

Church of the Holy Cross, Episcopal

400 South Church Street

Paris, Texas 75460



June, 2010

Welcome

We welcome all who read and view this profile of Holy Cross and hope it captures the excitement and growth we are experiencing. We are a nurturing, loving church whose members see Christ's work in our relationships with others.

We are looking forward to our next chapter with a priest whom we can love and who can love us.



Permanent Sign at Holy Cross

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Church of the Holy Cross is to love and serve Christ and make him known to this world; to be a loving, accepting center of worship, fellowship and outreach; and to be responsive to God's will in serving the needs of the community.

Vision Statement:

The Church of the Holy Cross is striving to be a growing, dynamic congregation of Christians with such hospitality that no matter how large the gathering we will retain a realized sense of being “family” to individuals, couples, families, seekers, visitors and friends. We emphasize our following strengths:

- * Our heritage of Anglican, liturgical worship that is inspiring, artful and exquisitely done.

- * A beautiful campus with historic buildings and a reverent and uplifting church for prayer and worship.

- * We are a church for everyone, with something for everyone, with easily identifiable entry points.

- * We are a people who are committed to growing in our understanding of Holy Scripture, faith, spirituality and generous giving to the ministries of God through Holy Cross.

- * An atmosphere where individual differences, opinions and tastes are not just tolerated, but valued; where conflict is resolved with integrity, maturity, love and respect for each other.

- * A growing and maturing place for developing healthy individual persons, marriages, families, children and joyful, productive retirees.

- * A strong and visible outreach to address the needs of the community, our neighborhood and the world through national and international mission projects.

Current Church Life

We are continually mindful of the importance of building and nurturing relationships through our special events and small group functions, and we work to validate a sense of belonging for all who wish to belong, whether attending one of our worship services or a social function.

⇒ We are intentional in our Supper Club ministry as a means of deepening fellowship among various groups within the parish and of integrating newcomers.

⇒ Our post-service coffee hours are an opportunity for fellowship and education regarding Holy Cross.

We continue to offer special events such as the Mother's Day reception, Sunday School kick-off luncheon, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and Talent Night, Halloween Festival, Women of the Church luncheons and other events. These programs provide special opportunities for fellowship for both members and visitors. (We LOVE to get together!)



Making plans on Rally Day

We use a Rally Sunday in August to kick off the new school year and to encourage greater participation in parish life. Many new and old communicants register for various activities in the church. Each organization has a representative present to discuss and recruit for their groups' activities.

The establishment in 2004 of The Episcopal Day School, A Montessori School, in Ruth Hall (former site of administrative offices), was a nod toward, not only a ministry of relationships, but a sustainable stewardship. The school is now filled to its capacity of 46 students and has a waiting list.

In recent years, Holy Cross has provided a Wednesday night "healing service," with the laying on of hands, that has a loyal following and many visitors.



Sunlight through the Arcade that leads from the church to our

Administration

Holy Cross has a full-time rector, a part-time parish administrator, and a part-time youth director. We also employ an organist and choir director. Moreover, Holy Cross is fortunate to have the (unpaid) services of a Deacon, Betty Clement.

Stewardship

We are committed to the importance of a “mindfulness” of stewardship, believing it should be addressed throughout the year, not just during the stewardship campaign; that diocesan and professional consultation is important to its success; that our goal of increasing our annual budget relies greatly on the implementation of these precepts.

- Last fall, we had Dan Wilson address the congregation on viewing giving as a part of being a Christian rather than as a part of meeting a financial budget.
- We are very pleased that as our annual budget has increased, we have *met* our stewardship goals.

Building and Grounds

We are committed to care for our beautiful, historic building and to make it a welcoming place for worship and fellowship.

Our Sunday school building, Ruth Hall, also houses the Montessori school. The offices have been moved to the rectory. The parish hall is the center of most social activities and includes a full kitchen.

Upcoming plans include a handicapped access for the parish hall and protection for our stained glass windows.

Holy Cross is particularly proud of our Aeolian-Skinner organ, a majestic instrument that is occasionally used by University of North Texas music students for recitals. It recently received a major renovation that assures its use for generations to come.



History of Holy Cross

The history of Holy Cross dates from the beginning of the Episcopal Church in Texas. On St. Patrick's Day, 1839, Bishop Leonidas Polk crossed the Red River from Arkansas into Lamar County, making what was called the first foreign missionary visit by a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church."

In February 1870, the Reverend F. R. Starr was appointed by Bishop Gregg to be missionary to Paris and parts adjacent. That same month, Fr. Starr conducted his first service in Paris. In January 1871, the vestry purchased half a block of land for \$1650. The construction of the church building was completed in July 1872 and it was consecrated in November that year.

In 1874, The Right Reverend Alexander C. Garrett arrived in Dallas as Bishop of the Missionary District of Northern Texas. This area consisted of 55 counties in the northern third of the state. At that time, the Dallas County population was only 13,314. Paris was a city of about 5,000 and most of the other towns in the district were much smaller. The Paris church building was moved several times between 1884 and 1887 and enlarged in 1892.



Rectory & Church prior to the fire of 1916

Holy Cross Church of Paris was one of 13 self-supporting Episcopal parishes in northern Texas when delegates met in the fall of 1895 to establish the Diocese of Dallas. Holy Cross Church sent an influential delegation to the Primary Convention of the Diocese of Dallas on December 20, 1895. This parish is the second oldest in the diocese, after Saint Matthew's in Dallas. The years between 1890 and 1916 were golden years for Holy Cross. A Parish Day School was begun in 1899, with a headmaster and three teachers; the church choir was recognized statewide for its quality; and the congregation increased to more than 200 communicants.

But on March 21, 1916, disaster struck both the City and Holy Cross. A fire started in the extreme southwest part of the city and, fanned by high winds, moved northeasterly in an ever-widening path. A third of the buildings in Paris were destroyed before the fire was brought under control. All of the Holy Cross Church buildings were completely destroyed.

The vestry made arrangements for church to be held in the Elks Lodge until a replacement could be built. The present lot on South Church Street was purchased from a family whose home there had been destroyed in the fire. It measured 120 by 216 feet, extending from Church Street to SE 1st Street on the west side.

At the time, Paris was a great cotton center and several Holy Cross parishioners were English cotton merchants. They had a considerable influence on the rebuilding plans, both its appearance and financial support. The cornerstone of the New English Gothic style, field stone building was laid by Bishop Garrett on March 8, 1917. Sunday School was taught in the new building for the first time on July 19, 1918, and Holy Communion was celebrated at the new altar for the first time on September 30. The rectory was completed at the same time as the church. The parish hall was built about two years later.



Cornerstone of Holy Cross

Another profound event for Holy Cross was the arrival of the Reverend James O'Connell as the new rector. "Rector," as he became known to everyone in Paris, was at Holy Cross for 30 years and left an indelible mark on the parish. He came during the closing year of World War II, and it fell his lot to rebuild the church membership after the war's disruption. Many of the young men who left for military service did not return to Paris to make their home. Moreover, quite a number of the community's women married soldiers stationed at nearby Camp Maxey and followed them to other areas after the war.

Rector O'Connell's work in organizing the youth of the church and his attention to other opportunities started a period of growth that was similar to that around 1900, when the parish had its first period of sustained growth. He was active in the diocese in many areas, including serving as Dean of the Eastern Deanery. He and his wife, Mildred, were involved in the cultural life of the community for many years, serving as very visible ambassadors for the Episcopal Church in Paris.

Parochial Report for 2009:

Membership:

Total baptized members: 245

Communicants (adults and youth) in good standing: 244

Average Sunday attendance: 110

Easter: 345

Marriages: 1

Burials: 11

Baptisms: 5

Confirmations: 8

Total church school students: 24

Stewardship:

Pledged: \$235,000 (pledges/90)



Our children enjoy the children's sermon.

At right is the Holy Cross banner designed and handmade by our Needlepoint group. Some of the ladies even give instruction to the younger ladies who are want to learn needlepoint.



Total of plate offerings, pledge payments, regular support: \$260,073

Money from investments (used for operations): \$8,316

Other operating income (from restricted and unrestricted gifts, contributions from congregational organizations): \$0

Capital funds, gifts, etc., \$0

Additions to endowment and other investment funds: \$8,000.

Expenditures:

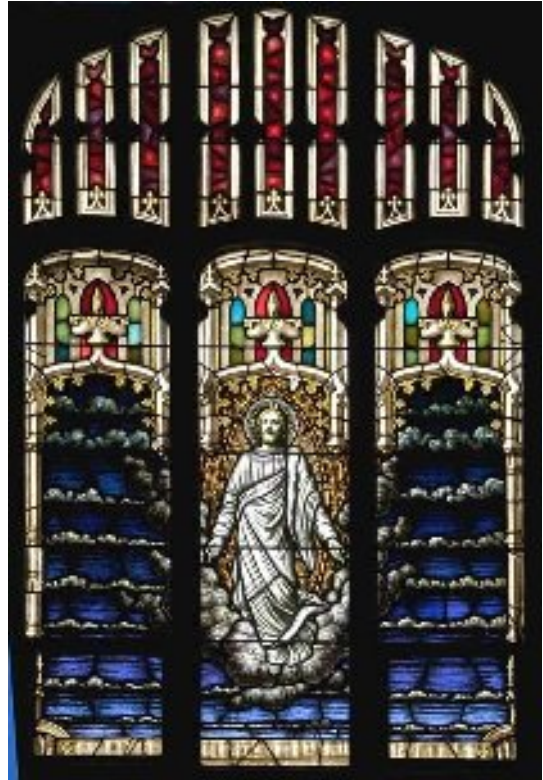
Diocesan assessment: \$21,748

Outreach from operating budget: \$600

All other operating expenses: \$279,708

Improvement and capitol expenditures: \$0

Total investment at market value: \$157,880



One of the beautiful stained glass windows at Holy Cross.

** 2010 pledges were up to \$239,966.00 and average attendance is up.*

Our Parish Community:

Altar Guild

The guild works in three teams as “housekeepers” of our Lord’s house. They clean all linens and vestments, polish the silver and brass, refill the candles and do all other chores that are essential for services. The guild also maintains the “flower calendar” and decorates the church at Christmas and Easter. All confirmed members of the church are invited to join.



Members of the Brotherhood cook for one of the October Luncheon Fundraisers.

Brotherhood of St. Andrew

This active group of men, dedicated to prayer and service to the church, sponsor and assist with many of the activities at Holy Cross, as well as outreach activities like Habitat For Humanity in which they work with the Diocesan chapters as well as locally. They assist with fundraisers for the youth and have an auction every couple of years for their own fundraiser.

Choir

The Holy Cross Choir is a small but talented group, led by organist Jennie Vaughan and choir mistress Pat Denney. The choir is known for performing challenging music each Sunday, and for their annual Lessons and Carols service, special concerts, and choral work on special occasions like Maundy Thursday, July Fourth and high feast days.

It has a reputation for fine technical work and a devoted membership. Their CD recorded during the 1996 Lessons and Carols service is still in circulation.



Vacation Bible School



Children's Christmas Pageant in vintage costumes

Children's Ministry

This ministry includes Sunday school and the involvement of youth in weekly services. Our vacation bible school draws incredible numbers of children, both within and without our parish community.

Team teaching is being used this year, with 12 adults committed to teach through fifth grade. Fifteen children regularly attend Sunday School and 39 children participated in our most recent Christmas Pageant. We currently have 20 active acolytes. On occasional Sundays, Fr. Terry delivers a children's sermon.

Episcopal Young Churchmen (EYC)

Holy Cross is blessed to have a very active Junior and Senior EYC. This group of young people are very involved in the social activities of this parish. They participate in the preparation of the October and the Spring Luncheons. In the fall, they collect can goods and deliver Thanksgiving baskets to the needy and help host the annual Halloween carnival. They also visit nursing homes, sponsor the Easter Egg Hunt, host the Mother's Day reception, and participate as acolytes. They accomplish most of their goals planned during their Sunday evening meetings. There they also enjoy fun, food and educational activities.



The Christmas Carol Fundraiser is fun!

The EYC also raises money for their Summer Mission Trip. In 1985, the youth group adopted St. Paul's Mission in Brownsville, Texas. They provide a Vacation Bible School and Sports Camp for the Spanish Speaking church. The EYC has never missed a year helping the children of that community.

Women of the Church

All women who attend Holy Cross are considered members of this organization and many participate. Its object is to relate the Women of Holy Cross to the whole task of the church through a program of worship, service, gifts, fellowship, and outreach. In the past it has sponsored bazaars and a children's clothing outlet to raise money for special projects. Today, most of its income results from the Thursday luncheons provided for the community throughout the month of October and a spring salad luncheon.

The Women of the Church prepare and host meals for the annual meeting, visiting clergy, special events, confirmation and parish family bereavement dinners or receptions.

Outreach projects include Co-Ministry, Children's Advocacy, Church Women United as well as St. Paul's Episcopal Mission in Brownsville, Texas. They purchase equipment for the parish hall, kitchen, rectory and Ruth Hall (school building). In addition, The Women of the Church pays a portion of the Christmas bonuses for the church staff and helps support Holy Cross's outreach through the clergy outreach fund (discretionary).



Some of the ladies prepare the drinks and desserts for the Spring Salad Luncheon.

All-Parish Survey

Our most recent survey indicated the average parishioner has been a member of Holy Cross for 20 years, also showed that 72% attend almost every Sunday; 22% twice a month; and only 6% said they attended only once or less per month.

Seventy-three per cent attend the 10:30 service, 27% attend 8:00. The latter congregants tend to like little or no music and Rite 1. The 10:30 parishioners, predictably, are younger, have children, and enjoy the music and the changing liturgy.

When asked if they feel like attending Holy Cross is allowing them to fulfill God's purpose for their lives, 81% said Yes, 18% said No, and 1% were unsure.

Regarding what they thought was important (from most to least) in fulfilling the parish's mission:

- 1) Be a place for traditional liturgical worship.
- 2) Embody a loving and nurturing community.
- 3) Provide Christian education for children and youth.
- 4) Attract and engage young people.
- 5) Provide Christian Education for Adults.
- 6) Make and encourage new Christians.
- 7) Be a safe haven for seekers.
- 8) Provide local outreach.
- 9) Evangelism.
- 10) Attract new families to the Episcopal Day School.
- 11) Provide U.S. Outreach (e.g. Habitat For Humanity, etc.).
- 12) Provide social activities.
- 13) Be a place for contemporary worship.
- 14) Provide foreign outreach and support foreign missions.

The top three answers to the question "what keeps you returning to Holy Cross" were: style of worship, church community and friendships, and quality and type of music.

The Rector

Holy Cross parishioners look to their priest as their spiritual leader, principal minister of Word and Sacraments, and chief executive officer of the parish—with responsibilities and functions traditionally associated with the office as set forth in the canons of the Church.

In almost every survey, parishioners have referred to basically the same functions and qualities they most value in a rector (in no particular order):

- ◆ Empowering a strong laity
- ◆ Encouraging excellence in the liturgy
- ◆ Preaching inspirational sermons and homilies
- ◆ Encouraging youth/children's programs
- ◆ Promoting Christian education.
- ◆ Being always the "Pastor/Sheppard" (ministering to the sick, the dying, the bereaved, as well as being available for short-term crisis counseling and guidance in spiritual growth)
- ◆ Furthering the social ministry of the parish

Parishioners welcome a rector who:

- Practices a management style that is more cooperative than authoritarian; who is a facilitator more than a doer; and one who is interested in continuing to develop and strengthen the significant lay involvement which already characterizes the Holy Cross community.
- Maintains worship services of beauty and dignity with attention to the altar, participants, music, healing and Celebration of the Eucharist.
- Promotes deepening of the spiritual life through worship, study and retreats.
- Continues to encourage the parish's active social ministries, as well as its commitment to ecumenical activities.

The Individual

Holy Cross Church sees its new rector as a priest who understands that a parish is an inclusive community that, as a member of the greater Church, serves as the sacramental sign of God's presence in the world.

Holy Cross seeks a person who is by nature warm, caring, energetic, friendly, thoughtful, humorous and sensitive to people of all ages—one who reaches out

comfortably to all of our members in a genuine pastoral manner. He/she should have a good sense of humor, a strong sense of self and a keen sense of personal direction.

The parish hopes that our new rector will be a person who is willing and able to challenge our congregation to continue its spiritual, physical and fiscal growth. However, we would expect sincere pastoral concern that elevates the needs of individuals above the material and programmatic interests of the church.

Holy Cross parishioners would like the rector's family to be actively involved in parish and community life.

Needs of Holy Cross

- Holy Cross has been fortunate to be a viable and growing church at a time when many Episcopal churches have lost membership, especially in small towns. However, there are some needs of the church which it hopes the new rector can lead in addressing. They are the following:
 - A growth plan with widespread input
 - Holy Cross to be more effective as a welcoming community
 - Holy Cross to be the presence of God in the community through visible outreach
 - A plan to unify our Christian Education program - Sunday School, Confirmation, Vacation Bible School, Adult Education, etc.
 - Better skills in stewardship
 - Creation and the training of a pastoral care team

Paris, Lamar County, Texas

Paris is a community of approximately 25,000, a county seat to 50,000, and a thriving northeast Texas town just an hour and a half (100 miles) from Dallas. Paris enjoys its own cowboy-hatted Eiffel Tower and the publicity it receives from sharing the name of a more famous French city. Paris, Texas also has one of the few remaining municipal bands in the U.S., one that still plays on Friday nights in the summer in the park. It has a community theater that operates in the black and plenty of barbecue and chicken fried steak. But while soy beans have taken the place of cotton, Paris has enjoyed a solid industrial base that includes Campbell Soup and Kimberly-Clark.

The English cotton brokers who helped settle and civilize the community also left it with an appreciation for parks and books and fountains. We have plenty of soccer fields and lots of walking/bike trails. The Paris Public Library has expanded. The City doesn't pay for municipal band uniforms anymore, but they do maintain the parks and

the beautiful Italian marble fountain on the plaza (the town square). The Historical Society and the Main Street Project insure that the historical district and the downtown are developed in a manner that maintains the town's historical authenticity, while encouraging commerce.

The city has diverse neighborhoods that house a diverse population and five school districts, one in the city and four in the county. Paris has the feel of a small town, with the advantages of a big city just a short drive away. And raising kids here means you have a big extended family to help out whenever you need it.

This profile is accompanied by a power point disk that provides the visuals.

The Lamar County Chamber of Commerce website address is www.paristexas.com.



Paris TX Eiffel Tower complete
with a Stetson Hat.