

# Christ Church, Anglican Parish Profile

Christ Church, Anglican Parish  
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## *The Friendly Church at the Gateway to Yosemite*

Our rector, Father Gordon M. Kamai, has elected to retire after having blessed us with 18 years of devoted and faithful service. During that time, our parish has flourished.

The Vestry has appointed a calling committee of five parishioners to conduct the search for a new rector. The calling committee has taken on this task prayerfully, fully certain that God will help us discern the rector he has in mind for Christ Church. We began our process with a congregation-wide survey in the spring of 2020.

From those results, the history of the congregation, reports from small groups, and other demographic data, we have prepared this parish profile for interested candidates. Christ Church is a congregation with a rich tradition of over 40 years within the community and the Diocese of San Joaquin. The original Christ Church in Oakhurst was the first church in the area and was built 125 years ago. We are traditional in liturgy, orthodox in our faith, and lively in our spiritual life together. Keeping this in mind, we begin our search for a new rector with a desire to further strengthen our service and ministry to our parish and the community.



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## **Oakhurst: A Community Overview**

Oakhurst (formerly Fresno Flats) is a census designated area in Madera County, California, in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountain range 14 miles south of the entrance to Yosemite National Park. In the 2010 census, the population was 2,829, down from 2,868 in the 2000. According to the Oakhurst Area Chamber of Commerce, the area population was 12,787 at the 2000 census. There are 30,000 people in the eastern area of Madera County. The surrounding towns include Coarsegold, Ahwahnee, Bass Lake, Raymond, North Fork, and Yosemite Lakes Park (YLP).

### **School Systems**

The local school system operates under the auspices of the Madera County Superintendent of Schools. The local elementary schools include; Oakhurst Elementary, Wasuma Elementary, Coarsegold Elementary, and North Fork Elementary. The intermediate schools include Oakhurst Intermediate and Rivergold Intermediate. There are two high schools in the area. Yosemite Union High School has served the Oakhurst community since 1976 and Minarets High School serves the students in the North Fork and YLP areas. There are a few Christian private Schools in the area but none are affiliated with Christ Church. There are a limited number of pre-school facilities in this area.

### **Medical/Healthcare Facilities**

Oakhurst and eastern Madera County have limited access to medical care in the mountain community. While there are a number of doctors and physicians assistants in the area, the population is larger than that small group can handle, so many rely on physicians in the Fresno area. Oakhurst has an urgent care facility available from 8am until 9pm. The Sierra Ambulance Service is a member supported program that provides emergency ambulance transportation to the valley's many hospitals. Kaiser Permanente and the VA have local offices in Oakhurst. There are also a number of dentists, chiropractors, therapists, and other medical practitioners in the local area.

### **Cultural & Recreational Resources**

Oakhurst and the surrounding areas offer a wide variety of recreation throughout the year. In the summer there's water skiing, wake boarding, jet skiing, kayaking, picnicking, fishing, camping, mountain biking, and hiking at nearby Bass Lake. Yosemite National Park and Badger Pass Ski Resort provide numerous ski trails during the Winter Season. The community has a 9 hole golf course in nearby Ahwahnee.

With its rich cultural and artistic heritage, eastern Madera County and Oakhurst offer an array of performing, visual, and literary art offerings. There are a number of small bands and a small community based orchestra. There is a very popular community theater company in Oakhurst that has had sold-out performances for a number of years. There are numerous service and social clubs in the area including Rotary and Kiwanis

The M.E.T. Cinema provides a 5 theater screen venue with popular movies available. It is a membership theater which allows for unlimited viewing of all movies for a low

monthly fee. Works by locally and nationally renowned painters, illustrators, sculptors, and graphic artists can be found in numerous galleries throughout the area.

We are located in the southern Sierra Nevada Range just 50 miles from Fresno along the beautiful California Highway 41 which leads to Yosemite National Park. The Southern entrance to Yosemite National Park is 14 miles away. Historic Mariposa is only 26 miles away from Oakhurst on Highway 49 (The Golden Chain Highway). In Mariposa you will be able to visit the oldest working courthouse west of the Mississippi River as well as the California State Mineral and Mining Museum.

Oakhurst is an easy 5 hour drive from the cultural and arts communities of Los Angeles, and less than four hours to San Francisco, providing ample access to additional theaters, orchestra, museums, concerts, and sporting events. The Fresno Grizzlies are a minor league team with a great stadium and Fresno State University has an excellent sports program which is supported by fans all over the Central Valley.

### **Colleges & Universities**

The Fresno area is home to California State University, Fresno with an approximate student enrollment of over 24,400 students. The University of California, Merced is only 90 minutes away with 7,300 enrolled students. The University of La Verne, National University, and University of Phoenix have satellite campuses in Fresno and there's a private Christian liberal arts program at Fresno Pacific University. We also have a community college in Oakhurst in addition to nearby tech schools.

### **Transportation**

The eastern Madera County area has easy access for travel. Highway 41 connects eastern Madera County to the San Joaquin Valley and Highway 49 starts in Oakhurst and takes people through to Mariposa and into the golden chain region of California. California Highway 99 is the north/south route through the center of the great San Joaquin Valley. Caltrans, the state highway authority, does a great job in keeping the roads clear when snow impacts the area.

While there isn't a public transportation system as most cities enjoy, the YARTS System does provide some access to Yosemite National Park and limited transportation to Fresno. There are taxi services available through Starlight Taxi Company, a small cadre of Uber drivers, and a county bus service.

## **Christ Church: A Brief History**

The history of the Anglican Church has had a few ups and downs. The Reverend D.O. Kelly was instrumental in planting a number of churches in the central California region and Oakhurst was one of those towns which benefited from his ministry. In 1894 Fr. Kelly supervised the building of the first church in eastern Madera County and it was named Christ Church after his boyhood home church. That original building still stands and serves the community of Oakhurst but in a different capacity. After the Episcopal congregation disbanded the church was abandoned and fell into disrepair. The local

Grandmother's Club purchased the building and moved it from its original location on Chapel Hill to the local cemetery to serve as a small chapel for meditation and reflection. It has since been refurbished and restored to make it safe for services to be held inside.

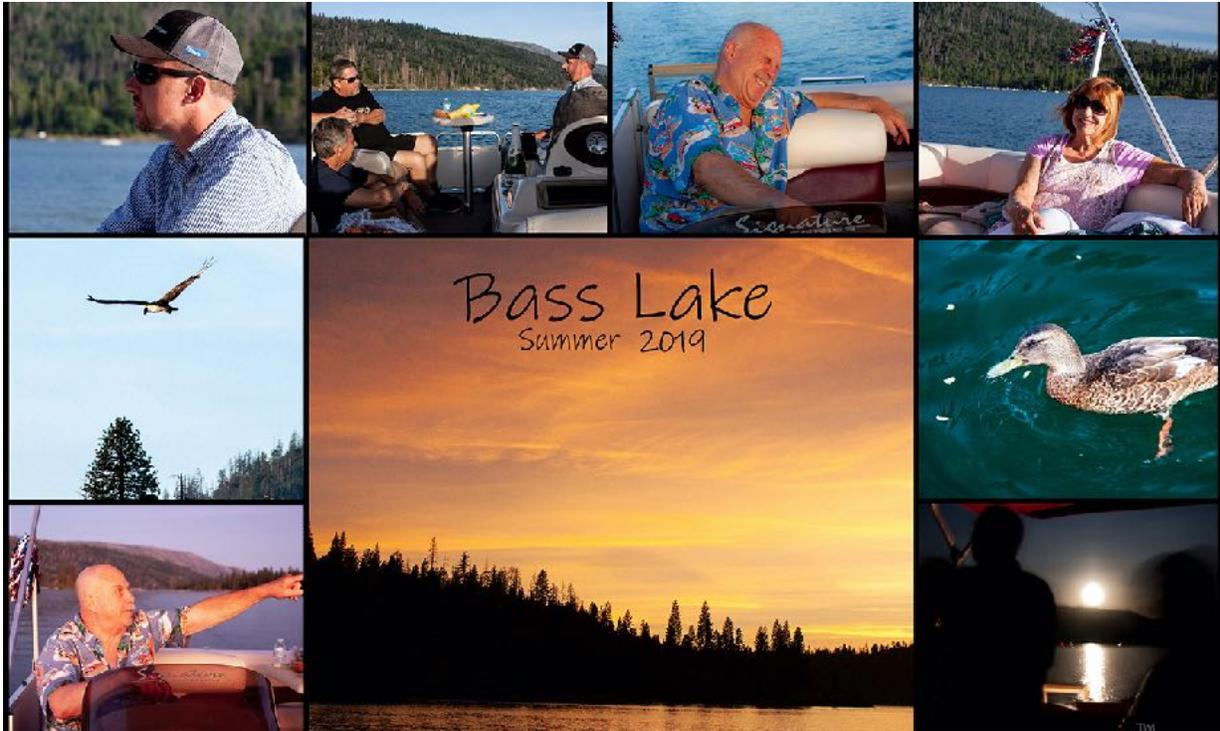
In 1976, local Episcopalians decided to regroup and start to worship together as St. Raphael's. The first service was held in Jan Barron's living room with less than a dozen people. After a few years they moved into a triple-wide trailer on the grounds of Sierra Sky Ranch, a motel operation north of town. That trailer was used until 1983 when the congregation raised enough money to build a church across the street from Sky Ranch. It was a glorious day when the congregation joined with Bishop Rivera and Bishop Mize to consecrate St. Raphael's new facility.

In 2004 we became a self-sustaining congregation and the vestry opted to reclaim the historic name of Christ Church

In 2007 we voted with our diocese to disaffiliate from the Episcopal Church (TEC). After 9 years of litigation we had to surrender our church building to TEC. In January 2017, we moved into the Oakhurst Masonic Lodge. In 2019, the vestry leased, on a trial basis, the facility next door to the Masonic Lodge which was a church facility formerly used by the First Church of Christ, Scientists.

Early in 2019 St. Andrew's Congregation from neighboring Mariposa surrendered their building to TEC and came to join us in worship bringing their Deacon with them.

We are developing options for a permanent home. The congregants have been generous in gifts so the Church has adequate funds to secure a permanent home. We have been blessed to have had 7 vicars and our 8<sup>th</sup> priest started as a vicar and then became our rector when we gained parish status. We have also enjoyed the blessings of three deacons who have served faithfully without remuneration.



## Christ Church Parish Life

### **Mission Statement:**

#### **Focused on Christ, Discipling His People, Reaching Out to the World**

Christ Church is a traditional Anglican congregation in downtown Oakhurst. The majority of our congregants are older and former Episcopalians. We are committed to liturgical and sacramental worship incorporating music that leads to a heartfelt devotion in the context of reverential awe towards God's holiness, majesty, and all-encompassing love. We are orthodox in our beliefs and committed to preaching and teaching the Holy Scriptures in ways that are engaging, relevant, and faithful.

Though we are a congregation with a long and deeply-rooted tradition, we are also a parish which is changing in some ways. We continue to grow under our Lord's ever-rich blessing and grace. While we strive to maintain the richness of our heritage, we are also open and responsive to the leading of the Holy Spirit so that we can be all that our Lord has called us to be.

Our average Sunday attendance is 46.3. Many parishioners are involved in the ministry and work of the church. We have a limited number of ministries in place. The more formal organizations and activities are listed with a brief description in the following pages. In six major areas they are:

- Administration
- Worshiping in Apostolic Traditions
- Experiencing the Joy of the Lord
- Meeting People's needs
- Training in Biblical Living
- Outreach to the wider community

As we describe these six areas of life at Christ Church, we are reverently aware that fellowship in Christ is the common theme in our parish. Our worship and service to the Lord are consistently built on the strong foundation of a joyful fellowship that brings us together as a Christian family to do His work.

### **Worship**

- **Sunday Services:** We have Eucharist at 8am and 10am. The Holy Eucharist is the principal service at Christ Church. A sermon is preached at both services. At the 8am service there is no music. At the 10am service, the organist plays a prelude and postlude. A Gospel procession occurs during the 10am service as well as various liturgical processions on certain principal feasts. Sunday school is held during the 10am service. During the pandemic we are streaming evening prayer on Wednesdays and Holy Communion on Sundays. We also have a drive-thru Communion following the service in our parking lot. We have acolytes and a choir at the 10am service.
- **Acolytes:** The purpose of the acolyte program is to glorify God, enhance the faith of its members, and provide an opportunity for individuals to participate in the worship service in a hands-on capacity. The objectives of the program are to

involve the acolytes in the service as much as possible, highlight the observances of the principal feasts and other holy days in which the acolytes serve, provide insight into the symbolism of items the acolytes use or encounter when serving, and to expose the acolytes to the rich heritage of Anglican worship. Children 9 and older are encouraged to participate as acolytes

- **Altar Guild:** The Altar Guild prepares all the things necessary for the celebration of Holy Communion, holy days, and special feast days. They function in a variety of service activities to support weddings, baptisms, and funerals. On Sundays and special days, the church is vibrant with appropriate flowers in the colors of the season.
- **Music Ministry:** Christ Church has a small choir led by our paid organist.
- **Greeter's Ministry:** The greeters welcome and assist visitors or newcomers with answers to questions about our service and facilities. They provide sincere hospitality in the name of our gracious Lord and Savior. The greeters and ushers are the same people on their assigned Sundays.
- **Lectors:** This group reads the lessons at Sunday Eucharist and holiday services. Along with public reading of the Scriptures, they assist at both the 8am and 10am Sunday Services.

### **Christian Education**

- **Sunday School:** The Sunday school program meets during the 10am Holy Eucharist and has classes from preschool through middle school. Classes rejoin the church during the passing of the peace. The curriculum coordinates with the Scripture lessons read during the Eucharist.
- **Bible Study:** A weekly opportunity at Christ Church. Bible study provides a venue for prayer and discussion of the Scripture. This time also provides a ministry for healing

### **Ministry**

- **Third Wednesday Suppers:** Designed to bring together 6-8 people each 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month for a meal and fellowship. This is done to provide a social outlet for some and a means of getting to know others from our congregation. The event takes place in a parishioner's home.
- **Youth Ministry:** This is an area for ministry that we look forward to growing.
- **Buildings and Grounds:** In the spirit of good stewardship, we continue in the process of finding a permanent home for our church.
- **Calling and Caring:** We have a prayer chain.
- **Lay Eucharistic Ministers (formerly LEMs):** After completing a training course, LEMs serve as needed as chalice bearers at the altar during Sunday and other Eucharistic services and also read the prayers of the people.
- **Eucharistic Visitors:** Our priest takes communion to those who are unable to attend due to health or age concerns.
- **Feed My Sheep:** Parishioners provide meals and encouragement to those members of the Church who are ill.

## Outreach

- **Martha's Market:** This ministry of dedicated ladies and a couple of men create hand-crafted items and foods throughout the year to sell at an annual holiday boutique that is well supported by the local community. Over the past ten years Martha's Market has contributed over \$50,000.00 to local groups and charities.
- **Christmas Caroling:** We sing at two convalescent care facilities in our area. This is done on the evening of the last Sunday in Advent.

## Organizations

- **Daughters of the Holy Cross:** The DHC is an organization for women who are communicants of the Anglican Church, churches in communion with it, or churches in the Historic Episcopate. The mission of their order is the extension of Christ's kingdom through prayer, service, and evangelism.
- **Christ Church Women:** A parish-wide organization, the CCW at Christ Church, is an active, energetic group that provides many activities for our parish. They sponsor funeral receptions and have supported outreach projects to Camp San Joaquin, Toys for Tots, the local senior center, the Boys and Girls Club, local schools, Helping Hands, and Manna House.

## Communications

- **The Messenger:** Our parish newsletter is published and e-mailed monthly to all parishioners.
- **Web Page:** Christ Church Anglican can be found on the World Wide Web at [www.christchurchoakhurst.org](http://www.christchurchoakhurst.org)

## Annual Events

- Blessing of the Animals in the local park
- Lenten Soup Suppers
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Parish Barbecue at the Church

## Property Resume

The congregation came together in the 1970's and worshiped in a triple-wide trailer until 1983-84. The congregation then secured property and built a small building to serve as our church. Originally named St. Raphael's it became Christ Church when we went from being a mission to becoming a parish. Sadly the property was awarded by a state court to TEC in 2016 along with other churches in of the Diocese of the San Joaquin. We are currently renting a facility.

## **Our Future Rector**

### **Parish Rector Position Profile and Opening**

A survey of the Congregation identified the areas which are of foremost importance to the members of Christ Church.:

The quality of our worship services is important to the majority of the congregation.

One of the most important duties of the rector is “preparing and preaching an inspiring sermon.”

Sermons should be biblically-based, thought provoking, and well delivered.

Traditional Anglican worship is desired by our congregation.

Members of Christ Church believe “The Bible is the inspired Word of God, and its basic moral and religious teachings are clear and true.”

The rector should be a friend and accompanying us on our journey of faith.

The rector catechizes individual members to discover their own gifts for ministry and service.

Education is an area where there seems to be a desire for improvement.

Involving the children is mentioned frequently.

Many members are already involved in a variety of outreach programs.

Finally, our parishioners appreciate sermons and biblical teaching that leads them into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

## **Challenges for the Future**

With an optimistic outlook toward our parish’s future built on solid biblical teaching and attentive pastoral care during the past years, our parishioners’ primary concerns are external, although they do identify a few areas within our parish that need continuing attention.

Our parish has an older congregation. Currently there are only two multi-generational families in the entire congregation.

Our Sunday school and youth activities need to be inviting to new families if we are to see growth.

Being a stable, established church has many positive attributes; however, one of the areas that is a challenge is creating a more evangelistic focus among our members.

Our parish is concerned with its ability to change lives for Christ. To accomplish this we need to be more welcoming of newcomers and share more readily God’s path to salvation with those in our community.

Our parishioners have provided the resources required for buying a facility removing this burden from the incoming rector to allow him and our vestry to focus more attention on the spiritual challenges of our Christian faith.

## By The Numbers

### Rector's Statistical Report – Parish Register

- Four Year Average Sunday Attendance
  - 2016---52.2
  - 2017---47.2
  - 2018---42.8
  - 2019---46.3
- Revenue
  - 2016
    - Income --- \$72,500.00
    - Expenditures--- \$75,534.00
  - 2017
    - Income--- \$82,549.00
    - Expenditures--- \$74,184.76
  - 2018
    - Income--- \$80,330.00
    - Expenditures--- \$74,457.29
  - 2019
    - Income--- \$78,175.00
    - Expenditures---
  - 2020
    - Budgeted \$79,350



### Wardens

Bill Atwood, Senior Warden  
Steve Sickler, Junior Warden

### Vestry

Diane vanDeursen, Walt Reimer, Dee Carr, Mary Helen Mierkey, Patsy Minney,  
Jackie Mallouf (Clerk), John Minney (Treasurer)

### The Calling Committee

Bill Atwood (Chair), Mary Helen Mierkey, Walt Reimer, Nanette Beaumont,  
Kim Langley, Dee Carr



