

2022 Parish Profile

## Welcome and Overview

# Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church is an Episcopal church in the Diocese of

Pennsylvania. Gloria Dei was declared a National Historic Site in 1942 and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1966. The church was established on Tinicum Island in 1646, 36 years before the founding of Pennsylvania. The congregation relocated to its present location in 1677, using a temporary structure as a house of worship. It was replaced by a brick church building in 1700, which still stands today. The graveyard next to the church has been in continuous use for over 340 years. In 1845 Gloria Dei applied for admission into the convention of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, and was accepted. The property is owned and operated by the Corporation of Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church, an Episcopal congregation.

In the 1950s, the National Parks Service purchased three acres of adjacent land to the church, which enlarged and enhanced the grounds. This made the property into a local attraction. Neighbors visited daily to lessen the stress of urban noise and grit by enjoying the grass, admiring the majestic trees, and wandering through our storybook graveyard.

First and foremost, the congregation at Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church is a family; a family of diverse opinions, life experiences, faith traditions, and interests. Our super-power is our strength together even when we do not agree. We come together and serve God and our community in a variety of ways; through Sunday services, Tuesday Evensong, our Lucia Festival, our music concerts, lectures and panel discussions, and in many ways as you will learn in this profile.

Only a small percentage of our congregation are "cradle Episcopalians." Many are former Catholics and many come from other Christian traditions. What keeps us at Gloria Dei is important. The words of our congregation describe what we find at Gloria Dei: feels like home; the relationships; the community; the shared worship; the spiritual tranquility; I find hope here; the history and green space; the warmth of the congregation.

Our Profile Committee spoke with almost all of the current active congregants to prepare this profile. We wanted to have an understanding of what the congregation feels is important now and what they feel to be important going forward. The general consensus is that the congregation wants to grow. We want to attract more families with children and create a robust children's program.

We enjoy participating in church programs and want the new rector to participate with us. We want to connect with the community outside our walls. The congregation likes to be involved in how Gloria Dei operates and many enjoy working on ministries that serve the congregation. We seek a collaborative rector who likes and respects us for who we are, and wants to help strengthen our spiritual community, while helping us welcome the changes that will come as we attract new people.

Our preferred worship style is informal. We generally use the Book of Common Prayer with other texts incorporated from time-to-time. In the recent past, a Liturgy Committee worked with our rector to choose the liturgy each quarter – we would like to reinstitute that committee with our new rector. We also enjoy when our lay congregants lead Morning Prayer and sermons. We have congregants who worship at our Evensong service exclusively.

Without question, we love good sermons! However, it must be noted that we have a wide variety of opinions on what that means. We do know from past experience that we do not care for the sermon to be read. We prefer to be talked to - not read to. Many congregants prefer a blend of the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. Here are some direct quotes: Sermons that explain social and political context of the Gospel and readings, and their application to today's challenges; a relatable sermon - meaningful and useable; a thought-provoking or meaningful sermon; I enjoy a sermon that connects to current events; good with dissection of the readings; sermons that are relatable to today's issues. The apparent line we do not want to cross is for our rector to tell us about partisan politics, or how to vote.

We enjoy music. For many years we had an adult choir, but that has not been possible with the small size of our current congregation. Our music director, Paul Fejko, is a master musician and organist. Each Sunday feels like a mini concert. In addition, we have periodic music performances by Sexton Sideshow, Jazz and Joe, and Historic Gloria Dei Preservation Corporation.

The congregation at Gloria Dei has suffered grief, loss, and a lack of confidence. Some parishioners left due to conflict with our previous rector. To find forgiveness and healing, we engaged a highly pastoral interim rector who has been of assistance in this area beyond our expectations. We have conducted two healing workshops that have been very effective. While we feel a new spirit taking hold among us, we continue to pray for healing and strength. We recognize this will be a challenge for our next rector and hope to continue with additional healing activities.



## Our Top 6 Desired Skills Sets

- Effective communication and interaction with others. The new rector should have a warm, outgoing personality and be able to communicate with people of all ages. This encompasses preaching style, and the ability to express faith topics in print and on our website. It is important that the rector is able to comfortably communicate with the community, including our tourists and visitors, our tenant, Kreative Kids Academy, the National Park Service, our Lucia and SS Poet families, and others. This would be a challenging position for someone who does not enjoy engaging with a large and varied number of people.
- Collaboration and conflict transformation. All members of Gloria Dei cherish our independence and are looking for a rector to consider our desires for ministries and programs at Gloria Dei. As noted in the overview, we have highly diverse opinions within the congregation. It will be important for our rector to listen and guide us to solutions that recognize our values and gifts as we work to be a strong faith-based community. To be very clear, we are resistant to top-down leadership. We have been effectively using consensus building techniques at our vestry meetings to great success.
- Participates in and encourages Gloria Dei activities. Gloria Dei is a very social congregation We have been disappointed in the past when our rector did not participate in our fundraising events, concerts, lectures, and community activities. We want our next rector to listen to our desires for program growth; help us determine what is best for the community; and attend our events. We feel that

- our rector needs to engage with the congregation and the community.
- Engages with children. As part of our parish development, we want to rebuild our children's ministry. We are looking for a rector with experience (and preferably training) in building a successful children's program. We recognize that the country is changing and traditional Sunday School may not be the best path to building a Christian education program for children. We are open to a children's message during Sunday service and other programs that engage and educate. We imagine that creativity in this area will be important.
- Provides effective management of staff, property, and financial matters. Our staff members communicated that they were unclear about their roles and responsibilities and requested clarification. To assist with this, the vestry undertook a review of two of these positions (sexton and parish administrator) and implemented comprehensive job descriptions for both. It will be important for our rector to supervise and clearly communicate with the staff to assure effective management.
- Provides pastoral care. The Gloria Dei congregation needs pastoral care from time to time. Some of our members are home-bound; some are experiencing scarcity of resources; some are looking for guidance in their faith journey. We currently have a program to bring the sacraments to the home-bound and a prayer ministry. We desire to keep these ministries and hope that our rector will be involved and find more ways for us to serve each other.



## Our 3 Main Goals:

The overall goal for Gloria Dei is to have internal and external organic growth. We seek to strengthen our current congregation and be a welcoming community to others.

- Organic growth of the congregation. We want to increase our membership with spiritual guidance and discernment. Our new rector should have training and experience in helping congregations to grow. The congregation has many ideas on how to achieve this goal, but need the leadership and inspiration of a rector to help us.
- Attend to the congregation and the community. We seek a rector who will help us heal from the past and develop our spiritual life both individually and together through programs such as studying the Bible and other books, prayer groups, and adult education. As we become an increasingly settled, healed, and engaged congregation we would like to reach out to the wider community.
- Develop robust children's program. We seek a rector with experience in developing Christian education for children. We do not have a current program in place. We would like to work with our current families, former Sunday School teachers, and others to create a program that will evolve over time. We understand that this will be a process and not a fast solution.

## Ministries at Gloria Dei: A Selection

Gloria Dei is blessed with many congregants who feel called to contribute their time, talents, or treasure in support of our varied ministries. Some of our ministries are for joy and grace, others create revenue to support our Church operations. We cannot detail all of our ministries in this profile. Some have been in place for over 80 years, such as the Lucia Fest; others came about in response to the pandemic. Following are the highlights that represent fundraisers, joyful community experience, and concern for our brothers and sisters at home and worldwide – and, sometimes all three.

ALTAR GUILD. The Altar Guild prepares the
worship table each week, oversees the safety and
maintenance of our sacred elements of worship:
robes, altar cloths, silver, and consumable supplies.
This ministry also cares for and protects our historic,
museum-quality chalices, tankards, and plates.



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS. Each year to honor St. Francis we have a blessing of the animals. Some years in Church, some years outdoors. Our campus is popular with neighborhood dog-walkers who especially enjoy this service. For our pet loving congregants this is a meaningful and quite fun event.



FLEA MARKETS. We hold a fall and spring flea market each year (pre-pandemic). We are noted for the wonderful foods prepared by our Gloria Dei home cooks. Both of these events bring our congregation together to help set up tables for



merchants, prepare and sell breakfast and lunch items, tours of the Church, and clean-up. It is a wonderful event that brings the community to our campus to sell and purchase items. We have a committee that collects items to sell at a Gloria Dei table that contributes to the revenue from the event.

 JAZZ 'N JOE. Alan Segal, Director of The Jazz Sanctuary, HGDPC Trustee, and husband to our former rector, Rev Joy Segal, is a longtime friend to Gloria Dei.

Alan brings his jazz band to Gloria Dei each month during the Spring and Fall to play the Great American songbook plus some of the Blues, as a fundraising event for the Church. This is another ministry where our home cooks provide desserts for our guests. We ask for free-will donations to support this ministry.

- LAY EUCHARISTIC MINISTRY. Participants of this ministry bring the Eucharist to home-bound or sick church members. Those interested in joining this ministry need to complete a brief training.
- LUCIA FEST. Our annual Lucia Festival honors our Swedish heritage. This 3-day event combines a service with the telling of the St. Lucia story who was beloved by the Swedes. Through story, song, and re-enactments with approximately 40 children and adults, this program is sure to bring anyone to tears for its poignancy and beauty. In Riverside Hall, we create a holiday shopping event we call St. Eric's Fair. Lucia takes nearly 100% of our congregation's efforts to create and person this event.



Pre-pandemic, it was our largest fundraiser of the year and generally draws over 1000 guests to the service and fair. There are a total of 8 services between Friday through Sunday. The service portion of the program is traditionally led by our rector.

- MERCY HOSPICE. A relatively new ministry is the support of Mercy Hospice, a place for single women and mothers with children to live as they recover from addiction. The residence provides individualized training and support to help residents move to independent living. We are collecting food and supplies for this community. Recently, our Gloria Dei home cooks prepared a meal for the 32 women and gave the chef a day off. At Christmas, we collected funds and donations to provide Christmas gifts. For Lent (2022) we collected funds to buy books recommended by the administration for the women.
- PRAYER MINISTRY. Participants of this ministry commit to daily private prayer for our congregants and others. This ministry also includes a weekly time of communal prayer on Zoom for those interested. Anyone is welcome to join as they feel called to.
- SEDER MEAL. Pre-pandemic, the congregation came together during Holy week for a reading of the Seder meal. This free event is purely for community and is greatly enjoyed by all as we remember God's love and the Exodus story.
- SEXTON SIDE SHOW. At Gloria Dei the position of sexton is shared by a talented couple. In a volunteer capacity, the sextons created a series of programs called Sexton Sideshows. These events are designed to bring our congregation and the larger community together to enjoy musical concerts such as O Brother Where Art Thou and Jesus Christ Superstar. They have also organized concerts to showcase a range of musical styles from classical, to folk, to a cover band of The Rolling Stones. For many years, these concerts have been a major part of a Memorial Day Picnic for the community to enjoy our park setting, some fabulous music, and delicious food.
- THE BOND OF CARE. During the summer of 2021, Gloria Dei raised funds to provide tuition and living expenses for underprivileged students enrolled at Church Mission Society College in Kerala, India. We applied for and received a grant from the DIOPA Global Mission Project to support this project We sold Rakhi brackets to the congregation and other donors to raise additional funds to support these students. We pledged our support to these students through a special Sunday Service and later connected with them via video conference. The program is continuing. Please see: <a href="https://www.old-swedes.org/news/the-bond-of-care">https://www.old-swedes.org/news/the-bond-of-care</a>

# Current Committees at Gloria Dei: Communications, Finance, Green, History, Hospitality, Property Our Financial Snapshot and Goals

#### **CURRENT FINANCIAL STATE**

We are already generously endowed by earlier congregations who left legacy gifts that sustain us today. While these gifts help us to operate the Church and buildings, there has not been a sufficient amount of revenue to keep up with building maintenance, or support ministries in the way we wish we could. Our pledge dollars do not currently cover the salary and benefits for our rector and other paid staff members.

However, it should be noted that all salary, benefits, insurance, office and sundry expenses, utilities, and standard maintenance/ repair expenses are equaled or exceeded by our endowment, rental income, fundraisers, and pledges. The Vestry maintains a balanced budget as standard practice.

Parochial Report Comparison	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*	2021*
Average Sunday Attendance	60	52	60	61	50	52	42	26
Baptism	9	14	9	11	5	4	1	5
Weddings	5	6	3	5	2	0	0	1
Funerals	5	8	9	2	4	8	1	3
Pledged	34,978	33.106	33,321	44,279	47,338	52,208	51,784	42,896
Plate and Pledge Received	49,994	47,087	50,012	55,618	52,703	54,346	45,756	50,964
Income from Investments	107,118	117,556	109.341	117,785	100,970	128,128	121,822	131,072
Other Operating Income	126,675	128,765	132,185	133,301	130,845	148,466	68,968	95,207

<sup>\*</sup>Includes on-line Facebook-streamed service attendance

## Long-Term Revenue Goals

- Increase our income through implementation of our wedding and rental opportunity. A revenue plan has been developed and approved by the Vestry that projects an increase in income from the rental of our sanctuary and hall for weddings and other events. (see below)
- Increase our endowment income through legacy giving. Our endowments currently provide about 50% of Gloria Dei's income. As in the past, parishioners can provide legacy gifts to increase the endowment for the future of our church. Gloria Dei currently has seven parishioners who have let us know that they plan a legacy gift for the future of Gloria Dei. We believe there are others who have not communicated their gift to Gloria Dei.
- Increase our pledged and donations income through new members. In 2022 Gloria Dei has 17 pledges and 5 additional automatic givers. The annual average gift is \$1,860/member.

# Long-Term Goals for Use of Discretionary Funds

- Proactively address deferred maintenance.
- Invest in sustainable practices. Decrease our gas and electricity energy use.
- Designate more income from donations and fundraisers to be used for church mission

Stewardship. The Vestry has taken considerable steps to secure our financial future.

#### **TENANTS**

We are fortunate to have Kreative Kids Academy as a tenant. They use the majority of our building, Roak House. They would like to rent the entire building and this should be considered. This building currently houses the church office, and was used for many years for our Sunday School program. We appreciate the rental income and it is important to our financial health. However, it will provide a challenge to restarting our children's program.

#### **PERMANENT RESIDENTS**

Approximately three years ago, the Vestry voted to save all revenue from the sale of interment rights in a fund to maintain our historic churchyard that dates back to 1677. We surveyed the available spaces for interment of ashes and raised prices for plots. With the available space, we have the opportunity to generate over \$1 million dollars. The funds are in an interest-bearing account and the Vestry voted to spend no more than 4% of the annual interest on maintenance. In this way, the fund will continue to grow and the churchyard will be maintained as would be expected.



In 2013, several members of the congregation formed a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. The HGDPC Board of Trustees is comprised of both congregants and community members. This organization raises public funds for the restoration and care of the buildings and grounds. An early accomplishment was the creation of a 30-year master plan for the church property and National Park Service grounds. This master plan was donated to HGDPC through a Community Design Collaborative grant. This document informs HGDPC's project planning and decisions.

In 2021, HGPDC completed a renovation of the Church interior and exterior with funds raised and matched by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through a Keystone Grant. This project is being honored this year by The Preservation Alliance for excellence in restoration.

The next project will be to replace the roof of the Church in 2026. The Vestry has set aside nearly \$100,000 in donated funds from various bequests and donations. HGDPC will secure matching funds grants from the Commonwealth and area associations. This project is expected to cost approximately \$250,000. Please see: https://preserveoldswedes.org/

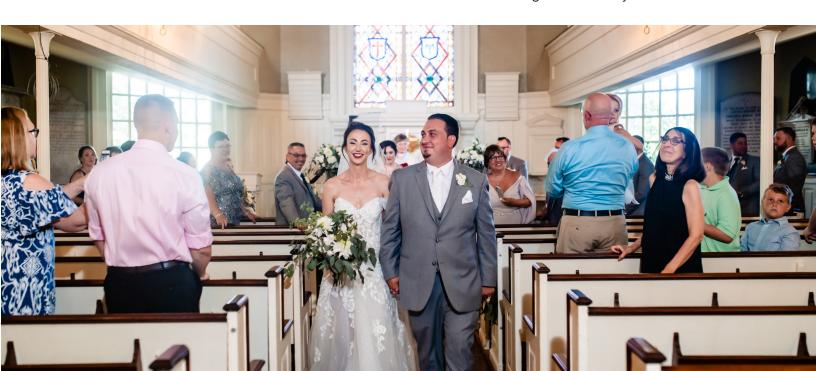
Although HGDPC operates independently from the congregation, their activities are shared with the Vestry. This has led to a fruitful partnership. Gloria Dei's rector serves as an *ex officio* board member.



Three years ago, the Vestry undertook a strategic planning activity. We wanted to explore how we might ensure long term financial stability. During this process, the committee learned that there was little to no interest in conducting capital campaigns to raise funds for maintenance and other needs. We learned that congregational growth and an increase in pledging would certainly be a long-term activity.

Our wedding opportunity is possible due to Pennsylvania law that was enacted with the Quakers to allow self-uniting marriages. Riverside Weddings at Gloria Dei will offer full Episcopal marriages where our rector will officiate as he or she deems appropriate, following the Canons for an Episcopal sacrament. Couples will also be able to secure a self-uniting license from the Commonwealth and bring in their own officiant. We have prepared a guideline booklet with details for wedding rentals. We anticipate our rector will embrace this opportunity to best use our assets to secure our financial future. The vestry approved the creation of a 20 hour/week Wedding and Event Specialist to secure and manage wedding rentals of the Church, grounds, and Riverside Hall. Please see our website: https://riversideweddings.org

Riverside Weddings at Gloria Dei launched in April 2022. The Vestry approved a name for marketing and social media purposes. Our specialist position has been filled and she is actively promoting our ministry. We anticipate approval of our guideline booklet from the DIOPA Standing Committee by June of 2022.



The Vestry is very comfortable with our decisions to secure Gloria Dei for the next 300 years. We are looking for a rector who will embrace our entrepreneurial spirit.

We believe that taking these actions will allow our rector to focus on community and mission. We hope that being relieved of the need to fundraise will be a plus when considering Gloria Dei.



## Summary

We would like to close this profile with a few quotes from our discussions with the Gloria Dei congregation when asked, What is your vision of the future at Gloria Dei?

"A priest that puts Gloria Dei and its parishioners 1st; one that values us as much as we value our church and church family."

"To grow with positive, strong, open-minded, loving environment."

"To grow into a better, more diverse community that reflects our growing changing culture."

"To inspire the congregation to do God's work in their everyday lives. That being a Christian is living it daily."

"The new rector should be warm, caring and kind and build on the qualities and diversity of the church."



