

St. Columba's Episcopal Church

Camarillo, California

Parish Profile

January 2023



Our Mission

To Be Partners with Christ in a Caring and Inclusive Community

Seeking to Know Christ and to Make Christ Known Through:

Loving God and responding to God's presence in each other

Enhancing spiritual growth for people of all ages within the Episcopal context of scripture, reason, tradition, and worship

Fostering a healing and caring community within the parish and beyond

Promoting progressive, challenging, and vital ministries

Striving for justice and peace among all peoples

<https://stcolumbaca.com>

Where are we?

Founded in 1964, Camarillo is in Ventura County, surrounded by fertile agricultural land, less than 10 miles from the ocean, and sits approximately 50 miles northwest of Los Angeles. With a population of over 70,000 and growing, it supports light industry and a premium outlet center that contributes greatly to the city's financial resources that are carefully managed by the City Council and City Manager. Also, Naval Base Ventura County is close by, so many residents are either young military personnel stationed here or retired military. Located on a coastal plain, Camarillo enjoys a temperate climate with ocean breezes that keep it almost smog-free.

Most of Camarillo's housing is single-family homes, but there are many apartments, town homes, and condominium units available. For families there are 14 schools for grades K-8, 3 high schools, and a 4-year university, California State University Channel Islands. There are also a number of other community colleges and universities within easy commuting distance.

St. John's Camarillo Hospital serves Camarillo for acute, extended, and emergency care. The population is further supported by larger hospitals, all within 15 miles or less. They include St. John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard, Community Memorial Hospital and the Ventura County Medical Center, both in Ventura, plus the Los Robles Hospital and Medical Center in Thousand Oaks. Additionally, UCLA Medical Center and Cedars-Sinai Medical Center are both about 50 miles from Camarillo. There is access to some of the finest medical care in the country.

Camarillo has cultural and recreational opportunities, such as the Camarillo Arts Center, summer concerts in Constitution Park, and concerts by the New West Symphony at Rancho Campana High School, a YMCA, 28 parks, tennis courts, youth soccer, baseball, softball, and football, 6 public golf courses within a 20-mile radius, and lastly, and multiple places of worship in the city. This makes Camarillo a wonderful place to live, work, play, and worship. To learn more about Camarillo, visit the city's website at www.visitcamarillo.com or the Oxnard Chamber of Commerce.



Our History

In order to have their children instructed in the Christian faith, the Las Camigas couples group started a church school on Sundays in 1951 assisted by Rev. Dan Bacot, Rector at All Saints, Oxnard. Soon the Rt. Rev. Francis Eric Bloy, Bishop of the Diocese of Los Angeles, sent Captain Raymond W. Lewis of the Church Army, a member of a missionary order of the Episcopal Church, to minister to the Camarillo people, making St. Columba's a part of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles for almost 75 years. By 1953 the congregation grew to become a mission of the diocese and was named St. Columba's in honor of the missionary who evangelized Scotland in the fifth century. At that time, a campaign was begun in order to raise funds for building a church and parish hall on a 2-acre site donated by E.E. Converse in memory of his wife, Lillian. The building, now the Parish Hall, was completed by 1954. Captain Lewis continued to serve the mission until the Rev. John Erickson was installed as Vicar. Fr. Erickson became the first Rector when the congregation grew and incorporated. The next Rector was Rev. Gerald Graves, followed by Rev. Dr. Alfred Smith, who served St. Columba's for over 28 years, and was followed most recently by the Rev. Canon Gregory B. Larkin. Fr. Greg served as Rector for over 22 years, until the summer of 2022.



St. Columba's Sanctuary – Built in 1967

In the mid 1960's, construction was initiated on the present sanctuary and completed in 1967. It can accommodate about 300 worshipers and holds the choir area with the console of the Allen Renaissance Organ (installed in 1998), the Mary Chapel opposite the Choir area, and the columbarium, situated along the west wall of the Mary Chapel.



Mary Chapel



Columbarium

The former church building was converted into the Parish Hall, which is used for church social and outreach events, and by outside groups, such as AA and the Boy Scouts. The building also houses the parish clergy and administrative offices. It has a large well-equipped kitchen, and classrooms for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd on Sundays and an area for storing food for the food ministries. Just outside the parish hall is a patio area, used for social functions and outdoor liturgical services, such as the Blessing of the Seeds in spring and Blessing of the Animals in fall.

Patio



**Children's
Learning Center**



On the other side of the patio is a group of buildings that house the office of the Music Director and the Children's Learning Center (CLC). The CLC provides preschool for children from 2 years through Pre-K. The school not only has well-fitted indoor classrooms, but also offers outdoor classrooms. The CLC is well-regarded in the community and normally has a waiting list. Beyond the CLC is a large lot where the Labyrinth is located.



Labyrinth



**Memorial
Garden**

The buildings are structurally sound. Maintenance and repairs are managed by our Buildings and Grounds Committee. We call on volunteers to resolve many of the issues involving our campus and call on professionals to cover those we cannot. In 2021 and 2022, we averaged over \$23,000 per year to repair and improve the campus. Funding is provided by budgetary outlay, special gifts and/or grants from the Endowment Fund Committee. We anticipate investing over \$50,000 in the campus in 2023. Our structures are a blend of Southern California architecture along with many Celtic traces of the rich heritage of our namesake, St. Columba of Iona.

Financial State of the Parish

The finances of the Parish are managed carefully. Most years, the budget is met through pledges, plate, fundraising and a monthly contribution from the Children's Learning Center. Excellent fiscal management in previous years has provided for building financial reserves that allow for a cushion if expenses exceed income. The approved budget for 2023 (proposed income and disbursements) is \$244,318. The percentage listed in the table for Salary and Personnel is not typical due to having budgeted for a part-time interim pastor for most of 2023.

2023 Budget - Income		2023 Budget- Disbursements	
Plate offerings, Pledges, & CLC Pledge	92%	Salaries & Personnel	59.80%
Fund Raising and Parish Hall donations	2.30%	Administrative Expenses	23.70%
2012 – 2022 Reserve Funds	2.60%	Programs & Outreach	12.60%
Special Gifts	3.30%	Property Support	3.90%
TOTAL: \$244,318		TOTAL: \$244,318	

Administrative expenses include utilities, insurance, advertising, liturgical and office supplies. Program & Outreach disbursements are inclusive of the Mission Share Fund, Music, Education, Taizé service, and Rector's incidental expenses and discretionary fund. Property support covers janitorial services. Most of our repairs and maintenance are funded through rental of the Rectory. We also have about \$70,000 in designated gifts and \$50,000 in undesignated special gifts and memorials available for larger projects. Additionally, our Endowment Fund Committee provides grants of \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year (3-5% of the total) to help with projects or special programs.

Our Endowment Fund currently has about \$550,000 in it. Those funds are split between the Diocesan Investment Trust and a private investment account. The investments are diversified. We also receive generous donations from parishioners' estates to build up the Fund. The Fund is managed by the Endowment Fund Committee.

The commitment of parishioners to give financially is in itself a gift we cherish.

Parish Survey Results

In order to prepare an accurate profile of St. Columba's, one that would present a true picture of the parish (the members, their character, their spiritual commitment to our church and community), a survey was prepared and given or sent to every individual member of the congregation. It was also posted on St. Columba's website and eventually mailed to parishioners that could not get one at church, via email attachment, or via the website. Of the roughly 110 surveys that went out, 61 were returned – over 50%. Everyone was asked to tell us:

- What one likes about St. Columba's
- How one came to the parish
- Why one has stayed
- How we might improve
- What each one would like to see in the new rector.

Clear trends were noted.

The survey captured demographic details demonstrating the sustained commitment and maturity of the parishioners:

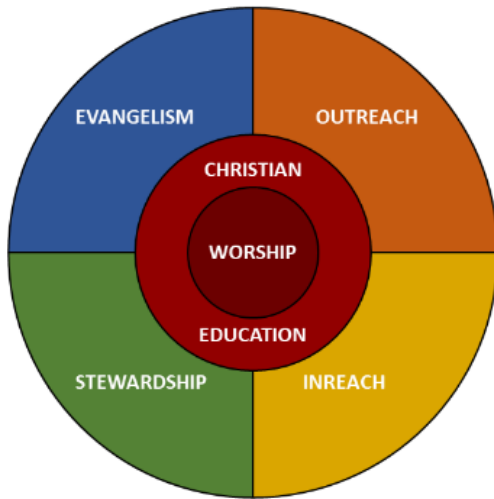
1. Most chose St. Columba's because they are life-long Episcopalians or came with family and friends, and many chose an Episcopal church after a search.
2. Some 33 have been at St. Columba's over 20 years and another 12 for 11-20 years.
3. The majority of the congregants are 60 and over, which matches what the California *Master Plan on Aging (2019)* reported: "the older population in Ventura County is the majority minority."

Not surprisingly, the results from the leadership retreat and the church-wide survey results reflect strong and positive feelings toward:

1. Worship being well-done and central to who the church is as a parish and in the community
2. Providing rich, expertly delivered music
3. Being welcoming and offering a sense of community
4. Offering practical opportunities to put one's faith into action
5. Providing spiritual nourishment
6. Promoting a feeling of being part of the St. Columba's community
7. Having a clear focus and sense of direction

Leadership, inclusive of the Vestry and the Transition and Search Committees met for a Leadership retreat, spending time reviewing "Healthy Church Behavior," which was reflective of the church-wide survey.

Parishioners are happy with what St. Columba's delivers in terms of worship services, how we commune with each other, opportunities for service and spirituality, and a clear sense of who we are.



As part of the survey, parishioners were asked their opinions about the Ministry Spheres at St. Columba's.

Historically, at the core of all we do is Worship, which equips us to hear God's call and to respond as servants of all. And as servants, we respond to Jesus's call to action through our Spheres of Ministry. The spheres are broken into four main categories: Evangelism, Stewardship, Inreach, and Outreach. These spheres, ministries of service, are upheld and supported by our Christian Education that equips us with the skills and training we need in order to reach out to the sick, the friendless and the needy, and especially to our own Parish family.

On a scale of 1-5, 5 being very well, the majority of folks (over half) rated the church at 4 or 5 in most spheres.

More specifically to each sphere:

Worship: Worship is highly valued at St. Columba's per the survey and the leadership meeting outcomes. Parishioners especially enjoy the inspiring music, sermons that encourage Christian commitment and growth, teaching that apply scripture to daily living. Opportunities for sacred worship and the Eucharist are offered not only on Sunday, but also every Thursday morning and at the Taizé service when they are in person (which is now viewed online). Other unique times of worship are through the labyrinth, Stories by the Campfire, and Lectio Divina.

Christian Education (Adult, Youth, Family): Parishioners appreciate and take advantage of opportunities for adult education, including Bible study and learning about Episcopal traditions and doctrine. Most would like to have some offerings of quiet days and retreats, as well as opportunities for leadership development. Many feel that families are welcome and included in church services, while at the same time, all would like programs for kids from birth through high school. The leadership also recognized the need for leadership development and the quandary of having programs for children and adolescents.

Stewardship (Giving and Administration): Consistently the surveys revealed and the leadership confirmed that St. Columba's is clear about our giving theology. Most agree that it emphasizes time, talents, and treasure, offers a clear message as to why we all need to give from our financial resources, provides diverse volunteer opportunities, and confirms the transparent use of church resources and how they are used effectively and efficiently. Time and talent are as essential as financial gifts and have been promoted through open communication with the congregation through announcements, weekly bulletins, and the parish newsletter, as well the availability of staff and the Vestry to hear from the congregation.

Inreach (Congregational Life): Most parishioners, including the leadership, agree that St. Columba's is very welcoming to newcomers and encourages them to get involved. Also, the clergy and lay people offer support to members, especially when in crisis. Examples include members of the Vestry making calls on a weekly basis during the pandemic and ensuring individuals could connect virtually to services offered online, as well as the Health Ministry providing support through visits, calls and sending cards and notes.

Outreach (Connecting with the Broader Community): Parishioners rated the church highly for maintaining close relationships with other Episcopal churches in the region, the diocese, the national church, and other faith traditions. Leadership thinks that St. Columba's could improve on interacting with and supporting other Episcopal churches and the Los Angeles Diocese. The parishioners feel the church maintains a good working relationship with area non-profit and community-based organizations, providing opportunities for the community-at-large to use the church grounds. The Food Ministry is an example of a significant ongoing relationship with the community for almost 50 years.

Evangelism: Parishioners and leaders alike feel that membership growth is strongly encouraged at St. Columba's. The COVID pandemic brought new challenges that we are striving to overcome. Historically, from 2005-2015, we did active evangelism under the umbrella of a program we called Threshold - the objective being to bring people across the Threshold of the church. We expanded it to include bringing people into the life of the church once they stayed for a while through social opportunities and active use of finding Time & Talent matches in the ministries of the church. St. Columba's is ready for a similar or new program that would renew our Evangelism efforts. But always, we continue to practice ministry and send love to God and everyone who passes our way.

In summary, we are a small, mature congregation, but still a very close, committed, and active parish. We look forward to finding an engaging and inspiring rector who is dedicated to helping us evolve into a thriving congregation - a congregation that is not only growing in numbers, but is also growing spiritually. As an open and welcoming congregation, St. Columba's desires to attract families, couples and individuals to join us in order that we can continue to express our love of God through worship and service to our fellow parishioners and the greater Camarillo community.

Ideal Qualities of the Next Rector

The Parish Survey, the leadership meeting, and countless conversations among parishioners expressly suggested the most important qualities to be sought in the new rector is someone who is an inspiring spiritual leader, able to challenge, encourage, and guide individuals and the congregation not only through meaningful sermons, but also in teaching and social opportunities. The second most important quality was that they have warmth, empathy and humor. Still of major importance, but with less emphasis in the survey, is the hope there will be an emphasis on children, youth, and families, but also for individuals who would benefit from their own social opportunities. Parishioners would like the rector to be committed to diversity and inclusion, incorporating social justice while serving and equipping the community of faith in ministry to persons in need within and beyond the congregation. We hope for a person who provides meaningful pastoral care and is effective in assisting persons facing problems, decisions or crisis. These almost countless hopes mean the rector will need strong communication and management skills while being able to articulate a clear vision for the congregation, embrace change, and lead from faith into action.

In closing, it cannot be stressed enough that the COVID pandemic brought changes, both to individuals and to the church. We have experienced great losses, but also new opportunities that we are continuing to benefit from. The Parish Survey results and the leadership retreat discussions emphasized that we are a congregation with a heart for worship and dedication to one another. We deeply desire a rector who will love, lead and empower St. Columba's into deeper worship and a renewed commitment to service of one another and to the broader community.

In God's Service,

The Transition Committee:

Nancy Miller, Chair

Marjo Gardner, Vestry Representative

Jeff Chung

Lyle Hyde

Richard Stone

Survey comments are available at <https://stcolumbaca.com>

Additional pictures of the life of St. Columba's are on the following pages.

Addendum: The People of St. Columba's

In the end, we hope this profile accurately portrays St. Columba's of Camarillo, but more than narratives, data, and statistics, we are people. Here are some of the *people* of St. Columba's over our almost 75 years:



Burning the Mortgage 1980



1st Post-Pandemic Parish Barbeque - 2022



Handsewn Banners Decorate the Sanctuary

Catechesis





Project Hope



Pruning the Roses Outside the Church



Parish Clambake 2011



Annual Meeting 2023



Food Ministry 2023



Celtic Faire 2023



**Blessing of
the Animals**





St. Columba's in Camarillo's – St. Columba's Day, June, 2022

Our Prayer

Almighty God, giver of every good gift, you have brought St. Columba's to this important time in our history. Look graciously on us, and guide us through our search, that it may enable us to grow in commitment to one another and to the work of Christ in our community. Help us to hear your gentle voice and to be obedient to your will. Bless us in this search, that we may choose a faithful pastor to join us in our ministries, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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