

The Church of the Transfiguration

12219 S. 86th Ave.
Palos Park, Illinois
60464
(708) 448-1200

Welcome

We, the people of The Church of the Transfiguration are excited about inviting our new rector to join us in the creation and development of the next chapter in our life as a church. We prayerfully support you in your process of discerning whether you are called to join our family of faith. We rest assured that the Maker's hand is guiding our steps, as well as yours.

This Parish Profile is being written to give you a taste of Transfiguration. Of course there is so much more that can be said about us, or any church, than what can be contained in a document of this sort, but we hope that the spirit of our congregation comes through in the following words.



Transfiguration Today

Our parish is currently under the guidance of a wonderful, intentional transitional minister, Fr. John Keydel, following the departure of Fr. Lane Hensley, our previous rector who left last summer after a seven year tenure. We are truly a church in transition. The last several years have presented some challenges for us. The rather sudden departure of a comfortably loved priest in 2001, a long search process with a loss of direction, followed by a new leadership and some eventual staff shake-ups led to some intense emotional wounds for many. We seemed to lose a sense of cohesiveness and purpose.

But pain can often be polished into beauty. God's Spirit is strong within us. The in-depth self-examination which accompanies the rector search process has been a clarifying and purifying endeavor. It has helped us begin to rediscover who we are and what it means to be a church - to touch the heart that beats beneath the structures of brick, mortar and tradition. There is a palpable sense of expectation. It is felt in the parking lot, and on the sidewalks leading into the church. It is felt in our coffee hour get-togethers. It is felt in our various meetings for prayer and planning. And, it is felt in our worship services; like the early spring trickle of a thawing stream, God's life giving energy is flowing through us. We are excited about this process of re-discovery. In completing the steps of congregational assessment, we have become clear on several areas upon which we wish to focus our attention and energies.



Our Key Goals

Attract New Members. To say that we want to “grow” and bring more people into our congregation puts us in pretty sizable company. Yes, we are interested in attracting new members, especially young adults and families with children, but our desire is not simply to add numbers. We are much more focused on the quality of the growth. We seek not only to add new souls to our family, but to foster the deepening of the involvement of those who already count themselves among our ranks.

Create more meaningful relationships. We are becoming more and more clear that the true nature of church is determined by the relationships between its members. We want to deepen our connections and more fully share the stories of our lives. We seek to create more opportunities to grow through the stitching together of this quilt of our faith journeys.

Develop healing ministries for those who have been broken by life circumstances. We are touched by the pain in our world. We want to be the hands of our God, to reach out in love to our community; to provide spiritual as well as physical and emotional sustenance.

Become intentional about providing quality education for parishioners of every age and stage of life. We want to develop opportunities, for children and adults alike, which encourage continued deepening of our understanding of our Christian mission, our relationship with God, with ourselves, and with one another.



Our New Rector

We recognize that relationship is the canvas upon which our developing vision will be created. The quality of that relationship, the way our new rector is with us is just as important as any specific skills which he or she may bring to us. This value orientation is evident in the list of qualities which have emerged during our reflection.

We seek a candidate who...

...Has a sincere, thoughtful and motivational preaching style. We enjoy preaching which can bring theological and spiritual perspectives into our daily lives in meaningful ways; sermons which enlighten and sustain our Christian lives.

...Is a skilled team leader, and delegator. We seek someone who is able to recognize the gifts and potential in our members, and who will inspire the development of leaders and overall participation within our parish.

...Is a warm and personable communicator. We are excited about receiving a candidate who is genuine and inviting, with strong communication skills. An easy, joyful sense of humor is especially appealing.

...Is an advocate of the full range of stewardship. We're looking for someone who can help us recognize our many talents and resources, and the joy which comes from offering them for the glory of God's Kingdom.

...Is gifted as a nurturing and supportive pastor. We want someone who models gentle caring and concern for the members of our flock, and helps to cultivate this spirit among us.



The People of Transfiguration

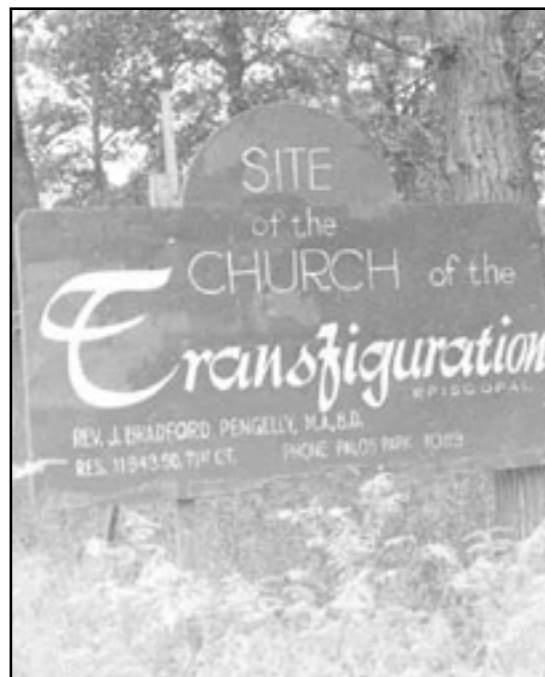
Our congregation is comprised of individuals and families from suburban communities within a 20 mile radius of the church. A number of our members are "cradle Episcopalians"; however, many were raised in the Catholic tradition, as well as other denominational backgrounds. We believe that this variety adds strength and vibrancy to our worship experience. There is a large percentage of professionals among us, with many in the teaching professions as well as business and human services. Quite a few of our members have lengthy family ties to the church, as well as established friendships. We are committed to a faith-based quality of worship with emphasis on thoughtful, personal sermons, heart-felt music, and meaningful liturgy centered around the Eucharist. A solid number of our parishioners serve faithfully in various roles within the service, and there is an open invitation for new participation in these roles.



History and Property

On these grounds, the Church of the Transfiguration held her first service in 1954. Since that time some additions have been made to create the church structure we now enjoy. Transfiguration has had relatively few rectors in its history. We have had unusually long stays including a 23 year term followed by an 8 year term. From our beginning, part of what has distinguished our church is its unique architecture and how it fits into the surrounding landscape of rolling hills and primary forest. Palos Park is known as the wonderful woodland area of the southwest suburbs of Chicago, due to its over 10,000 acres of forest preserve district lands. The Church of the Transfiguration settles comfortably into this unique landscape. Upon approaching the church, your eyes are easily drawn toward our bell tower where we have an original 300-lb Church of England bell which has been used to call people to worship. The church grounds are covered with trees and wildflower gardens. The south lawn holds a large play area for the children. Our large lawn on the north side of the church features a wooden cross, constructed by the Senior High Youth group. This is the site of our occasional outdoor services and annual church picnic. Our four bedroom rectory lies just down the hill, tucked into the trees on the east edge of our property.

Our worship space is adorned with a distinctive modern art cross which hangs behind the altar. The construction of the sanctuary makes for amazing musical acoustics. We have plenty of space for children's classrooms on the main floor and upstairs, as well as a large room with a kitchen for our social functions. Our lower level houses the church offices and two meeting rooms. A number of community concerns use our space for their functions, including a Moms of Multiples club, and several weekly A.A. meetings. We enjoy the opportunity to extend hospitality and love to our neighbors.





Congregational Programming

Our Sunday Worship Services are at the foundation of our church life. Eucharist, led by our priest and deacon is held at 8:00a.m. and 10:00a.m., utilizing Rite II liturgy. Our worship space is beautifully crafted by our devoted Altar Guild. The early service is simple and reverent and is conducted without music. There is an intimate bond among the smaller group which frequents this service. Our later service is more family oriented and informal. Members of the congregation take on roles as Eucharistic Ministers and Lectors, and several of our children and youth have been trained as acolytes. Music is a strong component of this service, including congregational and choral singing with accompaniment on piano and our historic Roeder Tracker organ. Both services hold a fellowship coffee hour following worship. We are open to a variety of experiences in our worship, though a connection to familiar traditions is valued.

A history of color and drama permeates some of our special services. During one Good Friday evening service, the rector rigged a curtain (which hung in front of our large iconic cross behind the altar) to rip apart at the moment of Christ's death. We have had some very moving and special services, including Holy Week gatherings such as our Tenebrae Service, foot washing, and our traditional Stations of the Cross meditations. There is an element of fun in some of our services, like

the candy-toting St. Nicholas, who inspires awe in the children as he raises his staff and calls them up to the altar for his special message; or the Pet Blessing Mass which hosts visitors of all persuasions of fur, scales, hooves and beaks.

Our Christmas Pageants are always a hit as the musical productions are written and directed by members of the congregation, and are unique each year. We're not beyond the spontaneous enjoyment of humor - like a recent Christmas Pageant when Archangel Michael's wings caught fire (but were quickly extinguished by the priest!). Michael was still able to fly safely back home! An annual feature of our worship is the youth service, in which our Senior High members conduct the service, from ushers to readers to preacher. Our congregation takes great delight in the involvement of our young people.

Music has been a long treasured part of our 10:00a.m. service. The congregation is unanimously appreciative of the work of our church musicians. The choir has gone through a number of incarnations. A dozen years ago, the typical choristers numbered around 12-15. Now we usually have 6, but their dedication is fierce. Changes in choral leadership, compounded by the challenges of other time commitments in our modern world, have contributed to the difficulty in building the ranks. Several times a year we have special performances of both vocalists and instrumentalists. Though the continuity

of these activities has become patchy over the last couple years, we hope to see, through new leadership and the hiring of a new music director/organist, a resurgence in the energy of our choir and music program.

Adult education. It has been years since we have had a regularly scheduled adult education component at Transfiguration. We have, in the past, had “Adult Forums” which were classes held for adults in between the two Sunday services. Adult education, when it has occurred more recently, has been a special event. For several years we have held Lenten “Day Retreats,” involving a Saturday morning program of prayer and sharing. Occasionally we have hosted special guest speakers. Recently, our Deacon offered an educational and experiential workshop on Buddhist meditation which was presented to a full house. This past year, in effort to address the emotional wounds within the congregation, we undertook a series of evening “coaching” sessions designed to build communication and conflict resolution skills. These were well attended by a core of lively participants. Though adult education has not received much attention over the past several years, our recent parish surveys have indicated a growing interest in the development of this area.

Our Senior High Youth Group numbers and participation ebbs and flows, but there is typically a close relationship among its members. The Youth Group is active in the church, hosting several fundraising and “Fun-Raising” events, like the annual pancake breakfast, or recent omelet breakfast, car washes, or the selling of hot-chocolate kits. There is an annual trip to Irons Oaks Adventure Center where the group participates in the high-ropes course, or on the team-building ground elements. Regular Sunday meetings involve discussions covering a variety of personal, social, and spiritual issues. Our youth are quite cherished within the congregation, and any activity which they initiate receives overwhelming support from the church membership.

Our children’s programming has long been a priority and really hit a strong stride in curriculum over the past few years. Our Joyful Beginnings program runs on a four week rotation with each class participating in parishioner-led groups. The groups focus on science, art, story-telling, and games, each covering aspects of the same Biblical theme for that rotation. A very recent decline in children’s enrollment has left these groups with small numbers. There is currently consideration of combining grade levels to increase class size.



Stewardship. We at Transfiguration recognize the broad meaning of the word stewardship: giving up to God, of our Time, Talents, and Treasure. Overall our numbers are a very generous group. Our stewardship committee is formed in the Spring, taking several months to plan campaign activities for the start of the church year. Some of our committees exercise great creativity in this endeavor. Apart from the annual stewardship drive, we have other fund raisers as the need arises, and always find a willingness among our congregation to dedicate resources to the cause.

Pastoral Care and Outreach Ministries. Transfiguration has a long history of ministering to the community and the world through a wide range of projects. In previous years we have been heavily involved with our Sister Parish, La Transfiguracion in Southeast Mexico. We have undertaken several fundraising projects to support residents of undeveloped nations. Locally, we have for years supported a food pantry and soup kitchen. Most recently there has been fading away of some of these ministries. We are in a time of transition and reorientation in our priorities. A renewed vision is gradually taking shape, and we are thoughtfully rebuilding a network of service programs to advance the message of Christ. We are feeling called to draw our attention to ministries which serve the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs within our congregation, as well as share our gifts and talents with those in need within our local and regional communities. Following further development in these areas, we intend to expand our outreach to encompass larger regional concerns as well as international projects supported by the broader Episcopal Church.



The Palos Park Episcopal Day Care & Learning Center, a ministry of the church, is hosted within the church building. We serve 80-100 children, offering a variety of programs for parents to choose from, including full Daycare, part-time Preschool, before and after school Kid's Connection, and Summer Camp. Our curriculum includes hands-on art, cooking activities, field trips, introduction to Spanish, introduction to Sign-Language, Chapel time, and special events, in addition to all necessary programming to help prepare children for school.

Parish Leadership

Our clergy leadership has been comprised of our priest and our deacon, John Nachtrieb, who was baptized and raised in our church. This deeply spiritual and beloved man has been a source of strength and stability for our congregation. However, after many years of service, Deacon John's spiritual path is leading him away from Transfiguration, and we will soon be without the services of a deacon for the first time in over 30 years.

Our Parish Manager is truly prized by the entire congregation. She runs the church office with grace and efficiency, and probably knows more about getting things done in the church than anyone.

Our Vestry works closely with our rector and Wardens to manage church affairs, as well as oversee our Episcopal Day Care & Learning Center. Collectively, our vestry membership have served on all of our church committees at some time, and so bring a vast pool of knowledge, experience and history to the group. A recent Amendment to the Constitution will gradually reduce the number of at-large members from 12 to 9 to be more reflective of the size of the congregation.

Parish Life

Historically there have been a variety of committees which promoted fellowship opportunities. Currently, the Children and Youth Committee is the driving force behind most of our social events. There is a core of people who attend and support these functions. Some of our traditional events - most of which involve food - include Games Night, an evening of fun playing all sorts of board games, and the Transfiguration Coffeehouse, where Leach Hall (our large fellowship room) is transformed into a performance space with candle-lit seating and a stage for a variety of musical performers from the congregation. From time to time we have guest speakers present to the congregation or special musical events performed by visiting musicians. In the warmer weather we organize church work days where members spend their time together helping with building clean-up projects or gardening and grounds work.



The Larger Church

Transfiguration has always enjoyed a positive relationship within the Diocese. We have had members and clergy who have served on the Diocesan Council. We consistently send a full complement of representatives to the Diocesan convention. Recently, our focus has been more internal, and Diocesan matters have been given a lower priority.

The St. Monica's chapter of the Daughters of the King is based at Transfiguration. This 12 member organization, which is part of Province V of the DOK, is active in service work, and recently hosted the Diocesan DOK Spring Quiet Day.



Our Numbers

The Church of the Transfiguration's Sunday attendance averages approximately 95. There are 80 pledges for 2011, totalling \$194,904. The summer of 2011 marks the final mortgage payment for the building. The Episcopal Day Care & Learning Center posts an income transfer of approximately \$4,000 per month to the church.

We have a General Endowment Fund that is approximately \$300,000. This is a restricted asset fund and is currently under review for purpose of future utilization. Within this fund there are two funds whose combined total is approximately \$130,000. The Sharon Louise Irvine Fund and the Sandra L. Broadbent Fund, initiated in 1995, serve the purpose of supporting special projects for the Day Care and/or for support of outreach and children's programs elsewhere.

The Community

The village of Palos Park is located 19 miles southwest of downtown Chicago. This quiet village of 5,000 residents has unique characteristics which render it an oasis amidst the congestion of the larger metro area. Village ordinances have served to preserve the natural character of the area known for its trees, ponds, hills and ravines. There is a rich geographic and cultural heritage behind this area. One of the few commercial establishments in the vicinity is the historic and popular Plush Horse Ice Cream Parlor which is directly across the street from us.

Palos Park itself is an upper middle-class community with many tasteful, beautiful homes and an excellent school system. The village is surrounded by other Chicago suburbs which feature a vast assortment of businesses, cultural and recreational activities, educational opportunities, and medical facilities, as well as numerous restaurants and shopping experiences.



An Intimate Conversation

Our world is full of metaphors which symbolize God's renewing spirit. The cicada's cracked and empty shell left clinging to a tree, the empty chrysalis as the butterfly lifts onto the breeze, or the new growth following the purifying blaze in the forest. We know that our God created, and can make beautiful use of these processes. As the old skins of complacency, fear, doubt, and hurt have begun to shed, we experience the fresh growth beneath. Each time we come together in the Lord's service, we get glimpses into that beauty. There is a strong, gentle, loving, creative spirit within the heart of The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration. We are asking God's guidance as we seek the right leadership to help us bring this spirit to full glow - that it may be a treasure in our own lives, and a blessing to the world. We appreciate your sincere discernment as you ask God if you are part of that leadership. Blessings!