

COMMUNITY LIFE

The various ministries and committees provide an avenue for parishioners to become involved in the parish community. There are many opportunities for fellowship throughout the year.

Hospitality is provided monthly after the weekend Masses by a team led by Ellen Murphy and/or sponsored by various parish ministries.

Parish Picnic at the East Greenbush Town Park is held annually in the late summer or early fall. The 11:00 Mass is held at the park and the cookout/picnic follows. Baskets are raffled to add to the excitement.

Casseroles, Cookies, and Caroling is held annually in December build community and carol around the neighborhood.

Weekly Bible Study is held on Wednesday mornings under the organization of Ronnie Barresi and Doris and Gary Beardsley.

East Greenbush Lenten Prayer Luncheons held at the First United Methodist Church are attended by our parishioners. The parish provides one meal during the season.

ADMINISTRATION

Various committees and volunteers provide assistance for a smooth operation at the parish and school.

Trustees Rick Hannmann (6 years) and Matt Heitker (1 year) currently serve the parish as trusted advisors and have extensive knowledge of the parish and its history.

Finance Committee is chaired by Steve Wiech. The committee with 2 additional parishioners and trustees meets periodically with the pastor. Detailed financial reports are provided to the committee electronically each month, with an annual report to the parishioners.

Parish Leadership Team (mostly former Pastoral Parish Council members) is led by Kevin Haggerty. In the absence of an assigned Pastor, the team has met monthly with parish staff, the Interim Parish Administrator, and Interim Sacramental Minister to ensure the continued successful operation of the parish.

Building & Grounds Committee headed by Kevin Haggerty, a local contractor, has continued to support the needs of the parish beyond a recent renovation project that included the parish center, rectory, church, and school. Currently they are focusing on renovating the rectory for the new pastor with insight on future needs at the facilities.

Bishop's Appeal Administration is being performed by Chris Larsen. She has reviewed and updated parish lists, assisted in preparing materials for the campaign and will keep the necessary records.

Re-Igniting Our Faith Campaign is being started at this time. The Parish Leadership Team has met with the diocesan consultant and is proceeding with the campaign.

Offertory and Envelope Data maintenance is being done by volunteers Mary Brieg and Karen Savicki weekly.

Money Counters count and prepare the weekly offertory collection deposits. Frank Pietraniello schedules the 2-person teams for weekly counting.

Volunteer Receptionists are used to cover the office in the absence of the parish secretary.

PARISH PROFILE

Church of the Holy Spirit
667 Columbia Turnpike, East Greenbush, NY

The parish of Church of the Holy Spirit consists of approximately 1190 registered families/ individuals in the town of East Greenbush. There are also parishioners who are residents of neighboring areas of North Greenbush, Castleton, East Schodack, Schodack, Albany, and Rensselaer. Approximately 740 of the registered parishioners/families receive weekly envelopes and 28 use the Vanco electronic giving option. An extensive parish survey was completed in 2017 that reinforced and offered suggestions in the areas of Prayer and Worship, Faith Formation/Youth Ministry, Building & Grounds.

The Church has a seating capacity of 300+. Weekly Mass attendance at the 3 weekend Masses range from 380 to 550. Due to the long absence of an assigned Pastor, attendance has slightly decreased from prior years.

In the early 1900's there were a very few Catholics living in East Greenbush. Residents wishing to attend Mass were forced to travel to Rensselaer or Albany, so the first parish was formed and celebrated the first Mass on November 26, 1922 in the Grange Hall. The first church was built and Mass was celebrated in it on Easter Sunday 1924. The parish continued to grow and a major renovation/addition was completed in 1992.

PARISH STAFF

Priest Pastor – Absent since July 1, 2018

Interim Weekend Sacramental Minister: Fr. John Bradley

Interim Parish Administrator: Gail Moore

Deacon Bill Dringus – Weekend liturgies, Friday Communion Services, Baptism Preparation, Ecumenical Activities, Altar Server training, RCIA

Music Ministry – Tim Dowling (PT-Weekend & some Holyday liturgies and occasional rehearsals)

Family Ministry & Lifelong Faith Formation –Director: Laura Countryman

Family Ministry & Lift (School aged children: Meghan Rossbach

Parish Secretary—position open since May 2019

Sacramental Prep / Family Ministry & LIFT-Young Families – PT position open since Fall 2018

Family Ministry & LIFT-Adults & Families w/ Teens -PT position planned for future growth

Maintenance – Paul Weideman (shared with school)

Bookkeeper – Outside contractor provides services 1 day/week

HOLY SPIRIT SCHOOL

Holy Spirit School welcomed its first students in 1962. The accredited school serves 200 students from Pre-K3 to Grade 8 from 11 surrounding school districts in Rensselaer, Columbia, and Albany counties. An after-school program is available, as well as many clubs, fieldtrips, and activities. The school has 18 full time teachers, 5 teacher assistants, 2 custodians, 2 administrative assistants, and 1 principal, Mike Kosar. 32% of the students are registered parishioners of the Church of the Holy Spirit.

FAITH FORMATION / LIFT (Living In Faith Together)

Faith Formation at Church of the Holy Spirit is lifelong, year-round, and intergenerational. It is designed to help all parishioners explore, share, learn, enrich, and live their faith in seasonal gatherings. A team of volunteers led by Laura Countryman, a full-time Pastoral Associate, creates and presents 2 gatherings per season. The gatherings begin with a meal, followed by an intergenerational presentation. Younger children attend breakout sessions, and intergenerational ritual and dismissal send the participants forth to live their faith. Other LIFT events include guest speakers and service projects, with more events in development.

Fifty-seven families currently participate in the program. A more comprehensive family ministry is in development to accompany families and adults through all stages of life. Youth ministry is under the direction of the LIFT program.

Sacramental formation for Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation are immediate preparation with the candidate, their parent(s), and/or sponsor. Participants prepare through retreats including mystagogy. Baptism preparation is currently being conducted by Deacon Bill Dringus.

PARISH FACILITIES

Church – Seats 300+

Parish Offices / Rectory – Offices: ground floor; Rectory: second floor with garage on ground floor

School – Classrooms, Gym/Auditorium. Library, Computer Lab, 2 Playgrounds

Parking Lots – Shared by church and school

MINISTRIES & ACTIVITIES

LITURGY

The parish celebrates weekend Masses on Saturday at 4pm and Sunday at 8:30 and 11 am. Many volunteers help to provide a welcoming and spiritual experience for all. Daily Mass is celebrated on Wednesday at 9am and a Communion Service is led on Fridays at 8:30 am by Deacon Bill Dringus. Monthly, children from the school actively participate in a special morning Mass, often on a Friday. Good Friday Stations of the Cross are acted out by volunteers of all ages. Approximately 80 people attend this annual service.

Sacrament of Reconciliation is available on Saturdays at 3pm or by appointment. Penance Services are offered with other local parishes during Advent & Lent.

Prayer and Worship has most recently been handled by a committee consisting of the Interim Sacramental Minister, the Interim Parish Administrator, the Parish Deacon, and a representative from the Music Ministry.

Music Ministry consists of a paid part-time Music Director and a choir of approximately 10 parishioners who lead music at the 4pm Saturday Mass, some Holydays, Christmas and Easter. The Music Director leads music at the Sunday liturgies with the assistance of cantors.

Altar Servers are trained by Deacon Bill Dringus. There are approximately 20 youth, ages 8 to 16, and 2 adult acolytes serving in this ministry.

Lectors are trained and scheduled by Victor Barresi. Currently 13 adults and 1 youth are serving in this capacity.

Eucharistic Ministers are scheduled by Pat Rickert. The 28 volunteers are available to serve at daily, weekend, holyday, and funeral Masses.

Ushers greet parishioners, assist the presider as necessary before Mass, take up the collection and seal it in tamper-proof bags, and distribute bulletins.

Environment and Decorating is done by a team of volunteers led by Ellen Murphy. The church is beautifully and appropriately decorated seasonally.

Sanctuary Care is handled by the custodian, Paul Weideman with volunteers assisting as necessary. Deb Gerace makes sure on every Friday that the church is prepared for Sunday liturgies.

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH

The parish has had a long-standing commitment to the service of others, both within the parish and the wider community.

Bereavement Ministry meets with families to help them plan the Funeral Mass and provide emotional support. They serve at the Mass and distribute worship aids that have been prepared by the parish secretary. A follow-up is done a month later with a Mass intention for the deceased. Annually they assist with the All Souls Day Memorial Mass. Mary Blevins and Helen Lewis co-chair this ministry.

Social Action Committee is led by Kathy Wiech and Lisa LeBlanc. This very active ministry operates on two distinct levels of service: Acts of Charity concerned with the need for food, clothing, personal hygiene and shelter, and Social Justice engaging in advocacy roles. This ministry works closely with existing organizations including CoNSERNS-U, Circles of Mercy, Joseph House for the Homeless, and Community Loan Fund. Numerous drives for supplies, food and funds are conducted throughout the year.

Christmas Giving Tree is organized by Richard Klee and over 800 items are forwarded to CoNSERNS-U.

Bag lunches are prepared by parishioners of all ages for the Capital City Mission, with nearly 1,000 lunches prepared twice a year during school break weeks.

Easter Baskets have been prepared annually since 2004. This year 235 baskets and additional candy were distributed to various local organizations.

Homebound Parishioners led by Rosemary Horan, are visited by parishioners who also send greeting cards several times a year.

Jazzy Sun Birthday Parties are prepared and hosted by youth and their families of the parish under the direction of Meaghan Rossbach in conjunction with St. Catherine's.

Prayer Shawls are knit and crocheted by parishioners under the guidance of Chris Larsen. They also make hats and scarves for the needy, novelties for the Easter baskets, and scarves for Reconciliation candidates.

Stewardship Week is held annually in May, giving parishioners a variety of activities and events in which to participate, that focus on the needs of others. A pot luck supper is held after the Saturday Mass to conclude this week of fellowship, ministry, and service.

Community Based Vocation Education Program places 2-4 students from Columbia HS and their teacher's assistant on-site weekly at the parish office to build relationships and office skills for the participants.