

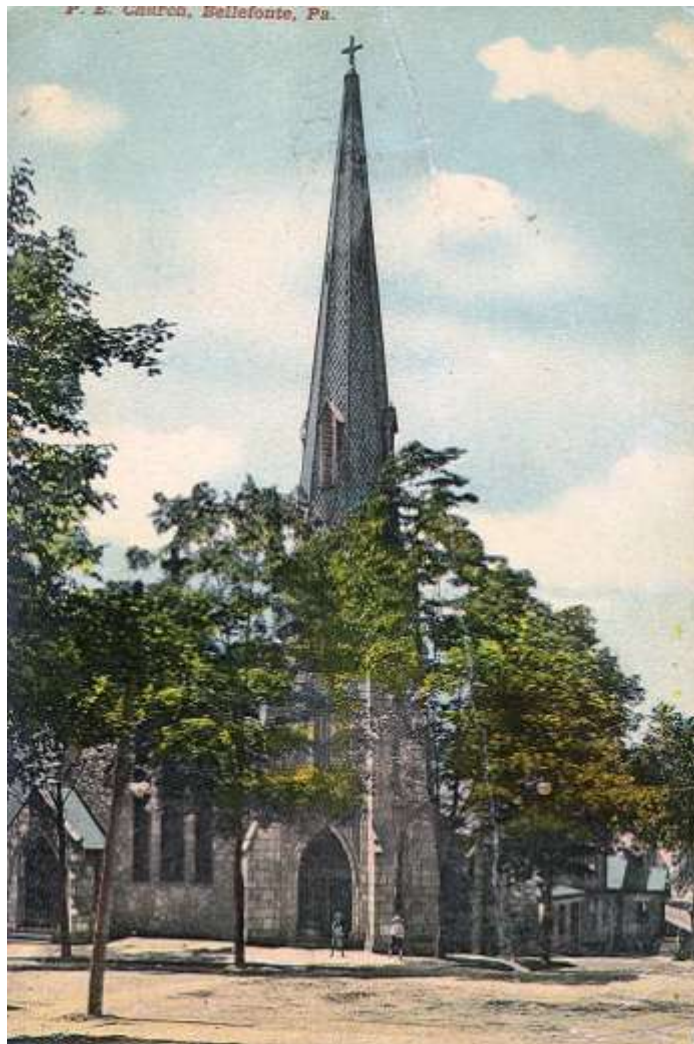
Our history

There has been an Episcopal presence in Bellefonte since 1825 when Episcopalians began meeting in a cabinet shop, then later at the local Masonic lodge. As the congregation grew, Bellefonte was designated a regular supply station, supplied from Lewistown until the organization of St. John's parish in 1836.

In 1837, the Reverend George W. Natt became the first rector of St. John's "Protestant Episcopal Church," whose first home was a wooden frame structure located at what is now the corner of East High and South Penn Streets, behind the Centre County Courthouse. Opened on Easter Day, 1871 and consecrated on June 7, 1872, the grey-stone church that is St. John's Episcopal Church today is located at the corner of North Allegheny and West Lamb Streets in Bellefonte.

St. John's and its rectors have been instrumental in establishing other Episcopal churches and missions in the area, notably Lock Haven and State College; it is the "Mother Church" in Centre County. Throughout our nearly one hundred-seventy year history, St. John's has included many community leaders, including the early leaders of Penn State.

In addition to the church itself, our grounds are home to two other buildings: the newly renovated Canterbury House, which has served as a rectory as well as meeting space for church and community groups, and a parish meeting hall that hosts our weekly coffee hour and a number of fundraising activities throughout the year.



Early 20th-century view of St. John's

Today, while maintaining its liturgical-centered worship, St. John's prides itself on its diverse membership and its plans for renewed community outreach and service to Bellefonte and the surrounding area.

Our community

Steeped in history, the small town of Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, combines the best of town and country.

An active, engaged community

Bellefonte is bustling with a year-round schedule of downtown festivals and activities. In a day and age when fewer people seem to know their neighbors, Bellefonte remains a town where community fun and fellowship remain important to everyday life. Some highlights include:

- The annual Big Spring Festival, a family event showcasing children’s activities, rides on the Bellefonte Historical Railroad, music at Talleyrand Park and restocking of the stream with hundreds of trout.
- A twice weekly farmer’s market offers locally grown produce and other goods.
- The Children’s Fair is held each June with pony rides, face painting, games, stories and crafts for the kids and the adults they bring along.
- Father’s Day weekend is marked by the Bellefonte Cruise & Classic Car Show.



- On summer Sundays, music lovers carry picnics and lawn chairs to Talleyrand Park for concerts at the Gazebo, ranging from Dixieland to classical.
- The Summer Bellefonte Arts & Crafts Fair featuring more than 100 artists and craftspeople, food and entertainment.
- Bellefonte’s Victorian Christmas is a celebration of yesteryear that attracts visitors from near and far for its carriage rides, craft show, children’s tea party and candlelight homes tours.

A rich architectural heritage

With more than 300 buildings in the National Register of Historic Places, Bellefonte’s impressive civic architecture and private homes (including those of seven governors) make the borough a popular walking tour for out of town visitors. While the iron ore that helped to



establish our town is long gone, the impressive architecture of this golden age remains.

Many of the larger homes in the area have been given new life as bed and breakfast inns and museums. Even the historic Pennsylvania Match Company building now houses the American Philatelic Society.



Abundant resources for outdoor living



Bellefonte residents enjoy four seasons of outdoor activity. Our own Talleyrand Park offers ample green space for picnics and outdoor gatherings just steps from downtown shops and restaurants.

Centre County also offers six state parks for fun and rejuvenation in the sun or snow. Our area maintains numerous hiking trails, biking trails, streams, and lakes to suit all manner of outdoor activity, from kayaking to fly fishing. In fact, Bellefonte is consistently recognized as the

home of some of the best fly fishing streams in the U.S. and remains a destination for anglers worldwide.

Proximity to Penn State

At its founding, Penn State University was the quiet rural outpost and Bellefonte the bustling urban center. These days those roles have reversed to an extent, though Bellefonte residents don't seem to mind. Just minutes away from the university, Bellefonte reaps the benefit of the world class arts, entertainment, sporting events without sacrificing the warmth and quiet pleasures of small town life.



Our diocese



St. John's is a parish in the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, comprised of 71 congregations with some 17,500 members. Elected in 2006, our Bishop, The Right Reverend Nathan D. Baxter, is the former Dean of Washington National Cathedral. Our diocesan office is located in Harrisburg, PA. For further information on the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, please visit www.diocesepa.org.

The People of St. Johns

How do you describe a congregation? Here are a few points that help to characterize the roughly 80 families that make up St. Johns.

Strong and welcoming

Visitors to St. John's know that, to us, "welcome" is not just a word, but a feeling. We recognize that all our members have something to offer and we welcome these gifts in their many forms. We are an involved congregation, and appreciate the joyful presence of music in our worship



services. We are dedicated to our church, and not afraid of hard work. We look to clergy for guidance, but don't expect our priest to be the primary motivator of every initiative. We are willing and able to take on lay leadership roles as the situation warrants.

Adaptable

While we find strength in the traditions of the past, we welcome the challenges and opportunities of the ever changing world. For example, our parish is a mix of new and long time members. Due to the sometimes transient nature of university positions, it's not uncommon for faculty from nearby colleges to be with us for just a few short years. But rather than destabilizing, we find this influx of new life an important part of our collective character. Similarly, while we cherish and celebrate the liturgical traditions of the High Church, our commitment to ecumenism has made our church appealing to congregants from a variety of religious backgrounds. We appreciate continuity, but we also welcome and value new voices.



Fiscally responsible

While many churches (to say nothing of the economy at large) are now struggling, we consistently see modest but stable financial growth. Even in light of the current recession, we've managed to

conduct a successful capital campaign for the care and maintenance of our church buildings. Our congregation saw the need and responded both cautiously and boldly.

Focused on outreach

At St. John's we find great strength in our church family and are dedicated to responding in kind with service to the world around us. We are blessed to have a full time deacon (appointed by the bishop) who has been an invaluable asset to St. John's and the community at large, working tirelessly in outreach missions with the local hospital, nursing homes, inmates, and other area churches.



We are not a large church, nor a very wealthy one, but we are mindful of our blessings and strive to share them with our community.

Engaged with area churches



Our ties to other churches in the community are strong and very important to us. We regularly share special worship services and educational programs, and, especially in the case of St. John Lutheran, we are accustomed to helping one another with clerical duties in times of need.

Finances

Though a small church, we've maintained solid, stable growth. With nearly 80 families and 70 giving units, our budget for coming year is \$169,000-180,000. Despite the economic climate, we are conducting a successful capital campaign. In this first year of the three year campaign we have received just over a third of the total amount pledged. While the recent economic crisis has not discouraged the generosity of our members, it has impacted a number of endowments that provide substantial revenue for the church as reflected in our current budget.

Our hopes for the future

Change can be exciting or it can be frightening, but it is most always a challenge. While emotions may be mixed at this time of transition, the people of St. John's Episcopal Church are uniformly ready for the challenge.

In seeking a new rector, we do not hope to remain unchanged as a church. St. John's is a parish that is ready to grow; to be and do more.

Outreach to families, especially youth

Though we embrace diversity, our parish is aging, and it can seem at times that only established youth programs attract youth. We have worked hard to equip our buildings with child care and Sunday school facilities; now we need help and guidance in opening the doors to their greater use.

Community outreach

We are proud of our involvement in the community and we hope to expand participation in our local ministries. Sadly, there is ample opportunity to reach out to the poor, the sick, and the suffering in our community. We need help and guidance to become a greater presence in the lives of our neighbors in need.

Guidance in capitalizing on our ample resources

Our parish is not lacking for dedicated, hardworking individuals with a broad variety of talents and abilities willing to lead new initiatives. Neither do we lack facilities necessary for meetings, education, or ministry. What we do need is help and guidance to coordinate and make the best use of these gifts.

Increased opportunities for Christian education and development

St. John's maintains an active men's group devoted to spiritual growth, and we offer a number of programs throughout the year on such diverse topics as the traditions of the church and coping with holiday stress and sadness. We'd like to continue this practice and even expand on it to ensure that all who seek it may have such opportunities.

If these challenges, our people, and our community appeal to your calling, we welcome you to contact:

Bette Shugert
(814) 355-9835
betteandgeorge@hotmail.com