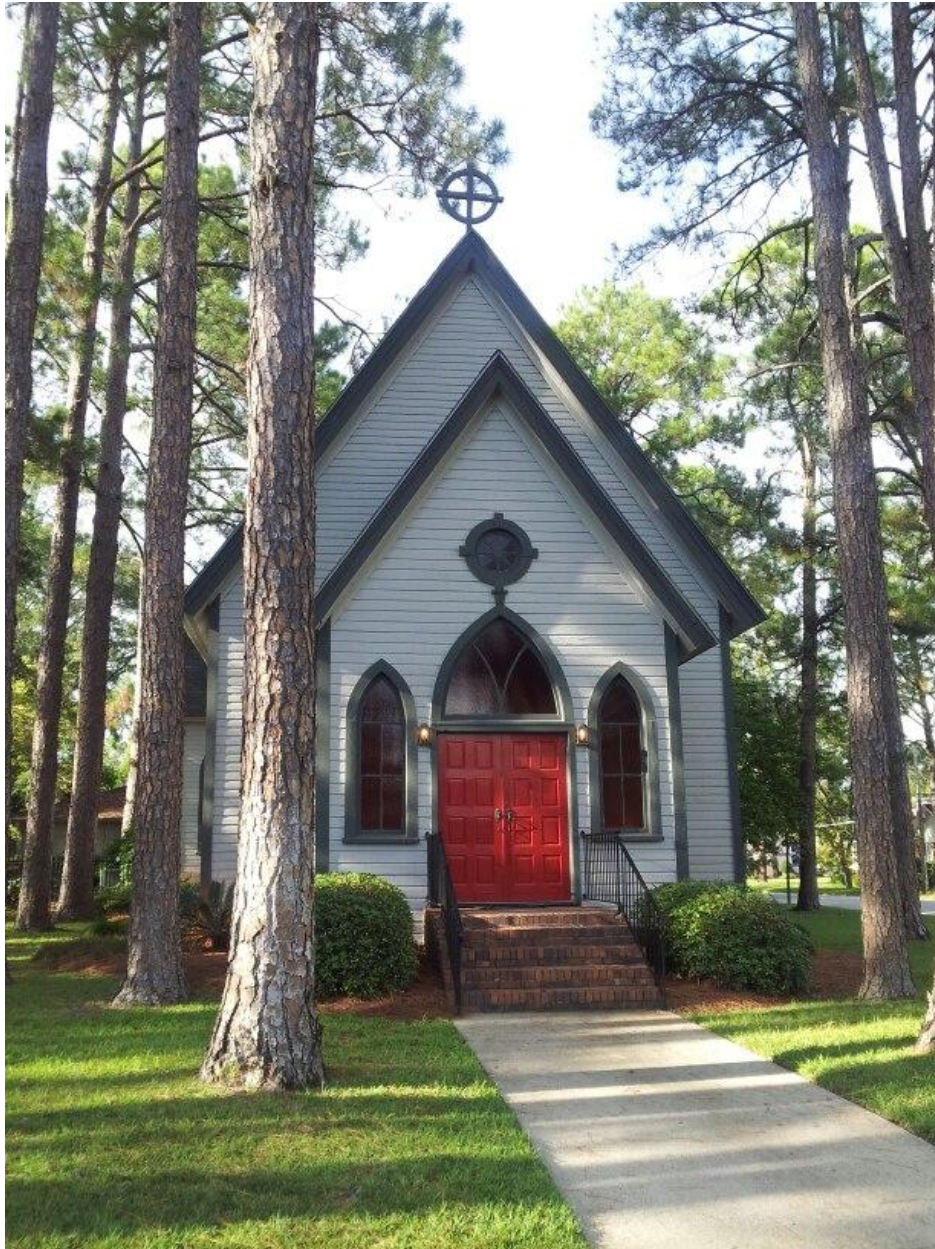


Church Profile
Christ Episcopal Church
Cordele, Georgia



408 South 1st Street
Cordele, GA. 31015

Profile of Christ Episcopal Church, May 2023

Church History, Building and Grounds



In his address to the Diocesan Convention of May 19, 1892, the Rt. Rev. Cleland Kinloch Nelson, then Bishop of Georgia, named Cordele as one of several towns which needed “to be attacked (to use the warlike phrase proper to a militant Church), and to be strongly manned.” He pointed out that Cordele and several neighboring towns were places “where the church has as yet no foothold.”

On November 24, 1894, Bishop Nelson and the Rev. W. Woodson Walker, Rector of Calvary Church, Americus, visited Cordele. It is probable that Episcopalians in the community had been meeting and worshipping in various homes prior to this time, obtaining the services of visiting priests when they could. This was the usual pattern of Episcopal “missionary activity” in Georgia during the mid to late nineteenth century, and continued until congregations became strong enough to erect a

church building.

Regrettably, the detailed beginnings of Christ Church remain shrouded in lost records—all records prior to 1944 were destroyed when the priest’s residence burned in 1943. However Bishop Nelson and Rev. Walker returned to Cordele late in 1896 and met at the Kirkland home with Arthur Kirkland, D. Ed. Kennedy, C.C. Cutts, and several others to finalize the organization of the Episcopal Church in Cordele.

Presumably a church building was already under construction at this time since the present frame structure was consecrated on February 14, 1897. The original Instrument of Consecration, signed by Bishop Nelson on that day, may be seen in the narthex of the church.

Christ Church was originally built on “Gunboat Hill” at the corner of South 9th Street and West 17th Avenue. Sometime shortly after the turn of the century (the exact date is now unknown) the building was moved to the intersection of South 7th Street and East 14th Avenue. Here Church School rooms were added to the rear of the structure.

Now known as “the most traveled church in the Diocese of Georgia,” Christ Church’s original building was moved to its third location at South 1st Street and East 15th Avenue in 1952. Moving the church the second time proved to be more difficult than anticipated. Several delays were encountered, and during at least a part of this time, according to newspaper accounts the church sat nearly in the middle of busy U.S. Highway 41. Once placed, the first service was held

at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 8, 1952. On May 10, 1953, Bishop Middleton Stuart Barn-well rededicated the twice-transplanted church.

One of Christ Church's early priests, the Rev. John M. Walker, later became bishop of the Diocese of Atlanta. It was during his tenure in Cordele that Christ Church purchased its first vicarage in 1915.

Three other houses have served as vicarages. The present one, located at 605

East 15th Avenue (next to the church) was purchased during the tenure of the Rev. Bill Bennett (1994-1999).



In the late 1950's, Mrs. Annabelle Holmes donated funds for the construction of a parish hall, which was dedicated in 1961 as Holmes Hall. On All Saints Day, 1990, a room most recently used for storage at the time was dedicated and consecrated as All Saints' Chapel. On December 28, 1994, the Sabra Coleman Memorial Garden, beside the church, was consecrated and blessed by The Rt. Rev. Harry W. Shipps. Mrs. Helen Bowmar was the first member of Christ Church to be interred in the Memorial Garden on March 18, 1995.



The most recent expansion of the church physically occurred in the first year of the new millennium, when the Rt. Rev. Henry I. Louttit granted permission to the church and vestry to

purchase the lot adjacent to the church vicarage. The expansion offers immediate use for recreation and parking, and opens the potential for growth in the future.

Several original items remain in use in the church. The handmade pews were installed in 1897. The interior of Christ Church contains the altar, brass altar cross, and a pair of flower vases dating back before 1924, and are which still presently in use. The altar cross is unusual in that it is engraved on both sides, the design being different on each side. It is presumed these are original—none are dated—or at least date from the earliest years of the church. The Eucharistic candlesticks were given in 1944.



Cordele Community

Cordele, also known as "The Watermelon Capital of the World", is a city in Crisp County, Georgia, United States. The city is the county seat of Crisp County. Cordele is located along Interstate 75, 140 miles south of Atlanta and 100 mile north of the Florida state line.

Cordele has the “small town” charm you hope to find in a South Georgia community. Comfortable neighborhoods with shade-covered drives, Victorian and Federal-style homes, and a growing downtown district are just a few of the amenities that make Cordele an ideal place to live. You will be greeted with a smile and warm welcome by residents ready to share their pride in our community and local business owners eager to make you feel “at home”.



In November 1864 the area that is now Cordele served as the temporary capital of Georgia. During the last days of the Confederacy, Georgia's war governor Joseph E. Brown used his rural farm house to escape the wrath of Sherman's "March to the Sea." During that time the farm house which Brown called "Dooly County Place" served as the official capital for only a few days. It was replaced in 1890 by the Suwanee Hotel, located in what became downtown Cordele. The hotel was destroyed by a fire in late 1994 and was redeveloped into apartments.

The small town of Cordele, GA was founded in the southern part of Dooly County in 1888 by J.E.D. Shipp of Americus. The city of Cordele was incorporated on December 22, 1888. It drew great benefits from the presence of two major railroads-the Savannah, Americus & Montgomery line and the Georgia Southern and Florida. It was named after Cordelia Hawkins, daughter of the president of the SAM railroad, and the town flourished from the junction of the two railroads. As the railroads brought more people and business to the newly settled territory, Cordele was experiencing phenomenal growth. Before 1905 Cordele was located in southern Dooly County nine miles from the county seat in Vienna. With Cordele's continued progress, many in the community felt the need for a seat of government to be closer in proximity than Vienna. Crisp County was formed in 1905 by taking a portion of southern Dooly County and Cordele became its county seat.

By August 1930, Cordele housed the first county-owned electric system in the form of the Crisp County Hydroelectric System. Located on the Flint River,



the hydroelectric plant continues to operate and the resulting Lake Blackshear has attracted residents and visitors to its water-front properties.

Cordele Crisp County demographics are:

Population: 20,128 (2020 census)

Race and Ethnicity

- White 52.3%
- Black 44.6%
- Hispanic 4.1%
- Asian 1.1%

Median Income

In 2021, the median household income for Crisp County residents was \$41,605. However, 24.2% of Crisp County residents live in poverty.

Median Age

The median age for Crisp County residents is 40.5 years old.

Economy

Cordele has a lot to offer and is a diverse community that boasts it's designation as the "Gateway to South Georgia".

Primarily an agricultural community of South Central Georgia, Cordele is known as the "Watermelon Capital of the World" and if you ever taste our home-grown melons, you'll understand why! Other major crops grown in the area are cotton, peanuts and pecans. We have a State Farmer's Market that caters to our local farming vendors and has some of the best-tasting fruits and vegetables to be found.

Cordele is also a great place to stop and stay! Just 2 hours from Atlanta and 1 ½ hours from the southern state line, Cordele is the perfect location to spend a night, a weekend, or a lifetime. We have great tourist attractions such as our Veterans State Park with Lake Blackshear Resort and Golf Club on site, the SAM's Shortline Excursion Train that leaves from Historic Downtown Cordele and travels to Jimmy Carter's boyhood home site, the Watermelon Capital Speedway, great hunting and fishing opportunities, and really great Southern Hospitality to enjoy!



Cordele is also a major transportation hub where 2 major railways intersect and Interstate Highways converge. With the area's natural resources, two major industrial park centers, the Cordele Inland Port designation, and major commercial corridors throughout the City, Cordele is the perfect place for industry and businesses to locate!

Quality of Life

Cordele-Crisp County has all of the “small town” charm and “southern hospitality” you would hope to find in a South Georgia community. Crisp County encompassing 296 square miles and is found along Interstate 75 approximately 130 miles south of Atlanta. Comfortable neighborhoods with shade-covered drives, Victorian and Federal style homes, and unique downtown district are only a few of the features, making Cordele an ideal place to live. Crisp County is the hub of the area and our vibrant community continues to grow with over 24,000 residents.

The Crisp County School System and Crisp Academy are a source of pride for the citizens of Cordele and Crisp County. Higher education is provided by Albany State University and South Georgia Technical College, where students are prepared to enter the work force.

Cordele has retained its agricultural roots and this important sector continues to play a large part in its success today, as agriculture is the number one economic driver in the county. As



Watermelon Capital of the World, Cordele is vibrant during the summer as the watermelon crop is harvested and shipped nationwide. The community's annual Watermelon Days Festival is just one of the many reasons to visit our community. In addition, we are home of Lake Blackshear, Georgia Veterans Memorial State Park, Historic SAM Shortline Railroad, Lake Blackshear Resort, Youth Ball Complex Crisp Motorsports

Park, Cordele State Farmers Market, and the Cordele Inland Port. Locals and visitors alike enjoy golfing on two picturesque courses, water activities at the lake, a variety of sports at the recreation department and arts and entertainment. We even have our own 110' Titan Missile, which is a landmark for our community on I-75.

Cordele has a diverse community with higher education and healthcare, unique attractions, manufacturing, tourism, small business, and an inland port – with tourism leading the pack. Economic growth in Cordele is credited to many great people and hospitality entities throughout the city.



Education

Crisp County has been fortunate to have several agencies of education to develop complexes within the community. The Crisp County Public School System has an enrollment of 1062 students. The system has a 91% graduation rate. The South Georgia Technical school is the second largest technical college in Georgia and has a campus located in Cordele Georgia. The City also has a private school Crisp Academy and a university; Albany State University Cordele Campus. Educational facilities have grown significantly in the past several years to address community needs in the medical and agricultural fields.

Religion

There are approximately 60 churches of all denominations in Crisp County, with the predominate number being Baptist, followed by Methodist. Christ Church is the only Episcopal church in the county.

The Parish Family

Vision and Mission

Our mission is to give glory to Almighty God through worship, prayer, song and service; to celebrate His love through His Son, Jesus Christ, and share our celebration with others.

By His Holy Spirit, word and sacraments, we will strive to grow in faith and to understand and follow His direction.

Parish Life

Ministries and Outreach Programs

MORNING PRAYER

Started in Christ Church by Bob Bright and Jack Roche in November 1989 as one of the first outreach ministries of the church. Bob and Jack continue to attend on a daily basis and have grown the attendance to as much as eight using technology to reach into the spiritual lives of others.

WORSHIP ON THE WATER

Worship on the Water (WoW) is a ministry of Christ Church held out at the Resort on Lake Blackshear. We worship at the resort dock from Memorial Day through Labor Day at 9 am. On pretty days, we gather by boat, jet ski, by car and by foot to worship alongside nature.

Began Memorial Day 2003 it was the "brain child" of Bill Stewart and James Hurt. Following months of preparation by a dedicated committee a successful structure of worship was formed. Outreach via email, flyers, newspaper, banners, television, radio, etc. expands our outreach efforts.



WoW serves as "Summer Church" for Lake Blackshear residents and visitors of other denominations from as far away as Norway. The venue also serves people that might otherwise not attend a church service.

REDDICK/ROCHE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Dennis Reddick was a beloved and faithful member and served locally as Chief Parole Officer. Originally sponsored by the Parole Association of Georgia in memory of Dennis Reddick. Christ Church assumed sponsorship in 2006 and in 2007 first scholarships were awarded. Success is due to the overwhelming support of our church members from playing in the tournament to cooking hot dogs hamburgers, etc.

Scholarship funds awarded to Crisp County High School Seniors thus far exceeds \$65,000.

RELAY FOR LIFE

2008 Christ Episcopal women sponsored Relay for Life fund raising event. Creative giving began with a simple wine and cheese party raising \$2,090.00.

Creative giving expands to "Save the Ta-Ta's" party raising \$2,570.00 in 2009. 2010- "Hats On for the Cure" raised \$4,288.00.

2011 - "Think Pink" raised \$5,032.00.

2012 - "Red Hot for A Cure" raised \$6,239.00 and received the Gold Member Award - "largest giving church."

Has become the "Ladies Event of the Year" for the entire Cordele community.

FOOD PANTRY "The Little Red Wagon Ministry"

- Originally began as a food closet and then became a soup kitchen.
- Later reevaluated the community needs and how to better serve the people in need.
- A "Little Red Wagon" was donated to the church and placed in the Narthex in 2009.
 - In addition to the offerings and oblations, the donated contents of the wagon are brought forward to our Priest to be blessed.
- A partnership food drive with the Cordele Lions Club provides over 400 lbs of canned food as a result of the "Can of Food for Entry" as part of the annual Crisp County Fair.
- Additional support received from individuals and other local organizations.
- Open once a month - serving 40+ people.

Demographics

Christ Church, Cordele is, like most churches, an aging congregation that is predominately of retirement aged people.

Stewardship and Finances

Parishioners and Pledges

Year	Parrisheners	# of Pledges	Pledge and Plate
2020	91	31	\$139,006.00
2021	87	30	\$136,148.00
2022	86	27	\$140,362.00

Rector Profile

We are looking for an individual who has great people skills, a pleasant disposition, and is able to extemporaneously speak.

*If you want this choice position
Have a cheery disposition
Rosy cheeks, no warts!
Play games, all sorts*

*You must be kind, you must be witty
Very sweet and fairly pretty
Take us on outings, give us treats
Sing songs, bring sweets*

*Never be cross or cruel
Never give us castor oil or gruel
Love us as a son and daughter*

And never smell of barley water

*If you won't scold and dominate us
We will never give you cause to hate us
We won't hide your spectacles
So you can't see
Put toads in your bed*

*Or pepper in your tea
Hurry, Nanny!
Many thanks
Sincerely,*

- advertisement from Mary Poppins, Copyright Walt Disney Co

Goals and Objectives for the Parish - Two to Four Years

Goal One - Attract and retain a priest.

Goal Two - Maintain the church vibrancy and energies. Retain the “spark” that we have as a congregation.

Episcopal Diocese of Georgia

Among the settlers arriving with Georgia founder James Edward Oglethorpe in 1733 was a clergyman from the Church of England. The Diocese of Georgia was established in 1823 and by 1907 had grown so much that it was divided geographically and the Diocese of Atlanta was created. Today, the Diocese of Georgia, with its Diocesan office located in Savannah, Georgia, spans the southern portion of the state from the rolling farms and piney woodlands in the west to the marshes and coastlands in the east. The Diocese is home to seventy parishes and missions diverse in size, theology, liturgical style, wealth, and race. Forty-one congregations hold parish status, and the remaining twenty-nine are missions. In addition, several chapels are maintained throughout the Diocese. Thirty congregations are located within twenty miles of cities with populations of 40,000 or more, and the other forty congregations are situated in suburbs, county seats, and rural towns. Approximately one hundred fifty clergy are canonically resident in the Diocese of Georgia at any given time. Included in the active clergy are more than thirty non-

stipendiary vocational deacons, who serve in the Diocese under the guidance of the Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Frank Logue. Most of the clergy in the Diocese serve in parishes and missions; some serve as school, hospital and hospice chaplains or in other non-parochial ministries expressing their special gifts. Priests of the Diocese of Georgia are expected to participate in convocational clericus meetings (monthly through most of the year), clergy conferences and the diocesan convention. Clergy are also called upon to serve on various diocesan board's, committees and commissions as part of their service to the larger church.

Search Committee Membership

Mark Boike, Senior Warden
Ernie Rhodes, Junior Warden
Skip Wright, Vestry Member
Wanda Jackson
Francis Carswell
Sonny Burt
David Forehand, Vestry Member