices are high, presenting a barrier to families with moderate and lower incomes, but other communities within a few miles of Portola Valley and Woodside have more moderate home prices. Thirty per cent of our parishioners commute to Christ Church from a wide spectrum of communities up and down the Bay Area Peninsula. Because of our proximity to Interstate 280 and Sand Hill Road, these members can usually reach Christ Church within 15-20 minutes.



Our Parish Today

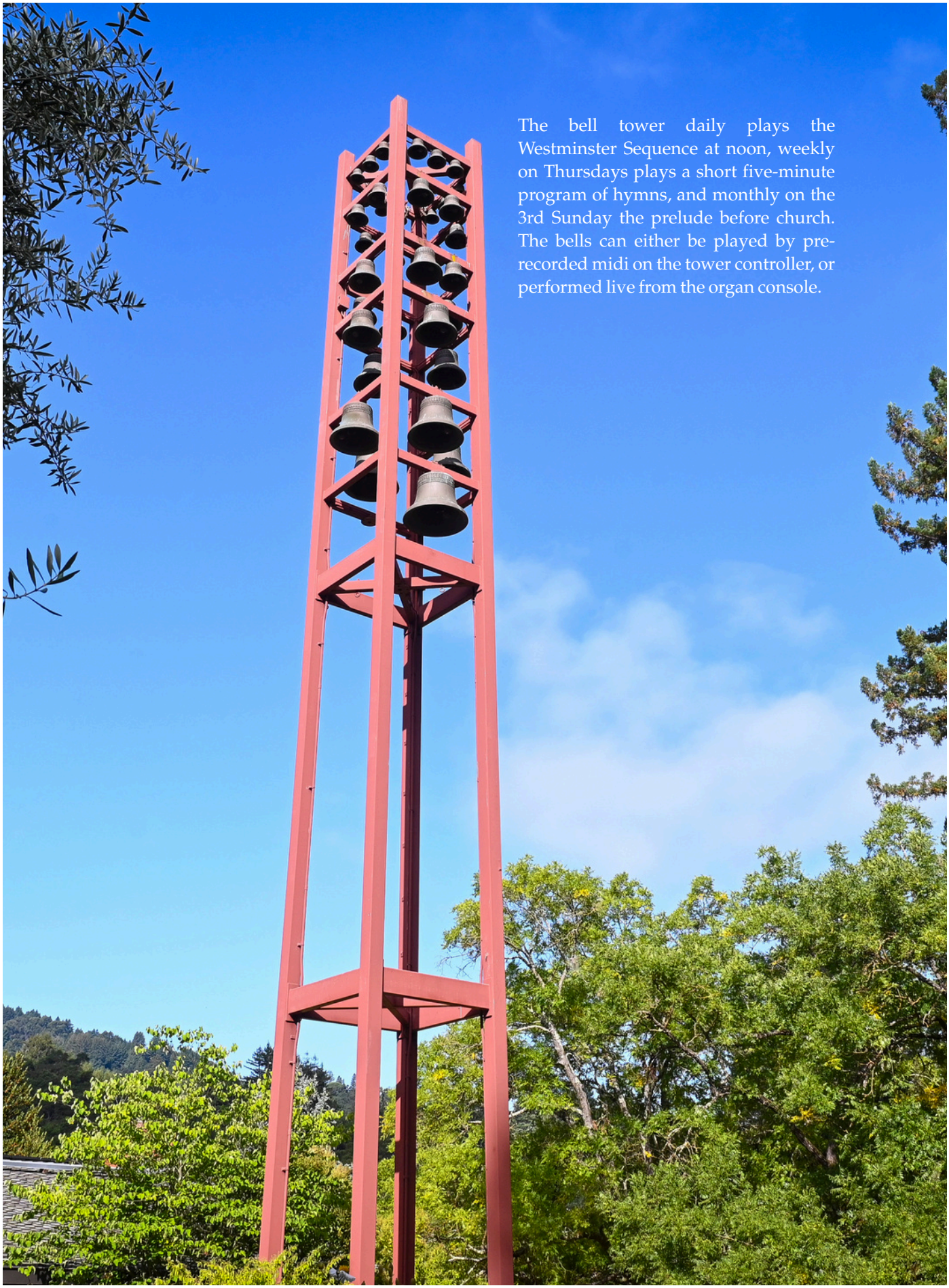
LITURGY & WORSHIP

The Holy Eucharist is at the heart of our worship, and is celebrated every Sunday morning at 10 am. Through the majority of the year, Rite II is celebrated with choral and congregational music. On some contemplative occasions we may follow Rite I. Our liturgy is primarily based on the Book of Common Prayer, though we occasionally explore other formats for special events, including our yearly "Blessing of the backpacks," Lessons and Carols, and Holy Thursday services. We also enjoy a collaborative relationship with Christ Church Los Altos and the other denominations in Portola Valley and have hosted and participated in joint services on special occasions, particularly centered on current events and social justice issues. Our Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Lay readers, acolytes, greeters and ushers and the Altar Guild faithfully assist every Sunday. Our tech team live-streams the service to YouTube.

Children are always welcome at Christ Church. Sunday School is offered during the service, and children come to the sanctuary to join their parents for Holy Communion.

We gather for special services throughout the liturgical year. Two services are held on Christmas Eve: a children's pageant with
Eucharist, and a candlelit choral service. Ash Wednesday is solemnly observed with one noon service. We observe Holy Week with Palm Sunday and Good Friday services. A special dinner is held on Maundy Thursday. Easter Sunday is often celebrated with great fanfare and special music. After the service, we have a large Easter Egg Hunt which is open to the community and usually welcomes 50-75 children.

Music is an integral part of our worship at Christ Church, and is offered in the richness of the Episcopal tradition. The supply clergy and the music director collaborate to plan our worship services. We have a core choir membership of twelve singers, and also have paid section leaders. Additional singers from the congregation and community join on special occasions. The choir is non-audition and open to all. Singers eagerly strive for a high level of musicianship and sing multiple anthems each Sunday, as well as leading the hymns from September-May. Summer choir takes place once a month in June, July, and August. The choir enjoys partnering with our neighboring parishes, including St. Bede's and St. Mark's in Palo Alto, and Christ Church in Los Altos. Several times each year, these churches combine forces to celebrate Evensong. On our campus, we have three beautiful instruments, a Visser-Rowland pipe organ, a Boston grand piano, and a bell tower. Our mechanical-action pipe organ, built in 1992, is a particular point of pride for the congregation. Its glorious sound is part of worship every Sunday, and visitors frequently tell us that they are moved by the beautiful music of our choir and organ. The instrument is highly regarded in the community and is frequently visited by local organists and featured in concerts.



The bell tower daily plays the Westminster Sequence at noon, weekly on Thursdays plays a short five-minute program of hymns, and monthly on the 3rd Sunday the prelude before church. The bells can either be played by pre-recorded midi on the tower controller, or performed live from the organ console.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION & CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

We are an intellectually curious and spiritually hungry congregation with high quality programs to meet the needs of our members at every age and stage of life. The emphasis is not on acquiring a set of beliefs, but rather on becoming a new people. In collaboration with Christ Church Los Altos, we are offering a variety of classes to explore and deepen our faith. As we explore and deepen our faith, we grow in the ability to connect that faith to all of life, to become who Jesus is in the world.

Women's Spirituality Group:
Formed in the early 2000s, we study books by a wide variety of inspirational spiritual and religious authors including the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Desmond Tutu, Michael Curry, and Pope Francis. We also pray with meditations by many poets including Rumi and Hafiz.

Carillon Preschool:
Carillon Preschool welcomes children aged 1 year 4 months to 5 years into a nurturing environment. We value a blend of play-based learning and exposing the children to cognitive growth, social awareness, and motor development to give access to teaching the whole child. Our philosophy centers around the belief that children learn best through play and a creative curriculum designed for a deep love for learning. Tailored to each child, our monthly thematic units encourage autonomy, social competence, and the joy of making choices. Both indoor and outdoor activities are thoughtfully planned to accommodate individual needs and developmental differences, promoting inclusivity and ensuring every child can thrive and reach their full potential.

Carillon Preschool offers lovely, age-appropriate classroom spaces that seamlessly integrate into the children's learning process. Each classroom is thoughtfully designed to provide access to various learning materials and environments. From art stations where little hands can explore creativity to puzzles that stimulate problem-solving skills, to dramatic play spaces that encourage imaginative storytelling to quiet corners where children can retreat for moments of reflection, our classrooms offer a rich tapestry of experiences. Additionally, circle time brings children together for group activities, fostering social interaction and cooperation. These purposefully crafted spaces serve as the backdrop for endless exploration, discovery, and growth, providing the ideal setting for each child to flourish.

The preschool's outdoor space has a fenced space nestled alongside majestic redwood trees. This space allows for ample opportunities for imaginative play and exploration. The children play with mud kitchens, climbing structures, sandbox, wheel toys, and more to encourage and engage their senses and curiosity in a safe and stimulating environment.

Central to the focus is the awareness that each child is a spiritual being, with an innate curiosity about the world around them. Through weekly chapel services, where we celebrate common bonds and "the joy of living in God's world," we aim to nurture the spiritual essence of each child, fostering a deep connection to their surroundings and the people within it.

The rector was typically leading two chapel services with two different age groups every other week; each service lasts 20 minutes, taking part in a meeting once a month with preschool staff, attending the Carillon Preschool family events (Back to School Night, school fundraiser, and school holiday events). The preschool director participates in Christ Church Parish staff meetings and consults with the rector as needed.

Beyond academic and spiritual growth, our community values collaboration and communication. Our advisory board works closely with the director to guide on school matters. The vestry, responsible for approving the school budget and voting on matters affecting both the parish and the preschool, fosters a relationship built on mutual respect, trust, and open communication.





OUTREACH MINISTRIES

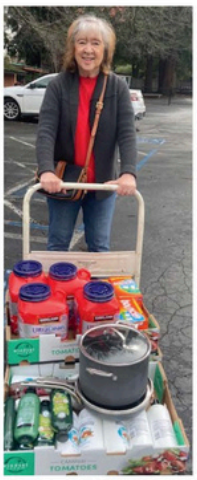
Through service to Local and International Missions, we are keenly aware of the needs of the poor, locally, nationally, and internationally, and we actively work to support people who are in want. Our Outreach Committee is extraordinarily active and helps our parish, in the words of our Bishop, to "punch above our weight" in serving our community. Our church supports the following organizations with volunteering and fundraising:

- Life Moves (addressing local homelessness)
- GAIA Global Health (eradicating AIDS in Malawi, Africa)
- Rise Against Hunger (ending hunger worldwide)
- SpiritCare (spiritual support for SF Bay Area seniors in care facilities)
- Project WeHope (food insecurity in East Palo Alto)
- Coast House shelter (addressing homelessness in Half Moon Bay)

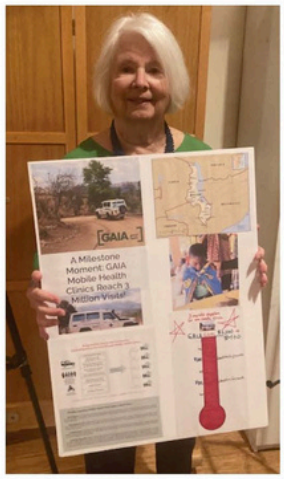







JOANN
TOMATOES


JOANN


GAIA
A Milestone Moment: GAIA Mobile Health Clinics Reach 3 Million Visits!





















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Underwear
For the Homeless
Thank you!!!


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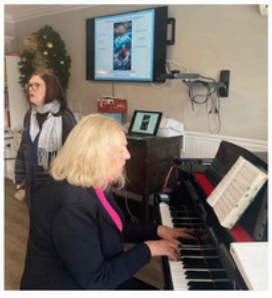


PARISH FELLOWSHIP

A Community of Friends in Social and Spiritual Activities

This amazing place is where we experience the joy of Christian community. All feel welcome, comfortable, accepted and safe. Our love and support for each other has been a binding force at our parish since its founding. We study, work, pray and play together. Many routinely scheduled events support the close-knit relationships among our members.

Coffee hours: The Sunday services at 10:00 am is followed by gathering for coffee, treats and conversation in the parish hall.

Barbecues: Church lunch barbeques are held in the garden patio in the spring and fall and other special occasions, combining standard grill fare with potluck offerings.

Dinner Events: We have community dinners about once per month on Thursday evenings to come together in fellowship, learn a bit about one another and strengthen our connections. Our medieval Christmas banquet follows a 14th century Oxford ceremony complete with music, royalty and jesters, and ending with singing carols and prayer. Our Maundy Thursday Agape Meal kicks off our communal celebration of the Triduum, leading us to Easter.

Shepherd's Care: We have developed this program to provide stronger church community "in-reach" by offering pastoral care to members and opportunities for members to connect with each other.

Concerts: Our choir and music director offer concerts to the community.

Voices in the Valley Speaker Series: We host speakers in monthly sessions open to the community on topics ranging from music, to the Supreme Court, to schools in Africa.

Intergenerational Events: Gingerbread decorating, the Easter Egg Hunt, Ministry Fair, Día de los Muertos and pumpkin decorating bridge connections between the full range of congregants, especially the youth and families of our congregation and our preschool.



Membership, Income and Expenses

Christ Church is a moderately-sized parish within the Diocese of California. We have remained financially viable through our seventieth anniversary and beyond.

Our 2025 Membership and Finances	
Number of Adults	130
Number of Children	27
Average Sunday Attendees (adults/children)	55
Number of Pledging Units	59
Income and Budget	
Pledges 2025	$361,276
Average Yearly Sunday Plate Collection	$14,000
Carillon Pre-school 2025-2026	$499,964
Budget for 2026	$563,052
Endowment Fund Assets	$2,079,789
External Expenditures	
Diocesan Assessment	$53,435

The Diocese of California

The Diocese of California is the oldest diocese in the state. It extends from Marin County to northern Santa Clara County along the coastal region and from Contra Costa County to Alameda County along the eastern borders of San Francisco Bay. Our diocese includes eight deaneries. Christ Church is part of the Peninsula Deanery. For information about our diocese, see www.diocal.org.

Our diocese elected the Rt. Rev. Austin Keith Rios as the ninth Bishop of California in 2024.

Our parish regularly represents the parish in deanery and diocesan meetings.

- A Christ Church parishioner has recently served as both President of the Peninsula Deanery and Chair of the diocesan Executive Council.
- Christ Church has worked in recent years with diocesan planned giving staff to cultivate major gifts both to the parish and to diocesan institutions (such as Bishop's Ranch).
- Several parishioners have worked closely with Episcopal Charities, a major diocesan institution (http://episcopalcharities.org), in awarding grants to Peninsula-based non-profit organizations.
- Groups of adults and youth from Christ Church have visited Grace Cathedral (http://www.gracecathedral.org) and received tours
- The bishop's recent visitations to the parish have been occasions of celebration and enthusiasm for the diocese and its work.

Our Attendance

Our attendance averages 50 each Sunday, and we are looking to our new rector to help us grow our attendance.

Our Financial Health

The following data provides a history of the financial health of our parish.

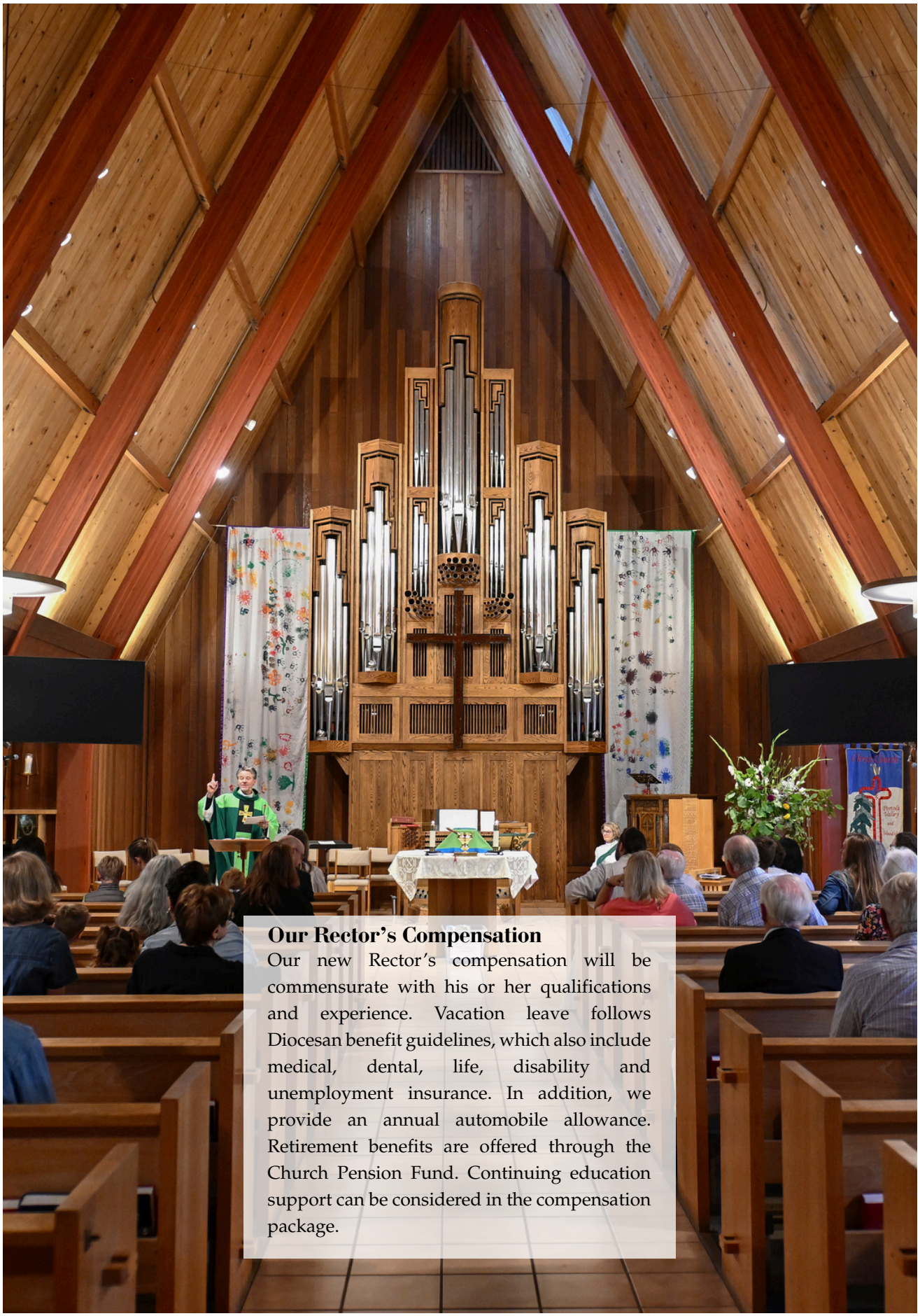
Important information about our financial status includes:

- The most critical financial documents are our annual audited statements and balance sheet. These are available for review in the church office.
- The annual Parochial Report is the Diocesan Record, also available for review in the church office.
- All assets are kept at acquisition cost or realized cash receipts on sale.
- The only accrued items are pledge advances and preschool advanced payments.



On summarizing our financial status, the Rector Search Committee appreciates the fact that our parish has always been able to raise funds for capital improvements and special causes over the years. In addition, we have always fulfilled our annual Diocesan Assessment obligation. With respect to our overall financial welfare, we realize that we traditionally have fared well during economic downturns, even at times when other local Diocesan parishes were not as fortunate.





Our Rector's Compensation

Our new Rector's compensation will be commensurate with his or her qualifications and experience. Vacation leave follows Diocesan benefit guidelines, which also include medical, dental, life, disability and unemployment insurance. In addition, we provide an annual automobile allowance. Retirement benefits are offered through the Church Pension Fund. Continuing education support can be considered in the compensation package.









Facilities

The redwood buildings of our facilities, with their rustic and simple architecture, fit our rural setting. Our grounds, which consist of three acres, have three single-story structures:
the Church building, Parish Hall and an office wing. There are no stairs or ramps.

The Church building includes a narthex, nave, sanctuary, transepts and sacristy. The building's distinguishing architectural feature is its steep roof and the resultant inner sound-enhancing space. The narthex, with its award- winning stained glass and small recessed-apse sitting area, provides a greeting space and a gracious entrance to the nave.

Pews in the nave and chairs in the transepts comfortably seat two hundred. The transepts provide flexibility for large memorial services.

Our custom-built set organ and 34-bell tower are community treasures. Our Visser-Rowland twenty-one stop tracker pipe organ is available for students, concerts, and special organ performances.

Our garden patio with benches and arbors provides space for repose, children's play, parish barbecues, occasional receptions, and summer Sunday morning services. The Churchyard columbarium is located in a peaceful setting within a grove of redwood trees that are adjacent to the east side of the nave. A native dry-creek garden adds color outside the west side of the nave. Our children's play areas are fenced and located near the Parish Hall and rear parking lot.

Adjacent to the office building is a small, peaceful patio partly surrounded by a rock garden with native plants. Chairs, a table and a view to the west across a meadow to the forested slope of the Coast Range provide the staff, parishioners, and Carillon preschool families a quiet place for coffee, lunch, and relaxation.

The Parish Hall is a multi-purpose space with a commercial kitchen, often used to host children's Sunday School, coffee hour, and community meals. This facility is also used during the week for parish-

sponsored activities, including the Mommy and Me events for adults with toddlers and the weekday Carillon Preschool. At Carillon Preschool we are pleased to offer our Lunch Bunch and After Care program available Monday through Thursday from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM. During this time, children enjoy lunch together, fostering social skills and meaningful peer connections. Our afternoons also include engaging enrichment experiences, such as hands-on STEAM projects as well as indoor and outdoor exploration and play in our beautiful spaces. We are continually growing to meet the needs of our families and are planning to expand our hours and enrichment opportunities in the future.

The office wing houses our Rector's and Music Director's offices. It also includes a library/parlor and an administrator's office with computer and document production equipment.

Several years ago, a few interested parishioners formed a Limited Liability Corporation to buy and install solar panels on the roof of Christ Church with a goal to move the parish "off the grid". The partnership agreed to have the Church pay back the LLC for its investment over a fifteen-year period, at which point Christ Church will own the solar panels outright. The results have been phenomenal: our energy production is currently exceeding our usage.

Rectory

We recognize that housing costs in this area are very high, and we are blessed to have land to build on. We have completed a land survey, our architect has completed preliminary drawings, a parishioner contractor will build the Rectory for cost. We have sufficient money in our housing account to pay for the construction and we plan a capital fund raise in 2027 to raise additional money. Our Rector will have the use of the Rectory as part of our compensation package.

Our Parish Background

Christ Church came into being at a time when Portola Valley was transitioning from a rural farming community with a few large estates,







scattered homes, and summer cottages to residential subdivisions populated predominantly with young families. Our Church began when several families responded to a notice in the local newspaper inviting those interested in forming a new church sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of California.

Following fundraising efforts and the purchase of three acres of land on Portola Road, a groundbreaking ceremony for our church building was held in May of 1956. The completed building was dedicated in March of 1957, and Christ Church was designated a parish in 1958.

Qualities We Seek In A Rector

We desire a rector who will lead, grow, and nurture our church. Our church is a welcoming place where we express God's love through worship, spiritual growth, and active participation in our local and global communities. The following attributes are desired for our rector:

VISIONARY ENGAGEMENT

- Possessing a holistic vision for church growth that is matched by an active engagement with the congregation.
- A collaborative approach with clergy, lay leaders, and parishioners to deepen their understanding of faith.
- An ability to inspire and empower all members to share their talents in service of the church's mission.

COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY

- A strong commitment to nurturing families and individuals of all ages.
- Willingness to foster a culture of fellowship, including youth ministry, adult education and in-reach initiatives to better serve our parishioners.
- An emphasis on inclusivity and welcoming all individuals into our church community.

INSPIRATIONAL PREACHING

- A compelling and thought-provoking preacher grounded in Episcopal theology and with the ability to deliver stimulating, spirit-filled sermons that connect scripture to contemporary life and resonate with our parishioners' experiences.

MANAGEMENT

- Strong organizational and personal management skills.
- Resolve conflicts with grace, love, and understanding.
- Care for our staff, who we deeply appreciate. Our staff runs our wonderful music program, children's choir, fellowship programs, and preschool and has carried our church through this transitional period between rectors.

STEWARDSHIP AND SERVICE

- A commitment to being exceptional stewards of time, talent, and treasure within the parish and the broader community.
- Experience in creating and leading outreach efforts that address social and environmental concerns.
- A supportive and nurturing approach that encourages individuals to engage in God's work.

WARMTH AND WELCOMING NATURE

- A naturally warm and welcoming demeanor that fosters a loving community atmosphere.
- The ability to connect personally with congregants and newcomers alike, making everyone feel at home.
- Strong interpersonal skills that encourage open communication and relationship-building.

We look forward to welcoming a dedicated leader who shares our vision and mission, and who is eager to walk alongside us in faith and service as we grow our parish.

Our Staff, Vestry, and Rector Search Committee

Music Director



Lauren Wittine: Lauren has been the music director at Christ Church since September of 2018. She hails from Florida, where she studied at the University of Florida and earned a Bachelor of Music in Organ Performance and a Bachelor of Arts in English. Lauren is involved in the local music community, and has served on the board of the local American Guild of Organists (AGO) for five years. She was also the Chair of the Young Organists Committee for the 2024 national AGO convention in San Francisco. In recent years, Lauren became certified to work in Early Childhood Education and now she teaches music class bi-weekly at Carillon Preschool. Her favorite aspect of her work at Christ Church is the opportunity to lift people up and encourage them through music and she prides herself on building a choir community that is positive and nurturing.

Parish Administrator



Chantal Eshghipour: Chantal manages the day-to-day operations of the Christ Church office and coordinates financial operations of the parish and preschool; administers the columbarium churchyard, schedules space and manages the long-range calendar; helps produce and print worship bulletins and weekly newsletter; and schedules readers, greeters, ushers, flowers, and altar guild. Chantal brings over 20 years of related experience, along with a fervent heart for serving the Lord and His church body. Her extensive experience includes executive assistant and program manager of both private and public companies as well as marketing, investor relations and corporate communications assignments. Sh holds a Bachelor's degree in business and French from San Jose State University.

Carillon Preschool Director



Cara O'Connell: Cara has been a part of Carillon School since 2015 and has served as Director since 2022. Cara's teaching career began in New Jersey, and earned a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with a specialty in Sociology from Georgian Court University. With over 23 years of experience in Early Childhood Education, she has worked with each of the age groups at Carillon, from 2's, to 3's, to Pre-K.

In addition to her teaching role, she served as Co-Director from 2019 to 2021 and then as Director since 2022, leading the school for students, families, and staff.

Vestry

Lena Perkins, Senior Warden
Ruth Ann Wrucke, Co-Jr. Warden
Paul Lovoi, Co -Jr. Warden
Betsy Alexander
Sarah Halsey
Andy Pflaum
Mercer Stronck

Rector Search Committee

Wendy McAdam
Vinie Miller
Lenore Lovoi
Sandy Bakken
Mark Flegel

Application Instructions

Thank you for your interest in our search for the next rector of Christ Church of Portola Valley and Woodside.

To apply, please submit your materials here.

If you have any questions about the application process, please contact the Rev. J. Sierra Reyes, Canon to the Ordinary, at sierrar@diocal.org.



Application submissions need to include:

1. A cover letter expressing why you are called to be the next Rector of Christ Church of Portola Valley and Woodside.
2. Your resume.
3. Your Vocation Hub Clergy Profile.

All applications and communications with applicants will be treated with complete confidentiality. We look forward to receiving your application.

~ The Christ Church Search Committee

CHRIST CHURCH
PORTOLA VALLEY & WOODSIDE