

St. Paul's, Angola

What are some significant moments in the history of your church that have shaped its identity today?

St. Paul's Angola was originally on the Lake Shore missionary circuit, with a priest visiting once a month. Lay readers conducted morning and evening prayer on the other Sundays of the month. Services were held in a variety of places, but in 1904 a decision was made to build a church on property purchased from Evans Bank, and in 1911 the church was completed at Lake and High Streets. As membership grew, limited parking and an overcrowded Church School space in the undercroft prompted a desire to build a larger church on property owned by St. Paul's farther down Lake Street, and much thought was given as to how this could be accomplished. A Future's Committee was formed, led by Russell Cinque. On Saturdays, volunteers worked to clear the land, and ladies of the church fed them lunch. Plans were revised many times, from moving the original building to the new site and adding on to it, to a final plan of constructing a new building consisting of Church School rooms, bathrooms, a kitchen, and a church hall where services would be held until a Sanctuary could be added. Thanks to many fundraisers such as spaghetti dinners, chicken BBQ's, yard sales, generous members, and a \$25,000.00 grant from the Diocese, the new building was completed in 1998. It was decided that most of the interior finishing would be completed by parish volunteers to save money. On Easter Sunday 1999, the move to the new building was officially celebrated with a procession of members from the old church to the new, led by Bishop Elect Michael Garrison riding a horse, and a new chapter in the history of St. Paul's was begun. In 2010, the Sanctuary was completed and added to the building.



What makes your church unique in the region and the diocese?

We are a welcoming, open-minded, and accepting congregation. Although membership has declined over the years, as one member likes to say, "We are small but mighty!"

What are the most vibrant ministries or strengths of your parish today?

All are welcome to worship here. Both new and long-time members feel they are not just members of a church, but of a caring church family.

Describe a moment in your community's life when you felt the presence of the Holy Spirit moving among you. What made that moment possible?

The Holy Spirit guided us and encouraged us through the long process of figuring out how to raise the money to build a larger, more accessible church facility, helping us to never give up hope as plans needed to be changed, rethought, and revised over and over again.

How does your church engage with the local neighborhood, the civic life of your community, or diocesan and/or Episcopal Church-wide initiatives?

We support Operation Good Neighbor and its Food Pantry, monetarily, with food and personal care products for distribution, and volunteers. We belong to the Lake Shore Association of Christian Churches, and donate money to support two local school's clothing closets for children in need. During the week, our building is used by Heritage Christian Services for a day program for adults with special needs. Once a week, Al-Anon holds a meeting here. We have an active Episcopal Church Women's group (ECW) which supports various charities.

What are the hopes and dreams of your congregation for its next chapter?

We hope to remain open, increase in membership, and continue to do the Lord's work.