

# Profile for St. Ann's, Afton

<https://www.stannsaftonny.org/>

125 Main Street Afton, New York 13730



St. Ann's is located in the Village and Town of Afton, the Village containing approximately 800 residents and the town about 4800. It is a rural area, with convenient accessibility to Binghamton, to the south, about 30 minutes and Oneonta, to the north, also about 30 minutes, on convenient I-88.

It is largely a "bedroom" community, with employment being in Sidney, about 12 minutes north, Greene about 20 minutes west and Binghamton, as previously mentioned. Agriculture has played an important role in the area and in the last 40 years has evolved from primarily smaller, family operated dairy farms, to several large commercial dairy operations.

In recent years, there has been a migration of residents from New York City, exacerbated by the events of 9/11. Summer/vacation homes are common.

There is considerable interest in white tail deer hunting, which draws hunters from down state as well.

There are currently 6 other churches in the immediate Village of Afton area, the Methodist, Roman Catholic, Baptist denominations and three non-denominational churches. The Presbyterian church recently closed.

We are a member of the Chenango District of the Diocese of Central New York, along with Zion Church, Greene, St. Paul's Church Oxford, Emmanuel Church Norwich,

Epiphany Church Sherburne, St. Andrews Church New Berlin, St. Matthews Church, South New Berlin and St. Peter's Church, Bainbridge. We have always shared a priest with one or more other parishes. For many years, we shared a priest with St. Peter's Church in Bainbridge, about 5 miles north. Because of this sharing of clergy, we are pretty much self-sufficient and have been able to take care of the administration operation of our parish, outside of priestly functions, including the preparation of our Parochial Report. For the past 12 years, we have shared a priest with Zion Church in Greene and St. Paul's Church in Oxford, the percentage of time in each parish based on the size of each church's budget. Our relationship with those parishes, in our opinion, has been favorable for all of us.

We are currently conducting hybrid services of Morning Prayer, done by parishioners and Holy Communion, conducted by supply priests as available. There are 7 parishioners who conduct Morning Prayer. We also have several individuals who provide home communions. We avoid any discussion of politics. We have been complimented by visiting people and priests who said that they see us as a warm, welcoming parish. Services are held at 9:15 a.m. Music is provided by an electronic device entitled "Hymnal Plus" which provides access to literally hundreds of hymns, worship songs and incidental music without the need for an organist. It has worked very well for us.

Our vestry meets the third Sunday, following the Sunday morning worship service. Sadly, we no longer have an active Sunday School due to the decline of young people. At one time, our Sunday School enrollment was between 30 and 40 students. Unfortunately, this erosion of young people is common to other churches in this area.

We have always been accepting of diversity and like to think that we are "colorblind."

St. Ann's has supported the community with various "outreach" activities, e.g. the Afton Food Pantry, Afton Chamber of Commerce, a yearly scholarship at the Afton Central School, community use of our LED sign for advertising community events, our yearly creche erected in front of the church, the use of our Parish Hall by AA and the Chenango County Mental Health Department, the yearly Arts and Crafts Day and the Interchurch Council and ecumenical services. For many years we operated our own "clothes closet" providing clean, usable clothing to the community. For some years, it was our custom to hold a "Holy Humor" Sunday after Easter. In addition, we have given financial support to numerous non-profit organizations both locally and outside the immediate Afton area, including the Episcopal Seminaries and the Episcopal Relief and Development. Our outreach efforts are typically about 15% of our gross income.

Our buildings are well maintained, with recently updated heating systems, new thermo-pane windows and doors, insulation and LED lighting.

Several years ago, we put together a small brochure that describes and has pictures of the Parish and its activities and that is available upon request.

## Financial

We have been blessed with individuals who provide regular financial support and individuals who, over the years, have contributed to endowment funds. Those two sources, plus a significant bequest from two now deceased parishioners, has enabled us to meet our financial obligations of a yearly budget of about \$45,000 and tithe some 15% of our budget to help others through the support of various non-profits, both locally and out of the immediate area. We have always met our assessment and pledge obligations to the Diocese, having increased our pledge every year for the past 30 years. We have two treasurers, one who maintains the budgeting and watches the expenditures and the other who writes the checks. Our stewardship effort is typically done with a letter and "intention" cards sent to parishioners, a somewhat lo-key approach that has worked well for many years. Pledge and plate offerings have remained remarkably stable as shown on graphs in the Parochial Report website.

## What do we see in the future?

In the past 15 years, +/-, we have experienced the same erosion of membership and attendance that is epidemic throughout most of the mainline denominations. These trends can be seen by accessing the Parochial Report information found on the national church website. Short of a major paradigm change, it does not appear likely that this trend will change. It is our intention to maintain an Episcopal presence in Chenango County, continuing to support our community, those in need and our parishioners as they age.

We need the services of a priest to provide the sacraments, support and encouragement that will enable us to do this. This would include hospital calls, worship services (Holy Eucharist), helping to provide spiritual growth through bible study, preaching sermons that explain to people how faith and the bible can help them deal with life's problems and challenges, and supporting our participation with local ecumenical efforts, doing this while maintaining a sense of humor. In short, to provide the services that we cannot provide for ourselves.

