

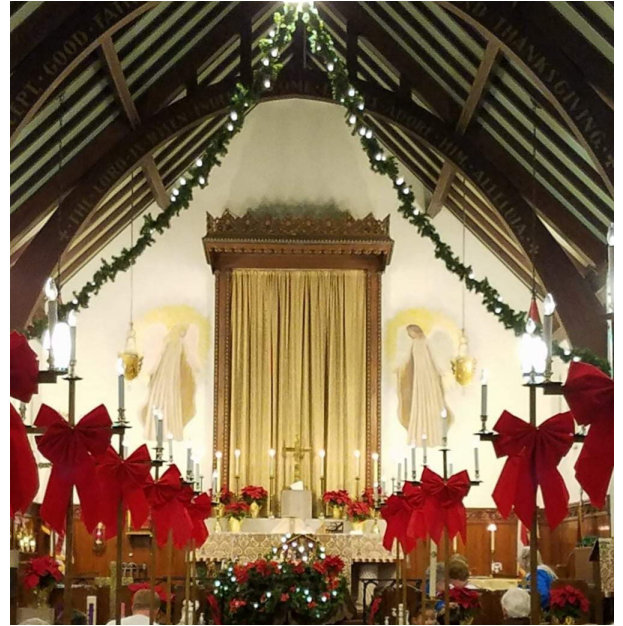
St. Mark's & All Saints', Buffalo

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

St. Mark's parish originally started in the early 1900's in homes in the Black Rock neighborhood, moved to a small building on Saratoga Street in Riverside, and found its final home being built at the current location in the 1920's. The current Parish Hall building served as the church, until funds were raised, making the current church possible.

In 2011, the church family of All Saints' in Amherst NY found a new home nestled with St. Mark's church family, beginning the new Corporation of St. Mark's and All Saints'. We were not their first choice, but personalities meshed, and it didn't take long to be one family, especially after respectfully merging assets.

Church members worked together with real fortitude from that time forward, continuing today despite nearly all being senior citizens.



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

The physical plant of St. Mark's & All Saints' Episcopal Church is well preserved and well appointed, with a sincere effort made to provide accessibility to all, both physically and virtually. Our curb appeal is kept up with our well groomed grounds, and an often changed signboard offering a thoughtful tidbit. There is a hall for use as a community gathering place that holds up to 100 people and serves this area that is far from the City Community Center, and one that is cut-off by railroad tracks. On Sundays, 3 different congregations enjoy worship on site. In addition to easy street parking, we have 2 parking lots available. We are somewhat unique in that, through the generosity of our past parishioners, we are financially able to well care for our Parish assets.

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

Being a good steward of our resources by sharing our facilities with others, both religious and civic entities, is our present claim to fame. Neighborhood block club and high school alumni meetings, serving as a polling place, and being available for other functions as needed keep us busy. Our part-time Priest in Charge, Rev. Rosey Nogle, is superb at explaining the Bible through her sermons, and at a once-a-week Bible study during the school year months on Zoom. Church services are also on Zoom and that is a wonderful asset to the aging group, especially through the winter storms.

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 time of our combined Dioceses, the Commission to Dismantle Racism was formed and proved to be a catalyst for change. At least 5 members availed themselves of the information being offered, and from it a "Beloved Community" group was formed. Those taking part in the meetings gave real thought to what a truly "Beloved Community" is and how that would appear to the world. A special movie event brought a few outsiders in to share a thought-provoking movie with questions after. It was a very moving time for all involved.

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

As noted above, we encourage use by civic groups. We are very active with local "Really Really Free Markets" that occur about 9 months of the year, some being hosted at our church. We encourage recycling used items by donating them to be taken to these market events. Our members are usually in attendance at Diocesan functions, and also supportive of fundraising efforts. We give monthly donations to 2 neighborhood food pantries, and at least annually to "Our Little Roses" Mission and Episcopal Relief and Development. For years we have taken up the "United Thank Offering" in May and October, and we continue that proudly. We hold periodic "Towel" Bingo fundraisers and give the net proceeds to a cause decided by our Vestry. We are stewards of a shed in our parking lot that has tools to use for neighborhood cleanups. The City uses our meeting hall about 3 – 4 times a year when doing a neighborhood cleanup.

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

It is difficult to discern how long we will continue to be viable, not because of finances, but because of the small number (15) of regular attendees. Our 2 fellow congregations (both mostly Asian) pay very little for their use and have no real responsibilities, so we keep them in mind when we think of the future. We are very open to change and always watchful for the chance to collaborate with others, ready to welcome any others that find themselves needing to make a move. We have financial and physical plant abilities; we just need the Episcopalians. Right now, we focus on making sure that our buildings are sustainable for the future. The endowment gifted over the years was meant to assure that Christianity would continue in this place, and that is our goal.

