

St. Mark's, Orchard Park

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

Prior to 2018 our transition committee decided not to do "business as usual." Instead of looking to hire an available priest, they took deliberate steps. A multi year study of needs and aspirations found the parish with a profile to outlined where they wanted to grow and what attributes a new Rector should have to help them reach their goals. The committee remained in place as a committee of advice to support the Rector. We are very serious about who we are and where we want to be in the future.

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

We are growing and attracting younger members, including 60 children and youth in the last three years. We are slowly becoming younger in our age demographic.

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

Outreach, Spiritual care, community care and fellowship are separate, but strong groups. However, they are empowered by our Stewardship Committees, which have been intentionally developed into a strong tradition here, with decades of support and leadership.



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?

During the Covid19 years we refused to give up or to close down. While we could not hold corporate worship, we did keep our offices open and our pastoral care in place. A few years before 'Covid', we were live streaming for our homebound and away parishioners, so we simply continued. The response to that was inspired; we stayed together, prayed together and fulfilled our pledges together.

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

Our community initiatives are supported both by individual members and the parish as whole. We became active in the Chamber of Commerce several years ago.

This year we were invited to supply the German food selections at the Community Oktoberfest. That meant we moved from a simple parish food take out fundraiser to being an active part of



the community celebration. It was the product of reaching out to the community businesses and services to support and gain their support and a recognizable place in the broader community.

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

The next chapter is one of hope and dreams for a new Rector as the current one retires. We learned a lot in the ten years since the last search began. Once again, we will be looking at aspirations and hopes for our future and finding the right set of skills to lead us there.

On the diocesan and the parish level, it's a new day!