



Parish Profile

St. Francis Episcopal Church

Victoria, Texas

Welcome to St. Francis, an Episcopal parish community within the Diocese of West Texas. This profile offers a quick overview of where we are, how we began, who we are now, how we worship and serve, and who we can be with our new Rector!

You can see our full story on our website. Here are a few quick facts:

- Diocese: Diocese of West Texas
- Address: 3002 Miori Lane, Victoria, TX
- Phone: 361-575-0441
- Email: office@sfvct.org
- [Website: sfvct.org](http://Website:sfvct.org)

Where We Are & What's Here

Victoria, Texas, known as the "Crossroads of South Texas" (because we are roughly a two hour drive from four major cities), is located along the Guadalupe River 30 miles from the Gulf of Mexico.

With a population of over 65,000, Victoria is a regional hub that was founded in 1824 by Martín De León and is uniquely tied to both rich Mexican-American and ranching heritages.

VICTORIA COUNTY is noted as one of the few areas where all six flags (Spain, France, Mexico, Republic of Texas, Confederacy, and United States) have flown.



OLD VICTORIA features a self-guided driving tour of more than 80 historic structures and homes.

THE TEXAS ZOO is a non-profit rescue facility located within Riverside Park. Our zoo features over 70 species, mixing native Texas wildlife (like bobcats, alligators, and white-tailed deer) with exotic species and rescue animals from around the world.





MUSEUM OF THE COASTAL BEND is a regional history museum on the Victoria College campus that highlights 13,000 years of South Texas heritage with permanent exhibits - *Where Texas History Began* and *Where Texas Ranching Began*.

THE NAVE MUSEUM hosts six to eight rotating exhibits every year featuring regional, national, and international artists.



RIVERSIDE PARK boasts 660 acres of woodland bordered by four and one-half miles of the Guadalupe River and offers hike and bike trails, sports facilities, picnic spots, playgrounds, and scenic views.

DOWNTOWN VICTORIA features a growing selection of local boutiques, cafes, the Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts, and the Victoria County Courthouse, built in 1892 and recognized as one of the most historically significant and visually impressive nineteenth century courthouses in Texas.





THE VICTORIA SYMPHONY performs at the state-of-the-art Victoria Fine Arts Center and brings world-class music to life through a dynamic lineup each season.

THEATRE VICTORIA produces and presents theatrical experiences that entertain, educate, and inspire. Programs for youth provide a theatrical academy, a Junior Company, and the Triple Threat Theatre Summer Camp (a 3-week camp involving youth from 6 to 18). Programs for adults include both musicals and plays as well as a recently initiated annual playwriting contest providing opportunities for authors to realize their ambition to see and hear their vision on stage.



COLETO CREEK RESERVOIR AND PARK is a premier outdoor recreational destination located midway between Victoria and Goliad, Texas. Operated by the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority, this year-round park encompasses a multi-use reservoir for freshwater fishing, boating, water skiing, and lakeside camping.

How We Began

In the spring of 1958, the groundwork was laid for the beginning of a new Episcopal mission in Victoria. Bishop Everett Holland Jones appointed Mr. Robert Campbell, The Hon. Frank Crain, Mr. Kerry McCan, Mr. David Vest, and Mrs. Emily Womack as an organizational committee. The Rev. Gerald McAllister, later Bishop of Oklahoma, was appointed Priest-in-Charge. On May 18, 1958, the first worship service of the "Victoria Episcopal Mission" was held at the Odd Fellows' Hall on Nueces Street. At that service, 108 persons signed the charter for the new congregation. That charter now hangs in the Guild Room. On July 1, 1958, The Rt. Rev. Earl Dicus, Bishop Suffragan of West Texas, presided over the first congregational meeting. At that meeting the "Victoria Episcopal Mission" was named St. Francis Episcopal Church.

A building fund was started immediately by the congregation and on June 15, 1961, the ground-breaking ceremony was held at the present parish location on Miori Lane. Construction began on the sanctuary, outdoor altar, office wing, and Sunday School building. On July 1, 1962, The Rt. Rev. Everett Jones dedicated the new buildings. At that time, under the leadership of the Rev. McAllister the church had grown to 185 communicants and more than 300 baptized members.



In 1963, the Rev. Robert H. Bonner was appointed Priest-in-Charge. The Rev. Bonner would go on to serve as rector of several churches in the Diocese of Texas before becoming Director of Stewardship for the National Episcopal Church. At the Annual Council of the Diocese of West Texas in 1964, St. Francis Episcopal Church was admitted as a parish of the diocese. Construction began on the Parish Hall which was completed July 1, 1965. In 1967 the Rt. Rev. James E. Folts, who later served as Bishop of West Texas, served at St. Francis as Assistant Rector.

In August 1969, the Rev. Rayford B. High became the third priest of this congregation. In the same year, all debt for the congregation was retired, and The

Rt. Rev. Harold C. Gosnell consecrated the church and set it aside for the use of Prayer and Praise. The Rev. High served as rector until 1977. Rev. High would later serve as Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of Texas.

The Rev. David D. Wendel, Jr. was called to be rector in January 1978. He served until 1986. During this period St. Francis entered into a missionary effort in Brazil where he had previously served several years as a missionary Priest.

On May 4, 1987, The Rev. David M. Reed was called to be rector. His first service as Rector was held on Mother's Day, 1987. During his tenure as rector, St. Francis began a new building project, and in November, 1994, a new Youth Center and adult classroom (The All Saints' Room) was dedicated and paid for. The Rev. Reed was married during his time as rector, and the congregation celebrated the birth of David and Patti's two children. Following his tenure at St. Francis, the Rev. Reed went on to serve as Bishop Suffragan and Bishop in the Diocese of West Texas.

On June 1, 1995, the Rev. David G. Read began work as the fifth rector of St. Francis. His first service was celebrated on the Feast of Pentecost. On July 1, 1996, Ms. Ada Sutherland joined the staff of St. Francis and Trinity Churches as Episcopal Youth Minister. Scott Brown was hired as the first Christian Education Director at St. Francis in August, 1998. A celebration of the 40th Anniversary of St. Francis Episcopal Church was held on November 7, 1998. The Reads accepted a call to St. Helena's Episcopal Church in Boerne, Texas, November 15, 1998. The Rev. Read became the Bishop of the Diocese West Texas on July 8, 2023.

The Rev. Jonathan Folts was called to be the next rector of St. Francis and assumed his duties August 1, 1999. The Rev. Kim Folts was selected as Christian Education Director when Scott Brown resigned to attend seminary in August, 1999. In May of 2004 the Rev. Folts accepted a call to St. John's Episcopal Church in Essex, Connecticut. On May 4, 2019, The Rev. Folts was elected as the Bishop of South Dakota.

On October 1, 2005, the Rev. Faith Bledsoe assumed the duties of rector of St. Francis. She served as Rector until October 2011 when she left to join the Order of St. Helena, a religious order in the Episcopal Church for lay and ordained women.

The Rev. Stephen W. Carson was called as rector of St. Francis and began working on October 1st, 2012. Father Stephen, his wife, Julie and their two children remained an integral part of St. Francis for 13 years. On June 1, 2026, the Rev. Carson accepted a call to St. Richard's Episcopal Church in Round Rock, Texas.

Currently, the Rev. Beverly Patterson is serving as our Interim Rector.

Who We Are Now

We are an Inclusive Community with Deep Roots and Hope for the Future.

St. Francis is a warm, welcoming, and inclusive congregation where relationships matter. Our members consistently describe the parish as a place where people genuinely care for and support one another through life's joys and challenges, and where lasting friendships are formed rooted in faith. We are a community that welcomes newcomers, respects diverse perspectives, and allows people to grow spiritually while belonging to something larger than themselves.

We emphasize spirituality and treasure our Christus Rex (Christ the King) that hangs above the altar, an ancient symbol of the Church that focuses on the glory rather than the suffering of our Lord.



We are a congregation of caring and open individuals. Within our parish, there is a strong sense of “family,” and we share a sense of unity in our fellowship with one another and in our search for meaning in our lives. We are friendly to those around us and share a warm compassion for others.

Mission and Values

Our Mission: “St. Francis welcomes, nurtures, and embraces all so relationships thrive and God’s love is reflected.”

Our Values:

- **Prayer & Sacraments** — Centered on the Eucharist and a life of prayer.
- **Welcome** — Hospitality for all who seek Christ.
- **Formation** — Growing in faith through lifelong learning.
- **Service** — Practicing mercy and justice in our community.
- **Stewardship** — Sharing time, talent, and treasure responsibly.

Our Demographics and Financials

Membership and Attendance	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Active Baptized Members	111	109	90	86	88
Average Sunday Attendance	40	42	40	40	40
Easter Sunday Attendance	74	73	65	83	82

Stewardship and Finances	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of pledges	48	48	43	40	38
Total Amount of Pledges	\$223,688	\$230,870	\$211,360	\$227,686	\$219,180
Pledge and Plate Offerings	\$234,856	\$228,227	\$209,816	\$210,838	\$221,506

Budgeted Revenues	\$252,303	\$241,945	\$236,517	\$237,704	\$250,793
Non-Budgeted Revenues	\$116,989	-\$28,955	\$220,832	\$184,818	\$210,856
Total Revenues	\$361,291	\$212,990	\$457,349	\$422,523	\$461,650

Budgeted Expenses	\$281,555	\$291,734	\$303,816	\$323,630	\$316,520
Non-Budgeted Expenses	\$8,437	\$77,614	\$72,844	\$89,025	\$86,276
Total Expenses	\$289,992	\$369,349	\$376,661	\$412,655	\$402,795

Total Current Assets	\$84,361	\$59,804	\$105,409	\$49,299	\$91,810
Total Other Assets	\$469,957	\$338,155	\$373,157	\$439,216	\$455,560

Although we have passed deficit budgets every year for the past five years, we have met the obligations of these budgeted expenses every year. We have no outstanding debt, our property is mortgage free, and we have no pending major renovations on our radar. Our heating and air conditioning systems have all been updated recently as have our grounds and sprinkler system.

How We Worship and Serve

At St. Francis we gather on Sunday morning for coffee and Sunday School at 9. Our Alter Guild makes sure that we have beautiful flowers as well as prepares our alter for Holy Communion. Our dedicated group of Greeters and of Ushers welcome all who come. Holy Eucharist, which includes a Children's Sermon, begins at 10:15, after our bell is vigorously rung. We generally use Rite II. Lectors and Eucharist Ministers serve during worship.



Our organist leads the music throughout the service with the participation of our guitarist and our small but mighty choir.



After church, we gather in the Parish Hall for snacks (provided by our congregants) and fellowship. We love to have themes around special celebrations, and we frequently have pot luck lunches.

Members of St. Francis seek ways to enrich the lives of others through service as well as ways to learn more about being an Episcopalian and serving Christ through various study platforms like EfM and our newly added Discipleship Group. We have an active Reunion Group that meets monthly where friends converse about Jesus and his place in our lives.



Blessing the gathered backpacks and school supplies and the students and teachers returning to school.

We serve a variety of organizations, either through St. Francis or as individual volunteers throughout the year. Donations are made to Victoria Christian Assistance Ministry (VCAM), Habitat for Humanity, and Christ's Kitchen. We collect toys at Christmas for Toys-for-Tots, can goods for the Food Bank on Shrove Tuesday, and back to school supplies for Shields Elementary. Our members volunteer at the Food Bank, Christ's Kitchen, and Meals-on-Wheels. Young Life meets in our Parish Hall on Mondays during the school year. Our All Saints Room has been made available for recovery groups who meet here regularly.

Who We Can Be

We worship, we pray, we study and we serve. At the same time, we recognize that we are at a pivotal moment in our parish history. Like many churches, we face the challenges of an aging congregation, declining membership, and the need to engage younger generations in the life of the Church. We want to honor the wisdom, faithfulness, and service of those who have sustained St. Francis while creating inviting pathways for children, young adults, and families to find a home among us. We seek greater visibility in the Victoria community, stronger outreach and partnerships, increased volunteer engagement, and renewed energy for ministries of compassion and service. We hope to deepen opportunities for faith formation, fellowship, spiritual growth, and pastoral care so that people can be known, supported, and encouraged throughout every season of life. We desire leadership that will listen well, work collaboratively, strengthen our connections beyond the parish, and help us build on our gifts while embracing new possibilities for growth and renewal.

As we look to the future, our greatest hope is that St. Francis will continue to thrive as a vibrant, Christ-centered church for generations to come. We hope to welcome new families, children, and members to our church home through worship that is joyful and accessible, relationships that are genuine, and ministries that respond to the needs of our neighbors. We want to remain faithful to the Episcopal tradition and to the values that define us today while finding fresh ways to share God's love in Victoria. We hope to grow as a community where people can ask honest questions, discover deeper spiritual practices, receive compassionate pastoral care, and use their gifts in service to others. We long to be a visible and generous presence in the wider community, offering hope, inclusivity, belonging, and spiritual nourishment, and we seek future leadership that can inspire participation, nurture faith, welcome new voices, and guide us with humility, courage, and a clear sense of God's calling.

We are seeking a rector who will love this congregation, honor its traditions, and help lead us into God's future. We hope to find a leader who can inspire growth, strengthen community connections, encourage participation, and help us discern new ministry opportunities. Most importantly, we seek a rector who will join us in living out our mission: To welcome, nurture, and embrace all so relationships thrive, and God's love is reflected.

Please come and join us!





EPISCOPAL DIOCESE *of West Texas*



The Right Reverend David Read, Bishop of the Diocese of West Texas, was consecrated as the 11th Diocesan Bishop in July, 2023. Prior to his consecration, Bishop Read served as rector of four congregations in the Diocese, most recently at St. Helena's in Boerne. Bishop Read brings a strong vision for church planting, discipleship, and congregational development. He reminds us that the Diocesan Staff exists solely to serve as a resource for the 87 congregations in the Diocese of West Texas.

Bishop Read has been married to his wife Jacqui since 1991; they have two children (Amy and Aiden) and three grandchildren (Kaydence, Makenna and Jameson David).



The Right Reverend Angela Cortinas, Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of West Texas, was consecrated as the 7th Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese on March 15th, 2025. Prior to her consecration, Bishop Cortinas served congregations in Florida and Texas. She brings her many gifts and skills to the work and ministry of the Diocese, and oversees lay ministry development, Christian formation, and discipleship.

Bishop Cortinas has one daughter, Victoria Fletcher.



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