

St. Columba's Episcopal Church

32 Emery Lane
Boothbay Harbor, Maine 04538

Parish Profile 2009



The Celtic Cross is one of several architectural symbols incorporated into the thoughtful design of St. Columba's Church.

Capping the central cupola is a large Celtic cross. This symbol was fashioned in Celtic Christianity to show the cross superimposed over a circle, representing the sun. The Celts first worshipped the sun until Christianity was brought to them by brave missionaries like St. Columba.

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Fear Not!



The only stained glass window in the church is above the Altar. It is a memorial to all those who ever “flew Navy.” Its message is “Fear Not,” the theme adopted by our congregational leaders for this worship space. It takes into account that we are a seafaring town. The touches of green signify the headlands of a safe harbor as the angel speaks “peace” from a bruised and stormy sky.

What I have seen is that you value each other - your generosity of welcome, your greetings and concern for each other are evident even to a relatively recent visitor like myself. So your community ~ initiated and sustained by and through the generosity of the Holy Spirit, the Lord giver of life, is important to you ~ the respect and affection of one to another are made possible by the action of the spirit in our lives as we promised in baptism, "with God's help."

You value your place of worship. Frankly, you have one of the most attractive buildings with the best handicap facilities I have seen in the diocese. A place that is incarnational, holy and appropriate.

You value working together and trying to discern the direction of the spirit in your search. That alone is priceless.

You value the life of the spirit in prayer and worship ~ in healing and service. So the Holy Spirit aids your efforts to be in a place where the spirit can speak in and through you.

You may feel that you're standing on the sidelines, but I tell you truly, you already have someone inviting you to dance.

Reflections on our parish community by the Reverend Nancy Platt in a recent sermon.

Welcome



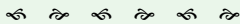
Saint Columba's is a parish on a journey. Founded just thirty years ago and four years in our church building, Saint Columba's is a mission church. Unlike the more familiar profile of an Episcopal church that is steeped in history and housed in an historic landmark, our story is that of a relatively new parish with a beautiful, contemporary church building.

At this point in our journey we are firm in our participation in the Episcopal tradition and form of worship, our care and support for each other and our pride in our place of worship. But we know that we must take "next steps." Our vicar of ten years, who retired two years ago, was instrumental in helping us build a new church building. That milestone passed and that ministry completed, we are ready for new growth - in congregation size, in stewardship, in outreach and in spirituality.

Reflective of the growing retirement population in the State of Maine and particularly in Lincoln County, our congregation is primarily comprised of retired folks. Nevertheless, we are energetic, engaged and open to new ideas and traditions. We love a thought-provoking sermon, welcome innovations in our worship and insist upon a hearty sense of humor.

By way of a recent Mutual Study of Ministry and a parish survey that queried parishioners as to preferences in a new vicar, we are understandably in a period of reflection and self-examination. But for all the information gathered, we have more questions about the future than certain answers. Bolstered by the Reverend Nancy Platt's assurance that we "already have someone inviting us to dance," we continue our optimistic journey in search of a new vicar. If you think you may be that spiritual dancer, please consider leading us in our journey.

Credit for naming St. Columba's Church goes to the Reverend Gordon Lind. He claimed his Danish ancestors sailed to Iona and harassed Columba and his followers. The congregation chose this name to help him "atone" for the sins of his forbearers. Columba was an early "warrior saint", born in 6th century Ireland who migrated, under duress, to Scotland. Along with twelve companions, he built a monastery on the island of Iona. He is known as the patron saint of fishermen as so fits with the character of our region.



The Great Blue Heron is the Celtic symbol of hospitality and healing, based on a legend that St. Columba had a dream that a wounded heron would appear at the monastery. God told him in the dream to take the bird in and tend it. In doing so, he would be receiving Jesus. In keeping with this tradition, the weathervane, in the form of a heron, sits atop the front cupola of St. Columba's Church, welcoming and healing all who enter.

History



To understand the history of St. Columba's is to understand the character of the parish.

Until 1979, the small summer chapel of All Saints by the Sea on Southport Island was the only Episcopal house of worship on the Boothbay peninsula. A year before, a small group of year 'round Episcopalians, eager to have their own local congregation, asked the Reverend Dick Hall, priest at St. Phillip's Church in Wiscasset, to conduct a service in Boothbay Harbor. This first service took place at the Pines Motel, the first of many modest sites - including the YMCA, Knights of Pythias Hall, the East Boothbay Methodist Church and the Spruce Point Chapel at the Railway Village - where this staunch group was to gather over the next two decades.

St. Columba's Church was accepted as a mission by the Diocese of Maine in November of 1980, and the Reverend Gordon Lind was appointed Vicar by Bishop Frederick Wolf. The Reverend Lind was much loved and is credited with not only leading the flock but naming St. Columba's as well. He retired in 1988.

There were efforts over the years to raise money for a new church, but it was not until the Reverend Margaret "Greta" Russell was called that this dream was realized. Greta was a dedicated priest who excelled at pastoral care and introduced many innovative programs to the parish. Her husband, the Reverend Carl Russell, was a recently retired priest with a gift for preaching and singing. Greta and Carl had been involved in the construction of a new church in Millinocket and so were a natural match for a congregation in quest of a new church building.

With monies saved over the years in the Future Fund, land was purchased in 2000, the 20th anniversary of the founding of St. Columba's. Bishop Chilton Knudsen blessed the site and urged us to "waste no time" in moving forward with our building plans.

The decision was made at this time to set aside \$5000 from the building fund to help rebuild a Brazilian church in great financial need. We did so in order to take our eyes off ourselves and do for others. This relationship with the Brazilian church continues to this day.

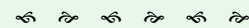
Thanks to good leadership, extraordinary vision and a congregation that was determined that, with God's help, we would build a new church, a congregation of fewer than 75 people raised over \$750,000. This was an extraordinary effort and one that reflects the dedication of a parish that has never failed to meet the challenge when asked for additional contributions in times of special parish or community needs.

Our beautiful church building was completed in early 2005 and dedicated by Bishop Knudsen in June. The time had come for the congregation to "enter God's gates with thanksgiving in our hearts; to enter God's courts with praise."

Sadly, in 2006, one year after the completion of the new church, the Reverend Greta Russell announced her retirement. Several months later, we warmly welcomed the Reverend Suzanne Colburn as our priest-in-charge. Now our interim priest, Suzanne continues the good work of building the congregation, supporting new and "seasoned" church members alike.



Under Gordon Lind's firm leadership, St. Columba's Parish grew steadily without having to rely on the Diocese for financial aid. The first fund drive was for the creation of a new silver chalice. Parishioners contributed silver spoons and other silver items that were melted down and turned into the lovely chalice that we use to this day.



Located inside the front cupola is the Memorial Bell. Cast at the Meneely Foundry in Troy, New York in 1858 and weighing 750 pounds, the bell is used to call God's people to worship, to mark national holidays and to toll and peal as we celebrate the passages of life.

Our Region

East Boothbay is also home to Washburn & Doughty. Until recently this boat yard was best known as one of the finest commercial boat builders in New England. On July 11, 2008, the local landscape changed when the 50,000 square foot facility burned to the ground. Our collective conscience gave thanks to God that no one was hurt in the devastating fire; then our thoughts turned to the loss of jobs. In the best tradition of small Maine communities, an adjacent boat yard immediately offered temporary employment to laid-off workers and local towns and organizations established funds to help the families of the unemployed. The state has promised assistance in the rebuilding of an even larger facility.



Tug boat at Washburn & Doughty



The East Wind

Maine's slogan is, "*Maine. The way life should be.*" For those of us that live on the Boothbay peninsula, this is doubly true.

The Boothbay Region is situated in mid-coast Maine on a 17 mile long, 4 mile wide peninsula that extends into the Atlantic Ocean. Four towns call this peninsula home ~ Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, Southport Island and Edgecomb. The combined year 'round population of these towns is about 7,000 people, with the numbers swelling in the summer with the arrival of cottage owners and tourists. Ninety eight percent of the population is white.

Maine has a large and growing retirement population. The Boothbay Region is part of Lincoln County, the "oldest" county in Maine with over 19% of the population 65 or older. We are experiencing growth of retirees "from away" because of our charming villages, magnificent ocean views, access to waterfront activities, arts festivals, dining and shopping. Portland is a relatively short distance (about 55 miles) from Boothbay Harbor, making for easy day trips to the Portland Museum of Art, the Portland Symphony, plays, more restaurants and even better shopping.

Commercial fishing, lobstering, boat building, marine research, health care and tourism account for much of the region's economic base. Fast becoming the "boat building capital of Maine," the region is home to several highly regarded boatyards including Hodgdon Yachts in East Boothbay, a quaint village that is part of the town of Boothbay. Hodgdon Yachts launched the 154' motor sailer, the Scheherazade, in 2003 and is now negotiating a \$200 million contract with the U.S. Navy.



Photo courtesy of Hodgdon Yachts

THE SCHEHERAZADE

Boothbay Harbor Shipyard, located along the harbor waterfront, has been known for building majestic wooden ships since 1869. Continuing in that tradition, the yard recently restored the 100 year old NY-30 ALERA, designed by Nathaniel Herreshoff. A replica of the historic Jamestown Settlement ship DISCOVERY was also built here; and the BOUNTY, the ship used in the movie, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, was rebuilt at this yard.



Photo courtesy of The Boothbay Register

THE BOUNTY

The region is known internationally for marine research. Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences is a research and educational organization that studies the productivity of the world's oceans, coastal waters and estuaries. The Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) has an important marine research station in Boothbay Harbor. The lab runs a state-of-the-art fishery laboratory as well as a wonderful educational aquarium. The facility displays interesting species of fish and lobsters. Visitors can pet a live shark



Photo courtesy of DMR

Boothbay Aquarium touch tank

and learn about sea creatures in the “touch tank,” filled with sea stars, urchins and other harmless invertebrates.



St. Andrew's Village

St. Andrew’s Hospital is a source of comfort for the ailing as well as being a significant employer. Affiliated with Maine Medical Center in Portland, our local hospital provides emergency and ambulatory services, inpatient care, home care and family medical practice. St. Andrew’s Village, a neighbor to St. Columba’s Church, is a retirement village with various levels of care, also part of St. Andrew’s Hospital Group.

There is one high school on the peninsula, Boothbay Region High School, which serves students from all four towns. Edgecomb and Southport each have their own elementary schools with Boothbay and Boothbay Harbor youngsters attending the regional school in the Harbor. Parents may also consider The Center for Teaching and Learning, in Edgecomb, a K-8 demonstration school, dedicated to the development of rigorous and joyful methods of teaching and learning.

Opportunities for higher education are generally available off the peninsula. Bowdoin College is in Brunswick, about a 40 minute drive. Several other colleges, including the University of Southern Maine, University of New England and Maine Senior College have locations in Portland. The University of Maine also has several satellite locations within easy driving distance.

The region also offers unique educational opportunities for middle school, high school and college students through the Ocean Classroom Foundation. A collaborative effort with Outward Bound, The Foundation’s Oceanbound program teaches seamanship, ocean sciences and literature. Participants sail on one of three of the Foundation’s schooners for classes that run from one day to a full semester of accredited learning.



Photo courtesy of Ocean Classroom

Ocean Classroom

So, what do we do for fun?

The Boothbay Region is a destination resort community with harbors, rivers and the Atlantic Ocean for sailing, motor boating, kayaking and fishing. For land lovers, the Boothbay Country Club is an 18-hole course that is considered to be one of the most scenic and upscale in the state.



Cod Race ~ Fisherman's Festival

Traditionally, vacation season begins in late spring with the Fisherman's Festival, most noted for young men and women running a relay race in slickers and hip boots while carrying a dead fish. Parades, fireworks and various festivals are celebrated all summer long; one of the most spectacular events is the Windjammer Festival where tall ships from all over New England arrive in Boothbay Harbor under full sail.

The Boothbay Railway Village is open from the late spring to early autumn, with special events for children through Christmas. It operates a narrow gauge coal-fired steam train in a re-created historic village. The Village also exhibits one of the finest presentations of antique vehicles in New England.

Live theater plays a big part in life on the peninsula. Two classic venues, the 1894 Opera House at Boothbay Harbor and the 1937 Boothbay Playhouse are home to events all year long. The Playhouse turns out great amateur productions, featuring talented kids, teens and adults from the surrounding communities.

The Boothbay Region also is home to Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, 248 acres of native flowers, trees, shrubs, stone walls, a sensory garden, children's garden and a waterfall. It is the largest botanical garden in New England.

The Boothbay Region Land Trust is dedicated to the preservation of the region's natural beauty. Visitors are invited to enjoy over 30 miles of trails, as well as forests, wetlands, meadows, working waterfront and historic sites.

Finally, the main spot for recreation in the Region is the YMCA in Boothbay Harbor. Full time residents and summer people alike depend on the many facilities available at our Y, including fitness, tennis, racquetball, an Olympic-sized pool, child care and teen center. Weekend and after school programs give kids a safe place to go.



Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens

St. Columba's in the Community



Boothbay Region Garden Club ~ Flower Show July 2007

There is a temptation, in reading about our beautiful and bustling peninsula, to assume that this is an idyllic place. Most people who live here couldn't imagine life anywhere else, but life here is far from perfect.

As of the 2000 census, the per capita income for Boothbay Harbor was \$21,000 with 11% of the population living below the poverty level; 17% of those under 18 years old and 9% of those over 65 live in poverty. The nature of our seasonal economy often requires that underskilled workers take on two and three jobs to make ends meet. Poverty, along with the attendant issues of alcoholism, domestic violence, poor health care and inadequate education, is always part of the picture on this peninsula.

In the spirit of doing Christ's work in the world, St. Columba's has a quiet, caring

network of volunteers who help those in need, within the parish and in the greater community. We are fortunate in being able to do so in concert with other churches and civic organizations that can be relied on to provide assistance to those in need.

The Community Resource Group is an example of a voluntary network, created to address the needs of families in crisis. This is an ecumenical effort, founded by local clergy, to provide a coordinated network of care and support. St. Columba's also works with All Saints by the Sea in a Joint Outreach program that identifies families in need and provides food, clothing, fuel and rent assistance. Both of these organizations will be challenged this winter to help with fuel assistance as temperatures drop and cost of heating fuel rises.



Community Lasagna Dinner

FISH (Friends in Service Helping) was founded by St. Columba parishioners to address the issue of the elderly and poor who have difficulty getting to doctor's appointments. More than sixty drivers volunteer their time to drive, on average, 48 clients a month to critical appointments. Members of the board of directors and drivers are drawn from area churches and civic organizations, all working together to provide this essential service in a region that has virtually no public transportation.

When a challenge went out to area churches last spring to see which church could contribute the most food to the Food Pantry (housed at the Congregational Church), St. Columba's and five other churches answered the call with combined contributions of about \$5,000 worth of food.

Through donations and volunteer efforts, members of St. Columba's support Meals-on-Wheels and Re-Building Together. St. Columba's is also a covenant church with Habitat for Humanity and participates with other local churches to provide "Warming

Space" in the winter. Calls for donations or volunteers are frequently announced from the pulpit.

We see our church building as one of our greatest assets, not just because of its beautiful architecture and open space, but because sharing this space is a wonderful way of introducing ourselves to others. This is a subtle form of outreach but one we think is effective in being part of the care giving community on the peninsula.

We welcome AA and Alanon to use St. Columba's as a regular meeting place. Likewise, we encourage live musical performances under our roof. We recently hosted Village Harmony, an ensemble of traveling teenagers, singing folksongs and spirituals. The Wingnuts, a local jazz band, comprised of school aged musicians, practices here weekly. This group performed for us this spring, testing the building's acoustics with good results. The space is also home to flower and art shows, the Boothbay Garden Club and a yoga group.



THE WINGNUTS ~ Local Jazz Band

About our parish



The Memorial Garden is an important part of our outdoor space. Thanks to the efforts of many parishioners and generous memorial gifts, this serene place of contemplation and remembrance has been created. Dedicated and blessed by Bishop Knudsen on October 14, 2007, the Memorial Garden is a state licensed site for the burial and scattering of cremains.



St. Columba's has about 130 active members with an additional 50 people that attend services seasonally or occasionally. Busy with worshipping together, helping each other and lending a hand in the community, we have never surveyed our congregation as to age, income or education. By observation, we are an older congregation with many retirees. We have a few young families. We appear to be economically "comfortable" but we know that all levels of income are represented in our congregation. We are resourceful and we get the job done, whatever the challenge, but we are not a group that is comfortable talking about educational credentials. One parishioner said that St. Columba's is "a great equalizer" and we appear to like it that way.

We worship in a truly beautiful space. Designed by architect John Silverio, the shingle style exterior of the building draws on late 19th century Scandinavian design while the open and vaulting interior is light and contemporary. Cork floors, simple silk hangings and elegant but movable furnishings contribute to the flexibility of the space as well as its superior acoustics. The building is completely handicapped accessible and is equipped with a system for the hearing impaired.

Off the narthex is a conference room/coffee room, a library, nursery, bathrooms, church office and vicar's office. This space is currently suitable for our congregation's needs but the original building plans did take future growth into account. It's good to know that should our congregation and programs grow, we are in a position to increase the size of our building as well.

When not in church we stay in touch with parish activities through The Coracle, our monthly newsletter. Named for the small boat that brought St. Columba to Iona from Ireland, The Coracle was recognized by the Diocese for excellence in representing diverse voices in the parish community. "People from away" in particular, benefit from receiving The Coracle as it allows them to feel part of St. Columba's year 'round.

The flower ministry, modestly referred to as the "flower committee," plays an invaluable role in bringing the gift of beautiful flowers into our worship space. The eight members take turns in filling containers with their own unique creations. And they do so with great Yankee ingenuity. Although the congregation donates a modest sum for altar flowers, these resourceful women gather flowers from their own gardens in the summer, evergreens in the winter and donate the few flowers that have to be purchased. From their "surplus budget" and a generous gift, the flower committee recently donated three beautiful walnut flower stands, crafted from the same piece of wood from which the baptismal tables, ambo and altar were made.

The spirit of generosity and sharing is alive and well at St. Columba's. Members of the Lay Eucharistic Ministry are available to bring the Eucharist to shut-ins, especially to elderly neighbors at St. Andrew's Village. The Care Committee is a quiet, caring network of volunteers that responds enthusiastically to calls for food, transportation, cards and visitations for parishioners in need.

The Blueberry Festival is a one-day event every August and our biggest fund raising effort of the year. On that day the church is turned into a pancake diner, yard sale, bakery, ice cream parlor, gift shop, children's reading room, and anything else we can think of to add next year!



The Prayer Shawl Ministry is a wonderful fusion of spirituality and practicality. The women of this ministry donate their time, skill and materials in the making of beautiful shawls, blessing each stitch as they knit. Each shawl is then donated to someone in need of warmth and comfort.



State of the Church



Pentecost Sunday 2008

Our regular worship has long offered a comfortable blend of traditional Episcopal celebration and gently different innovative styles. While the recently introduced eight o'clock seasonal service is a quiet Rite II Eucharist, the year 'round ten o'clock service often has a creative element. The implementation of varying worship styles is most often well received. The congregation seems ready to try most anything and those elements that work, stick.

Music is a vibrant part of St. Columba's – we love to sing! Although we do not have a choir, our congregation is musically savvy. Traditional and well known hymns, graduals and spirituals are an integral part of our

worship and celebration, but we always welcome new and innovative pieces of music. We are accompanied by either the 101 year old Chickering grand piano or the Clavinova, played by a parishioner who generously donates her time and talent as her gift to the church. We have also celebrated with cello, violin, bell choir, area vocalists, guitar and flute.

Our regular worship involves the congregation in many aspects - lay people perform the duties of lesson-reading and chalice bearing. Others serve as crucifers, acolytes, inside and outside greeters, ushers and coffee hour hosts. Parishioners also provide a vital healing ministry during communion.

St. Columba's also boasts a "deep bench" when it comes to retired clergy. A number of retired Episcopal priests attend services upon occasion and several have been called upon as supply priests when needed.

We also provide a regular worship service with Eucharist at St. Andrew's Retirement Community for those who cannot travel. We have hosted Taizé candlelight meditation services and the local World Day of Prayer. Clergy at St. Columba's regularly participate in the town's ecumenical services: Thanksgiving, Good Friday, Easter Sunrise Service at Ocean Point, Blessing of the Fleet, Memorial Day and Bacculaureate.

As a mission church since our formation in 1979, we have been nurtured by the Diocese of Maine and its Bishops. Our relationship with Bishop Knudsen, in particular, has been extraordinarily open and communicative. The expression, "The Bishop, in her wisdom . . ." was often heard and acknowledged at St. Columba's. As Bishop Stephen Lane assumes his new position, we look forward to continuing and building upon the relationship we enjoyed with Bishop Knudsen.



Bishop Lane's 1st visit ~ September 7th, 2008

Bishop's Committee

- Wardens: James Begley
Gerald Homer
- Treasurer: Michael Moss
- Clerk: Nancy LaFrance
- Members at Large: Judy Adamson
Terence Farmer
Gloria Walter
Susan Wilson

Discernment Committee

- Co-chairs: Chris Joule
Bill McMurry
- Members at Large: Terence Farmer
Joyce Parent
Jackie Pinard
Alwyn Purinton
Connie Moss
Elinor Virden
Gloria Walter

Mission & Goals

Looking back at the discernment process that this parish undertook in 1997, we see that the quest for spiritual growth was a fundamental goal of the congregation at that time. It remains so today. This was made very clear in a 2007 questionnaire to our congregants where spiritual growth and thoughtful sermons were most frequently mentioned as important issues for parishioners. One person asks “to be pushed or stretched to make us think and ponder what is ahead.”

Although traditional in makeup, St. Columba’s is a flexible and open community of worshippers where the congregation generally welcomes liturgical innovations as part of its spiritual stretching.

We would like to have a choir to enhance our worship but budget constraints have stalled our efforts to hire a professional organist/choir director. Perhaps the new vicar will be able to identify and motivate the musically talented among us.

Like many parishes today we would welcome an active and robust church school. As we are an older congregation with very few children in regular attendance, this may be an unrealistic goal unless the makeup of the congregation changes significantly. Adult Bible study groups, however, are frequently

mentioned as being important to the congregation. To this point, attendance at evening discussion groups has been disappointing, due in part to the reluctance of many of us to drive in the evening.

Pastoral care, particularly for the elderly, is very important to us. As one parishioner said,

“Work with what we have to strengthen before reaching out to attract younger membership.” Because we have limited resources, many parishioners feel that we need to attend to “what is on our doorstep” before we are able to cast a wider net of care. We need renewed energy to work within our current congregation while reaching out to others.

St. Columba’s is very proud of its work with outreach

programs over the years. But that does not mean that we are satisfied. We would like to expand our outreach by providing programs and space to organizations in the Boothbay region. Some have suggested adding child care, youth and family programs, community suppers as well as ecumenical events, all of which would be in keeping with our commitment to “make a difference in the Boothbay region” while attracting new members to our parish.

Our mission: To build a strong, faithful and committed community of Christian souls who are followers of Jesus, worship in the Episcopal tradition, dedicated to doing Christ’s work in the world and who will make a real difference in the Boothbay Region.

The New Vicar

St. Columba's new vicar will join a parish that is comfortable with its traditions, its communal routines and each other. We are united in our goals of spiritual growth, caring for the pastoral needs of our community, growing the size of our congregation, increasing our presence in the community and increasing our financial base. It follows that our next vicar will have the skills and experience to help us accomplish our goals.

The ability to deliver a thought-provoking sermon will be important for our new vicar. One parishioner asks for "someone with scholarship who can bring that attribute to their preaching." We are looking for a person with spiritual and biblical vigor in a sermon rather than a social or political reformer. Reinforcing the importance of a good sermon at St. Columba's, the Reverend Carl Russell, now retired, observed that if he were still getting calls about his Sunday sermon on Thursday, he considered the sermon to be a success!

Another parishioner, commenting on the new vicar's qualifications, said, "Spirituality seems to be a priority." Priority, indeed! We are looking for a leader with deep spirituality and the ability to convey it to the congregation.

We are a traditional parish that also enjoys liturgical innovations. We are joyous and

creative in our worship within a prayer book framework. Our next Vicar should be comfortable in following this tradition.

The parish is not able to support a full time vicar presently, so the person whom we call may either need to be bi-vocational or have other means of support. Clearly, it is the desire of the parish to become self-sustaining and to be able to afford a full time priest in the future.

The successful candidate for this position will be able to help this parish take those "next steps" that will help us grow our parish and our place in the region. To do this successfully, our new vicar will first, be comfortable living and working in a small town where "everyone knows your name." Secondly, he or she will be both an active and involved priest and a community member, someone who, through their personal gifts and commitment, can help us develop a local presence for the benefit of St. Columba's and the greater community as well.

God has blessed us and provided for us with the means to have come a long way since our search for a Vicar in 1997 and again in 2006 when our current spiritual leader accepted the call to become priest-in-charge. We believe our mission to be exciting and attainable, in small steps, with the loving guidance of a new Vicar.



~ A Sunflower ~



~ Grapes ~



~ A Puzzle Piece ~



~ A Prayer Stone ~



~ An Acorn ~

A sunflower, grapes, a puzzle piece, a prayer stone, an acorn are all symbols used over the years to bring stewardship to mind and help us remember that ALL things come of Thee, O Lord.

Financial Information

Finances have been a challenge the past few years. We have been consistently challenged to raise enough money through pledging to keep pace with rising operating costs and frustrated in not being able to afford a full-time vicar.

While stewardship season has been held in May and June to encourage seasonal congregants to pledge as well as year around parishioners, stewardship is becoming a year round effort, particularly with newcomers. We have a dedicated stewardship committee that each year introduces a creative theme to generate a positive attitude toward committed giving. This approach, however, is a “soft sell” and some in the parish feel that we need organized one-on-one canvassing to increase awareness of our normal operating needs and to increase our pledging base, leading us away from dependence on diocesan support and unpredictable special gifts and bequests.

The 2008 budget was reluctantly approved with an operating deficit and with faith that the year would not end up that way. While perhaps not a good “business practice,” our faith might be justified by knowledge of the overwhelmingly generous support for the building fund, a \$13,425 response to a special “challenge” to fill a deficit in the 2006 operating budget, and \$17,616 in special gifts received again in 2007. We’re projecting over \$15,000 in special gifts and bequests in 2008.

Pledges represent 73% of our budgeted 2008 operating income with the balance coming from unrestricted special gifts, fundraising, special events, building use fees, and diocesan assistance. Our primary fundraising event is the August Blueberry Festival, regularly netting over \$4,000.

While the number of pledges increased from 2007 to 2008, the average pledge decreased dramatically due to congregant attrition and an influx of first-time pledges. As of September 30, 2008, we have received 71 pledges for 2008-09 totaling \$98,095, an average of \$1,382 and a 13.5% increase over the average pledge for 2007-08. Yet, we face a deficit again in 2009, made worse by the unusual expenses associated with the discernment process, search, and relocation of a new vicar.

In 2009 we will again receive a \$12,500 grant from the diocese with encouragement to consider a capital drive to retire our debt as well as to prepare a long range plan to become self-sufficient and grow from mission to parish status.

Prior to 2008 interest only payments on the building debt were made from the residual

balance in the building fund. With the conclusion of the capital funds campaign in 2007, beginning in 2008 debt payments are being made from the operating fund and are currently structured to retire the \$63,000 building debt in 19 years or less. The cost of clergy in 2007 was reduced by the retirement of our vicar and the reliance on supply clergy for the remainder of that year.

Budget

	<u>Actual</u> <u>2006</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>2007</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>2008</u>	<u>Proposed</u> <u>Budget</u> <u>2009</u>
Income				
Pledges	\$88,486	\$85,867	\$95,000	\$98,095
Gifts and Plate	7,634	6,949	7,500	4,000
Special Gifts	17,824	17,616	4,000	5,500
Fundraising	3,169	4,828	7,000	7,000
Diocesan Grant	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500
Other/Building Use	2,428	1,865	2,600	2,600
Total Income	\$132,041	\$129,625	\$128,600	\$129,695
Expenses				
Clergy	74,160	52,622	65,603	69,100
Administration	21,887	28,170	23,234	23,173
Building and Grounds	9,758	9,761	11,175	12,265
Assessment	15,941	17,338	18,254	15,850
Outreach/Programs	4,309	6,189	6,331	6,291
Debt Service	0	0	6,090	6,090
Discernment Committee	1,500	580	1,500	9,000
Total Expenses	\$127,555	\$114,660	\$132,187	\$141,769
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$4,486	\$14,965	(\$3,587)	(\$12,074)
Number of Pledges	57	58	78	71
Average Pledge	\$1,552	\$1,480	\$1,174	\$1,382



"FREE AT LAST"

*This sculpture, hanging in the loft,
depicts a scene from John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."
It can be seen as communicants return from the altar.*

Applicants should contact:

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Episcopal Diocese of Maine

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