

St. John's Episcopal Church

Bellefonte, PA

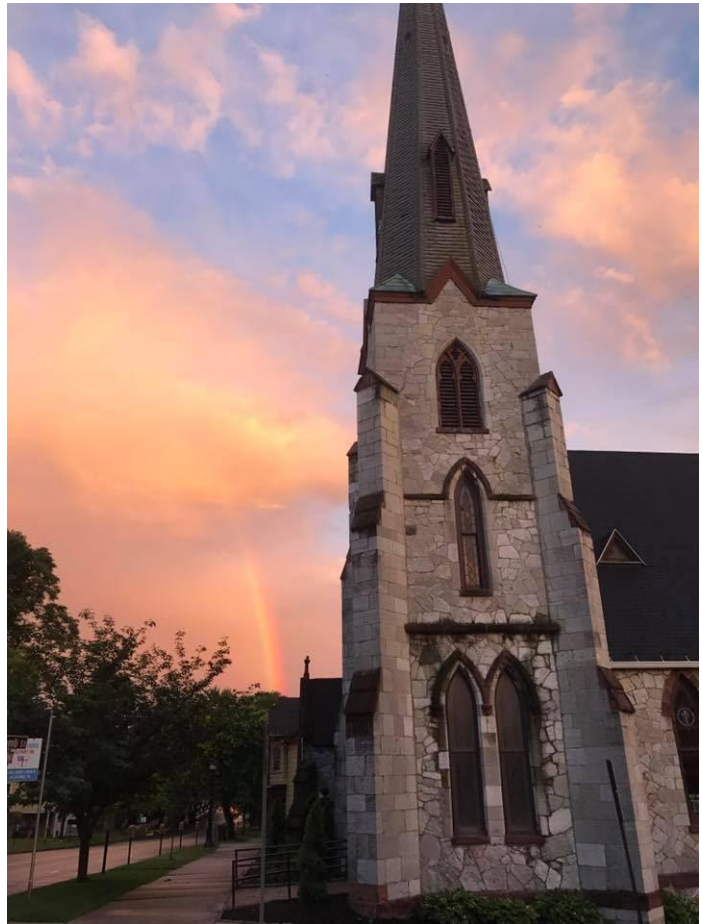
Parish Profile 2024



Creator of all good things, you have blessed our parish with the gifts of a loving community, devotion, and discernment. Grant that we may deepen our commitment to you, to each other, and to the future of our congregation during this search process. May we grow together in grace so that we may be fully prepared to support the ministry of our new rector; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Contents

Letter of Greeting	3
History and Facilities	4
Diocese, Clergy, and Staff.....	6
Sunday Worship	8
Who We Are.....	9
Our Vision.....	12
Our Community.....	14





Saint John's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Letter of Greeting
April 2024

Dear Friend in Christ:

St. John's is a spirited and caring parish devoted to supporting its members, to serving our local community, and to keeping a high liturgical worship practice here in the heart of central Pennsylvania. As we find ourselves in a time of transition and reflection, we have discovered that 93% of our parishioners feel that St. John's has made a significant impact on their spiritual life.

We therefore seek a priest who can build on our strengths and is adept at preaching, pastoral care, and community engagement. We hope for a leader who will nurture our talents and foster our outreach endeavors, who will encourage the commitment of our young people and address the concerns of our aging parishioners. Sharing our commitment to serving the poor and suffering in our community, we seek a rector who will inspire us in our various roles as Christians in society. We also hope our rector will appreciate belonging to the St. John's parish family.

In sum, we are searching for someone who will enjoy our fellowship, help us to develop a vision for our future, and who will exhibit strategic management skills to assist us in sustaining our strong history of dedicated service and stewardship.

Faithfully,

The St. John's Search Committee, on behalf of the Vestry and the members of our Parish.

History and Facilities

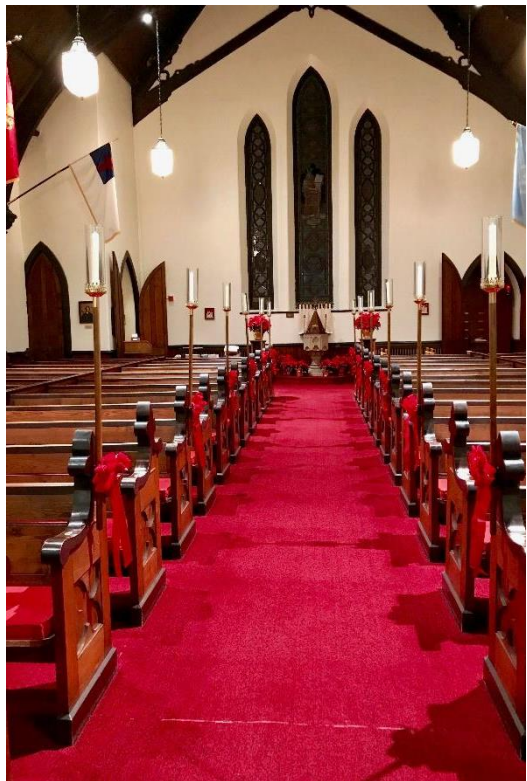
Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, has recorded Episcopal worship since 1825 when Episcopalians gathered in a cabinet shop, then later at the local Masonic lodge. As the congregation grew, Bellefonte was designated a regular supply station, furnished from Lewistown until the St. John's parish was organized in 1836.

The Rev. George W. Natt became the first rector of St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church in 1837, and the congregation worshipped in a wooden frame structure located at the current corner of East High and South Penn Streets, behind the Centre County Courthouse. The grey-stone Gothic Revival church that houses our congregation at the corner of North Allegheny and West Lamb Streets opened on Easter Day, 1871, and was consecrated on June 7, 1872.

St. John's was the Episcopalian "Mother Church" in Centre County, and its rectors helped to establish other Episcopal churches and missions in the area, notably in Lock Haven and State College. Throughout almost two centuries, St. John's has counted among its membership numerous community leaders, including early founders of Penn State.

In addition to the church, our grounds encompass two other buildings: the recently renovated Canterbury House, which has served as a rectory as well as meeting space, and a parish hall.

The need for a rectory to house the Rev. John Hewitt and his family prompted Major W. F. Reynolds to have the house built next to the church on Lamb Street. Major Reynolds gave the house as a thank-offering and presented the house to the parish on November 29, 1877.





The Mary R. Beaver Fellowship Hall, built in 1907, is integral to our parish life and seats 80-100 people. Recently renovated with air conditioning, a new floor, and a refurbished ceiling, the hall serves as a meeting space for church and community groups. Church members use the hall for our weekly coffee hour as well as fellowship meals and fundraising activities.

Today, while maintaining a liturgical-centered formal worship practice, St. John's prides itself on its diverse membership and its active community outreach and service to Bellefonte and the surrounding area.



Diocese, Clergy, and Staff

Our parish belongs to the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, comprising 62 congregations with 9,115 members (2021) located in a wide swath that extends from New York to Maryland. In 2015, the Right Reverend Dr. Audrey Scanlan was elected as our eleventh bishop. She came to Pennsylvania from Connecticut, where she served on diocesan staff as the Canon for Mission Collaboration and Congregational Life. Our diocesan office is in Harrisburg. For further information on the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, please visit <http://www.diocesecpa.org>.

Deacon Alex Dyakiw

Deacon Dyakiw was ordained to the vocational diaconate in 2007. A Brooklyn native, Deacon Alex and his wife, Ellen, relocated to Bellefonte in the early 1990s. Since ordination, Deacon Alex has led, or participated in, many outreach ministries in the area, including a weekly men's group, food ministry, and visitation to local prisons and elder care facilities. He has served twice as interim chaplain at the Mount Nittany Medical Center. Although partially retired, he provides leadership in the congregation and actively serves the community.



Deacon Kevin Lowe

The Reverend Kevin M. Lowe was ordained to the diaconate in December, 2023. Born and raised in Ithaca, NY, he has lived in State College since 2007. He will complete his Masters of Divinity at Bexley Seabury Seminary in May 2024 and hopes to secure a call to a church elsewhere this summer. Deacon Kevin is also a historian of American religion with a PhD from Penn State; a professional musician; and a husband and father.



Larry Roberson, Senior Warden

Larry has served as the Senior Warden since 2012. A cradle Episcopalian born in Williamsburg, Virginia, he attended Bruton Parish and Saint Martin's churches. He came to Bellefonte in 2006, joined St. John's, and first served on Vestry in 2009. He has assisted with many projects, such as restoration of the Fellowship Hall, floor repairs of the main entrance to the church, and Columbarium expansion. On Sundays he runs equipment for the video livestream to Facebook and YouTube.



Ellen Dyakiw, Children's Sunday School Director

Ellen retired from teaching elementary school after thirty years and has taken her love for children into our Sunday school classroom. As director, she believes that a strong religious foundation will help young people grow to live a caring and meaningful life. Ellen volunteers in a variety of community outreach projects, including a garden therapy program, and free tutoring and craft club at Bellefonte Youth Services. Moving from New York in the 1990's, Ellen has found a home in Bellefonte, where her heart is at St. John's church. She lives here with her husband, Deacon Alex.



Erik Clayton, Organist & Choir Director

Erik Clayton was appointed Director of Choirs at State College Area High School in 2015. He received his undergraduate and master's degrees from Penn State University, where he studied choral conducting. At St. John's, he directs a quartet of professional singers and provides special music (including wind and string accompaniments and an augmented choir) for High Feast Days. Having served as church musicians for more than 15 years, Erik and his wife, Rebecca, are proud to call St. John's their church home. They reside in State College with their four children.



Barbara Roberson, Parish Treasurer

Barbara Roberson came to live in Bellefonte in 2007 with her husband, Larry. They chose to make St. John's their spiritual home and became members soon after. Barbara is a Scot, born and brought up on the northeast coast of Scotland. In addition to being treasurer, she serves on the Altar Guild, volunteers with FaithCentre, and helps with the children's Sunday School.



Trish Weidemann, Parish Coordinator

Trish grew up in New Jersey and lived in Baltimore for 18 years before coming to Centre County. She moved to Bellefonte from State College ten years ago. Trish holds an accounting degree from Rutgers University of New Jersey and loves working with numbers. In her spare time, she likes to weed the garden, mow the lawn, play cards, do puzzles, and walk her dog. She also loves to crochet and is partners, with Sunday School Director Ellen Dyakiw, of "Scarves & Things."



Sunday Worship

Our 9:00 celebration of the Holy Eucharist is a "Low Mass," which includes a sermon, but no music, and lasts about 40 minutes. This service is spoken in traditional language, so the service has a somewhat more formal feel despite its simplicity and brevity.



Our 10:30 celebration of the Eucharist is a High Mass, with the priest singing certain parts of the service, with sung responses from the choir and congregation. The service includes hymns and a sermon, and normally lasts about an hour. For about two-thirds of the year, the 10:30 Mass is offered in contemporary language, and for about one-third of the year, it is offered in traditional language, as in the 9:00 Mass. Increased ceremony involves a greater number of servers assisting at the altar. On High Holy days, we offer the Solemn Mass, like a High Mass, but with incense.



Weekday Worship

- On Tuesdays, lay leaders provide a weekly prayer service at 5:15 p.m.
- On Thursdays, a Low Mass follows 5:15 p.m. prayers. This contemporary-language service has no music or sermon but does have a healing rite for members of the congregation to receive laying-on-of-hands and anointing with prayers for healing.

Both services last about 30-45 minutes.

Who We Are

Strong and Welcoming

At St. John's, "welcoming" is not just a word, but an action. We are an involved congregation, dedicated to our church and not afraid of hard work. In fact, a recent survey reveals that most of our parishioners have volunteered in some aspect of the life of the church and its programs. Though we look to clergy for guidance, we don't expect our priest to be the primary motivator of every initiative. We are willing and able to take on lay leadership roles as the situation warrants.





Parishioner’s responses on 2024 survey when asked to describe St. John’s.

Adaptable

Whereas we find strength in the traditions of the past, we welcome the challenges and opportunities of the ever-changing world. For example, our parish is a mix of new and long-time members. Due to the transient nature of university positions, it is not uncommon for professors and students to be with us for just a few years. But rather than destabilizing, we find this influx of new life an important part of our collective character. One measure of our ability to attract new members is that more than a quarter of those recently surveyed have been attending St. John’s for five years or fewer. Similarly, although we cherish and celebrate liturgical traditions, our commitment to ecumenism has made our church appealing to congregants from a variety of religious backgrounds. While we appreciate the joyful presence of music in our worship services and value liturgical continuity, we also welcome new voices.



Fiscally Responsible

Although we are a small parish, we have maintained modest but stable growth, and we have been very consistent about meeting, if not exceeding, our budget for many years. With nearly 60 families and 39 giving units, our budget for 2024 is \$220,956. We are particularly blessed by endowments with a total value of \$1,020,436, that provide substantial revenue for the church from year to year. Our 2023 income from the endowments was \$41,690. We are currently able to maintain our properties within budget. Recently, we have replaced the wood floor at the altar and choir loft behind the rood screen, as well as the entryway. Additionally, we expanded our Columbarium and resolved bat abatement and remediation.



Focused on Service

At St. John's, we find great strength in our church family, and we are dedicated to responding in gratitude with service to the world around us. We are blessed to have a full-time deacon, appointed by the bishop, who has been an invaluable asset to St. John's and the community at large, working tirelessly in outreach missions with the local hospital, elder care facilities, prisons, and other area churches.



Our Vision

Outreach to Families

We have worked hard to equip our buildings with facilities that accommodate childcare and Sunday school; now we need continued guidance in the expansion of our children's programs. In recent years, we created raised-bed gardens on the rectory lawn for use by children from the local community center, and members of our parish provide a bi-weekly evening meal for children from the Youth Services Bureau.

Community Outreach

We prize our involvement in the community, and we hope to become a greater presence in the lives of our neighbors in need. We wish to steward our ample resources: many hardworking members with a broad variety of talents and abilities willing to lead new initiatives; facilities necessary for meetings, education, and ministry. We seek continued guidance to coordinate and make the best use of these precious gifts.



Increased Opportunities for Christian Education and Development

St. John's maintains an active men's group devoted to spiritual growth, and we offer several study and discussion opportunities throughout the year to enrich spiritual formation. We'd like to continue these practices and even expand formation programs to ensure that all who seek them may have such opportunities.



Parishioner's responses on 2024 survey when asked to describe St. John's as they hope we will be in five years.

Our Community

Historic Town with Modern Amenities

The historic borough of Bellefonte—seat of Centre County—provides a pedestrian-friendly urban feel in a picturesque rural setting. Daily life in Bellefonte includes views of gorgeous historic architecture and beautiful vistas of the green undulating ridges that surround Happy Valley.



With more than 300 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, Bellefonte has impressive civic architecture and private homes, including those of seven nineteenth-century governors—five of Pennsylvania and two of western states. Some of the larger homes in the area have been given new life as bed and breakfasts and museums, and visitors appreciate walking tours of the town. In addition, old structures have been repurposed into modern restaurants, hotels, distilleries, and breweries.



Some highlights of Bellefonte and the surrounding area include:

Talleyrand Park and Bellefonte Waterfront

In the heart of Bellefonte, head to Talleyrand Park to walk along Spring Creek, feed the trout, and enjoy sounds of cascading water from our town's natural spring. Talleyrand Park is a popular meeting place for all ages with a playground, historic railroad station and visitor's center, and soon-to-be bandshell for outdoor music and entertainment.



Bellefonte Museums

Built in 1810, the Linn House currently houses the Bellefonte Art Museum for Centre County which engages visitors in the region's vibrant culture and history. The museum hosts a permanent exhibit that reminds us of Bellefonte's role in the Underground Railroad with stories of the courage of freedom-seeking African Americans and local Quaker ironmasters who helped them. The Centre County Library's Historical Museum is located on the second floor of the historic 1814 Miles-Humes House in Bellefonte. It is dedicated to local history, including Bellefonte's industrial roots, famous families, Civil War artifacts, textiles, and more.

Local Dining Establishments

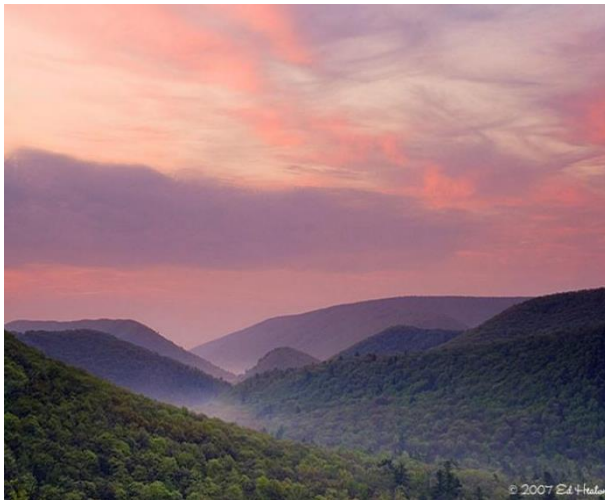
Adjacent to Talleyrand Park, enjoy a breakfast panini at Bonfatto's Italian Corner Cafe or a cappuccino at Café Buzz. The historic Pennsylvania Match Company building now houses the national headquarters of the American Philatelic Society and a large library, as well as Big Spring Spirits, featuring cocktails created from spirits distilled on-site with the water of Spring Creek. With roots in the early nineteenth century, the Gamble Mill is a pillar of Bellefonte architecture and was lovingly restored in 2020 to house a fresh-from-farm restaurant, craft cocktail bar, event space, and lodging.



About $\frac{3}{4}$ mile upstream on the Logan Branch from Talleyrand Park, Axemann Brewery and Titan Hollow restaurant and cidery have brought new life to old factory buildings. Other favorite food and dining options include Good Intent Cider, Mama Lucrezia's, and The Governor's Pub.

Centre Region Parks and Outdoor Recreation

For rejuvenation in the sunshine or snow, Centre County boasts six state parks that are accessible to all, free of charge. Our area maintains numerous hiking and biking trails, streams, and lakes to suit all manner of outdoor activity, from kayaking to fly-fishing. For example, Spring Creek Canyon is a lovely spot for a creek-side walk; Bald Eagle State Park offers swimming and boat rentals; and skiing and snow tubing are available nearby at Tussey Mountain. Bellefonte is also consistently recognized for its excellent flyfishing streams and remains a destination for anglers worldwide.



An Active, Engaged Community



Bellefonte Borough bustles with a year-round schedule of downtown festivals and activities hosted by several long-standing community organizations. Special events in Bellefonte draw visitors and promote community cohesion while providing activities and fun for all ages. Some highlights include:

- the **Children's Fair** held each June, with pony rides, face painting, games, stories, and crafts;
- the **Bellefonte Cruise & Classic Car Show** on Father's Day weekend, featuring a parade of high performance and classic show cars;
- the summer **Bellefonte Arts & Crafts Fair** showcases the wares of more than 100 vendors;
- the **Bellefonte Under the Lights** outdoor, progressive-style dinner featuring Bellefonte's food and beverage providers;
- the **Bellefonte Outdoor Expo**, that highlights beautiful and accessible natural assets in the area, while showcasing vendors, nonprofits, and businesses that specialize in outdoor and recreation;
- the **Fall Fest and Halloween Parade** held each autumn featuring children's activities, local food and beverages, and rides on Bellefonte Historical Railroad;
- the **Bellefonte Victorian Christmas** that celebrates yesteryear and attracts visitors from near and far for its carriage rides, music, craft show, children's tea party, and unique cookie crawl.



Proximity to Penn State

The Pennsylvania State University was established in nearby State College, a quiet rural outpost, whereas Bellefonte was the bustling legal and economic center of the region. These days those roles have reversed. Just minutes away from Penn State, Bellefonte reaps the benefit of world-class arts, entertainment, and sporting events without sacrificing the warmth and quiet pleasures of small-town life. As Pennsylvania's only land-grant institution, Penn State provides unparalleled access to education and public service to support the citizens of the Commonwealth and beyond. Penn State placed 28 among top national public universities in the 2024 *U.S. News & World Report* ranking. For more information on Bellefonte and the region, see the Bellefonte Invervalley Chamber of Commerce (<https://bellefontechamber.org/>).



