



St. John's Episcopal Church

Naperville, Illinois

Parish Profile 2022



PARISH OVERVIEW

St. John's Episcopal Church in Naperville (a western suburb of Chicago), is a vibrant, diverse, and welcoming community that offers a warm, loving Christian atmosphere to people of all ages. We strive to reflect the love of Christ in our liturgy, traditions, and community outreach programs.

As congregants, we work to live out the vision of our church: *We seek to lead our lives as disciples of Christ, growing and maturing in our faith and sharing that faith with others.*

St. John's offers an array of programs and ministries for all ages and interests. Members of our church participate in Bible studies and prayer groups, the

Peoria, Aurora, and Rockford, and many rural settings across the state.

The Episcopal Diocese of Chicago encompasses congregational vitality initiatives such as The College for Congregational Development, established Episcopal college ministries throughout the state, and a strong commitment to social witness, as expressed through the work of Episcopal Charities and Community Services, the social outreach arm of the diocese.

The Right Reverend Paula E. Clark became the thirteenth Bishop of Chicago in September 2022.

Interested candidates are asked to complete the diocese's Clergy Information Form for Transitions. Questions about the application process should be directed to The Reverend Andrea Mysen, Director for Ministries (amysen@episcopalchicago.org).

ST. JOHN'S HISTORY

St. John's roots run deep in Naperville as it was first organized as a parish in 1850 and the first building was erected in 1865. It is the oldest Episcopal Church in DuPage County (Illinois' second largest county)

Brotherhood of St Andrew, Daughters of the King, Episcopal Church Women, Outreach Board, youth groups and children's Sunday School programs, Adult Forum and adult and children's choirs.

The Episcopal Diocese of Chicago is geographically and culturally expansive. The diocese spans about half the area of Illinois, stretching from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River, from the Wisconsin border nearly to St. Louis. Our 122 congregations are found in the city of Chicago, in the suburbs of Chicagoland, other Illinois cities like



St. John's rectory sits on extensive outdoor church grounds

and became part of the Episcopal Diocese in 1947. This first church is still standing as part of Naperville's historic Naper Settlement – an educational and entertainment venue that connects present-day Naperville with the area's rich history. The church as we know it today was built in 1972 and expanded in 2002 to offer classrooms, offices and gathering space.

In addition to its main facilities, the church also owns the rectory and Pennywise Resale Shop. Pennywise is popular among the local community, and proceeds support St. John's operating funds. The entire campus encompasses about 23,000 square feet with large outside grounds suitable for events or outdoor services. The church seats more than 200 and utilizes a full pipe organ for services. Finally, St. John's added an Ash Garden in 1975 and a Columbarium in 2017 which contribute to the beauty and serenity of St. John's grounds.

OUR COMMUNITY

As the only Episcopal Church in the immediate area, St. John's serves parishioners from Naperville, Plainfield, Oswego, West Chicago, Aurora, Warrenville, Sugar Grove, and other communities across DuPage, Kendall, Kane, and Will Counties.



St. John's members taking part in a community-wide, food-packing service project.

City Highlights

The population of Naperville is just under 150,000 making it the fourth largest city in Illinois. Despite its size, Naperville offers residents a close-knit suburban feel. It is an affluent suburb, with median household income averaging about \$115,000. Many residents own



their own homes and are well educated. The economy centers around healthcare, research, tech, and energy industries.

Naperville is an award-winning community and is consistently rated as a top city in which to live. Rankings include:

[2022 Best Cities to Live in America - Niche.](#)

Ranked 4th Best Place to Live in the US in 2022 by Livability

<https://livability.com/>

[best-places/2022-top-100-best-places-to-live-in-the-us](#)

It is also one of the safest communities in the country: [Naperville is the safest city in the U.S. based on cost of crime: study | WGN-TV \(wgntv.com\)](#)

Schools

The two school districts that Naperville students attend (Districts 203 and 204) are always rated among the best school districts in the country. Niche.com ranks the schools in Naperville as #1: [2022 Cities with the Best Public Schools - Niche.](#)



St. John's members serve our greater community through caroling at a nearby senior center.

In addition to its school districts, Naperville also has colleges and universities in proximity. North Central College is located within downtown Naperville and several other higher education institutions are nearby including Benedictine University, the College of DuPage, and Aurora University. Naperville is also the home to satellite campuses of other colleges and universities such as Northern Illinois University, Governor's State University, and Indiana Tech.

Events and Attractions

The downtown area, including the Riverwalk, is a popular destination for people looking for shopping, restaurants or just relaxation. Nearby is the Millennium Carillon (one of the four largest carillons in the nation) and Centennial Beach, a beach and park area built on and around a former quarry.

Naperville also boasts one of the best library systems in the country. Its three libraries are in various areas of the city and has been ranked #1 in the 100,000-250,000-population category for ten straight years. Naperville is also home of the DuPage Children's Museum.

The city is also home to many events, small concerts and holiday events at Naper Settlement, the Last Fling (over Labor Day weekend), marathons and triathlons and other assorted gatherings. Given its downtown location and proximity to these events, St. John's has

a unique opportunity to utilize its parking lot and church to serve our community.

Proximity to Chicago

Naperville is located about thirty miles west of Chicago. There is an excellent commuter rail system that includes express trains to and from Naperville during rush hours, which allows for quick access to the city for workers or to take advantage of its vast array of employment and entertainment options.

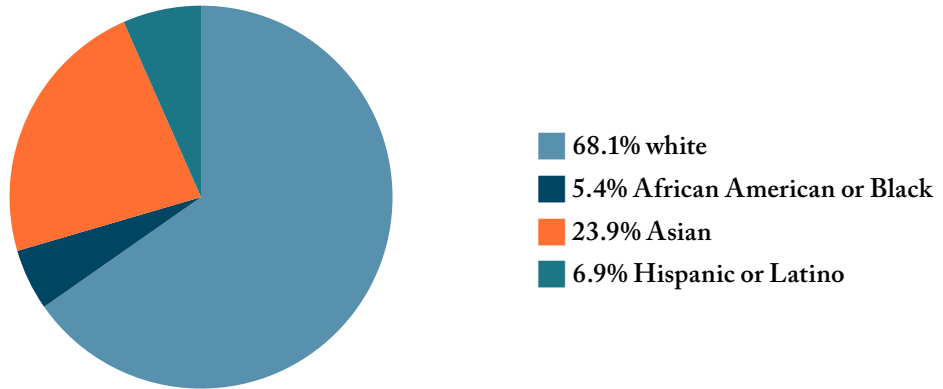
Being close to Chicago provides Naperville residents access to all that Chicago offers including the arts, world-class museums (such as the Art Institute, the Shedd Aquarium, the Museum of Science and Industry, the Field Museum of Natural History, and the Adler Planetarium), Lincoln Park and Brookfield Zoos, the Lake Michigan lakefront, O'Hare and Midway airports and more. Professional sports teams include the Bears (NFL), the Cubs and White Sox (MLB), the Bulls (NBA) and the Blackhawks (NHL). The Sky (WNBA) just won that league's championship led by Naperville's Candace Parker. The Chicago metropolitan area, including Naperville, is also home to top-rated healthcare in the United States, with three nationally acclaimed academic medical centers.

In summary, we believe that the city of Naperville and its surrounding area has a lot to offer anyone thinking about making it home.

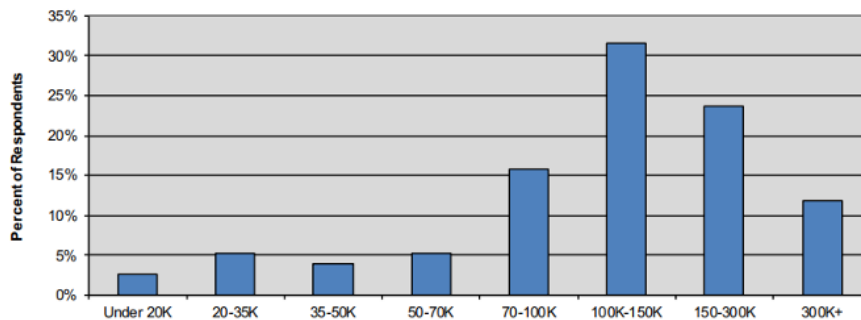
DEMOGRAPHICS

As St. John's is in the center of one of Illinois' largest cities there is room to grow our congregation and serve more people in our community.

Naperville Racial Demographics Census 2020



Income Level of St. John's Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) Respondents



Average household income among CAT respondents was \$154,178 and the average contribution per household was \$3,344.

STAFF

Paid Staff

Parish Administrator
Church Organist
Choir Director
Senior High Youth Minister
Pennywise Shop Manager

Volunteer Staff

Treasurer
Junior High Youth Ministers
Senior Warden
Junior Warden



Youth Ministry Team

FINANCIALS

In 2021, St. John's celebrated God's gifts and our hard work as the church mortgage was paid in full! We also completed a capital campaign and major repairs to both the church and rectory that year. This has allowed us to make additional improvements including new energy efficient windows in the Nave.



Other financial highlights:

- 106 Pledgers; 64 Givers of Record
- We have a Living Trust, managed by the Parish Treasurer. The Vestry can choose to withdraw up to 3% annually to support operations. This process is considered a loan and has always been paid back to the Trust.
- Pennywise Resale Shop also brings in revenue that is incorporated into our budget.
- Our parish sets aside \$10,000 annually to build reserves for maintenance and repairs.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

St. John's offers two Sunday in-person services: 8:00 a.m. (RITE I) and 10:30 a.m. (RITE II) with additional Friday night virtual Compline services twice monthly. Current Sunday church attendance averages about 100 parishioners, which is down from the 150 average attendance before COVID. In addition to Sunday services, St. John's offers many engaging

activities for our parishioners of all ages. Our youth participate in a combined Junior and Senior High Youth Group, Youth Choir, Acolytes, mission trips, and youth-led church services.

Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group:

- Confirmation program for incoming 7th - 8th graders
- Members present per event: around 10

Sunday School:

- For children ages 3-years old through 5th grade
- Volunteer taught
- Members present on Sundays: around 30

Vacation Bible School:

This ministry is on hold due to COVID restrictions

- Consists of student volunteers (Jr. & Sr. High)
- Age ranges from preschool – 5th grade (4-11 years old)





From left to right: Members of St. John's Garden Ministry, members of the Righteous Brothers Ministry who keep our parish well-fed. Acolytes range from 2nd grade through high schoolers

Our parish also supports many other ministries; these activities provide opportunities for parishioners to find an avenue for sharing their time, talents, and treasures with the community surrounding our parish.

All activities are planned to include the entire age spectrum of the congregation. Pre-COVID, these opportunities annually covered:

- Healing Prayer Team: prayers after Sunday church services and at other times as needed
- Pennywise: provides community-wide resale items and volunteer service opportunities
- Trinity Sandwich Board, Aurora: St. John's takes turns with several churches in the area to provide meals for the homeless
- Feed My Starving Children: Feed the Need at North Central College
- Hesed House meal preparation: the second largest homeless shelter in Illinois
- Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry: for local families in need
- Revive Center for Housing and Healing, Chicago: provide Christmas Baskets
- Youth Mission Trips to Appalachia in Kentucky: High school and college students can participate
- St. John's Farmer's Market: weekly every Wednesday during the summer season (currently on hold)
- Boy Scout troop: based at St. John's, the troop conducts service projects that sometimes benefit St. John's
- St. Leonard's House: halfway facility for men



St. John's Members delivering Christmas gifts to those in need.



St. John's Chapter of Daughters of the King.





From left to right: St. John's 2022 First Communion Class and St. John's 2020 Confirmation Class.

- recently released from prison
- Wayside Cross Ministries/Lifespring Aurora: program for women and women with children that provides transitional living
- Lawrence Hall: a community-based service agency embracing at-risk youth and their families in Chicago
- Naperville Police Chaplains Association

Most of these activities are described on the St. John's outreach page, along with pictures of our involvement. The Outreach Board also makes financial contributions to designated charities. The congregation is blessed to welcome representatives throughout the year to explain how our contribution has helped; often the presenter brings participants from the charities.

We also believe there is untapped opportunity to reach out to Naperville Central High School and North Central College, both close in proximity to our church building. We wish to support them in many ways, including:

- To assist with North Central's fall orientation for first-year students and help transfer students adjust to a new environment
- To offer physical uses of our church's facilities, like study groups and tutoring sessions for both college and high school students
- To offer support in mental health services

- To support faculty and staff needing comfort during crises with students
- To establish a relationship with the campus ministries at North Central
- To provide opportunities to earn service hours required for graduation by working at Penny-wise Shop, in the Music Program or with our buildings and grounds

The Outreach Board makes a financial contribution to Young Life of Naperville and Aurora a ministry to youth where adult volunteers give their time and energy to be positive role models, introduce the youth to Jesus, and nurture their faith.





CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND SMALL GROUP FEEDBACK

In our search process for a new Rector for St. John's, we gathered input using a Congregational Assessment Tool* with 154 responses. The survey revealed our top goals:

- Growing by reaching new people and incorporating new members into the life of our Parish
- Engaging people in meaningful relationships and creating new personal bonds
- Ministering to people who are challenged by life circumstances

In addition to the survey tool, the search committee conducted six small group sessions that enriched our understanding of what people want from their experiences at St. John's. Many of the ideas expressed highlighted the values people place on our church's vision and the tenets the Episcopal Church:

"We're the only Episcopal Church in a very large community with great location – let's take advantage of it"

*"We value diversity and inclusion"
"Group worship is an anchor"*

"The liturgy is comforting in its familiarity, in communion with others"

There were many who commented about the need to

grow our church and offered ideas to reach that goal:

"We need to get the word out"

"We need to attract young adults with relevant offerings"

"Need greater community involvement"

"Looking forward to all the gatherings we used to enjoy"

We also heard from members on ways they would like to see St. John's evolve:

"We've lost some coordination between ministries that would be more powerful together"

"We can do a better job of helping people find their gifts for ministry"

"We can use technology more effectively"

When we asked about qualities our parishioners were looking for in a rector, this is what they told us:

"We need to seriously consider additional clergy, youth ministers, and deacons"

"We're looking forward to a great preacher;



Youth participate in services in various ways.

thought-provoking messages with a wow-factor that promotes follow-up discussions”

“We should be a blend of traditional and contemporary, formal and informal”

“We can’t allow tradition to hold us back, but don’t underestimate the reluctance to change”

“We like when the pastor is involved directly with the youth, outside the service”

And finally, we surveyed our teen congregants who told us they care deeply about the relationships they are forging together at church:

“My strongest friendships are in my Church – no way I’ll go elsewhere”

“I’m more excited to go to youth group than to Church – we get the closest there”

The top goals that are particularly strong for St. John’s (relative to other churches that have conducted CAT surveys) are consistent with priorities expressed in small group sessions:

- The importance of inspirational worship services that remain true to Episcopal tradition with music and member participation.
- An emphasis on the value of pastoral care in the personal lives of members.
- The need for small groups, nurtured friendships, shared meals, and restoration of some interactions that have faded over time.

Our survey revealed that many respondents are “on the fence” when asked whether they are satisfied with St. John’s (52%) and whether we have sufficient energy (54%), which indicates that St. John’s has many observers – people who are affiliated with the Church but are waiting/watching in the wings to see what happens. This assessment is supported by additional observations that:

- The response to our Congregational Assessment Tool was about 150% of average Sunday attendance.

We had more people willing to invest the time in completing a survey than are typically willing to join a worship service

- Worship service attendance is a fraction of what it was 5 – 10 years ago.

Decreased attendance was a pre-pandemic trend exacerbated by a prolonged hold on in-person attendance or programs

- Major holiday worship attendance is far greater than an average Sunday.

There are many friends of St. John's who enjoy our services, but with only a casual sense of commitment or obligation

Youth member feedback from two small group sessions revealed additional dimensions for growth at St. John's. For example, while the entire parish was consistent on growth orientation, member engagement, pastoral care, worship experience as top priorities, our youth members added social and institutional change as a priority for their involvement.

The CAT survey revealed far more about St. John's than is included in this parish profile and can be a source of exploration for months and years to come; we regret that we did not do this survey over the last 15 years. We expect to work together between our Vestry and Rector to focus on sustainable programs aligned with priorities we know to be essential in the minds of our community and as recommend by our diocese. A potential concern that we have acknowledged for

St. John's is related to our adaptability. We have many members longing for more of something, yet a survey interpretation that suggests we might be low in terms of flexibility.

Neither our Vestry nor the Search Committee views the call or role of a new Rector for St. John's to be a singular answer to achieve these goals. **However, we strongly believe (and the circumstantial evidence suggests) that we have a large community of faith seekers on a spiritual journey who crave reconnection with St. John's under renewed leadership.**

That does not mean that we need or expect a Rector who will do it all. We have and continue to expect lay ministry leaders and volunteers who regularly step-up. CAT survey data and candid small group input reinforces that we are ready for new leadership. Parish-ioner feedback calls for a renewed vision for what it means to invite, welcome, and connect people to the body of Christ and for a revitalized relationship with the Church.

** Vital Signs report for St. John's Naperville generated from a Congregational Assessment Tool by Holy Cow! Consulting in collaboration with Diocese of Chicago CAT survey interpreter, April 2022*



From left to right: Our annual blessing of the backpacks as school starts – a highlight for those heading back to school no matter their age!

High-schoolers leading communion at our youth-led service.

OUR NEXT RECTOR

Ideally, our new rector will exhibit the qualities on this list. With God's help, the successful candidate will bring the best blend of these characteristics to help us continue to grow and fulfill our vision and mission in doing God's work in the greater Naperville community. In small group conversations with parishioners, and in our CAT survey, responses about the ideal rector included:

Energetic in mind and approach

- Ability to attract both young and seasoned parishioners
- Supportive of children's and youth programming
- Focus on youth beyond the sermon

Personal characteristics

- Empathetic
- Open hearted
- Good listener
- A shepherd mindset
- Compassionate
- Encouraging

Experience as rector

- Parish experience
- Proven record of growth
- Operational excellence

Communication

- Enthusiastic teaching about the Word-of-God
- Engaging for our youth
- Inspirational
- Conversational and authentic

Forward thinking

- Visionary
- Open to new ideas and new ministries
- Capacity to lead through periods of change
- Champion for diversity and inclusion

Strong and effective leader

- Ability and desire to develop lay leadership
- Understands the required administrative skills and how to delegate

- Collegial, welcoming vestry and parishioners in decision-making process
- Open to having deacons who can help expand outreach and impact
- Desire to work with other pastors in the Deanery
- Strategic leader who can cast a vision and lead the church
- Ability to negotiate and resolve conflicts
- Be a part of the life of the parish

In other words, the successful candidate for rector needs to help us bring out the best in all of us!

SUMMARY

This is an exciting moment of change for St. John's Episcopal Church! To our dedicated parishioners, St. John's is more than a place of worship; rather it is a home that allows them to connect with lifelong friends while walking together in Christ's mission. It gives us the tradition we love as Episcopalians while pushing us to expand our thinking. It is centered in a vibrant city with small-town charm that has much to offer.

We look forward to welcoming a new rector who can help shape and grow St. John's for years to come!

