

THE CHURCH OF THE HEAVENLY REST

PARISH PROFILE

JUNE, 1982

OUR CHURCH

The Church of the Heavenly Rest is a vital, urban parish on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. Since the mid-70's we have shown remarkable and sustained growth. Virtually every aspect of our ministry has increased in its breadth and depth. At the same time, our Sunday attendance, pledging and endowment have all increased. Clearly the community has been responding to our many ministries.

We do not want this momentum to stop. We want to continue growing internally as Christians, externally in our involvement with each other and the world around us, and numerically.

Recently the Vestry endorsed a series of five year goals, a copy of which is appended. They are ambitious. To achieve them will require an enormous amount of work on the part of clergy and parishioners alike. They are intended to expand our identity as "a community of Christ, a community of caring, a community of concern". Our new pastor must be prepared to deal with the challenges that these goals imply.

HISTORY

Founded in 1868, the Church of the Heavenly Rest was originally located on Fifth Avenue near 45th Street until the present Church building was completed in 1929. When Heavenly Rest moved to its current location at 90th Street and Fifth Avenue, it merged with the Church of the Beloved Disciple, then located at 89th Street off Madison Avenue. Since its founding, Heavenly Rest has had seven rectors, Alan Houghton having come to us in January, 1975.

FACILITIES

Located on "museum mile" between the Cooper-Hewitt and the Guggenheim, the Church is essentially neo-Gothic in design, with an art-deco flourish. The main nave, including the balcony, seats close to 900, and is adjoined by a chapel for 200 that includes an organ and small choir balcony.

The parish hall, used by the Church, the community and the Day School, adjoins the main Church structure. Included in this complex are two apartments, generally housing an assistant or associate and the verger.

The rectory is a large, four/five bedroom, four bath apartment, facing Fifth Avenue, at the corner of 93rd Street.

We believe that all our physical facilities are in good repair.

PARISHIONERS

As recently as twenty-five years ago, we had a Vestry whose wardens were essentially elected for life. We had rented pews and ushers who wore morning suits at 11:00 on Sunday morning. With the sixties came changes of many varieties; formalism and its attendant accoutrements disappeared. The average age of the parish rose while parish rolls declined. From a boom of some 150 children regularly appearing for Sunday School, we sank to practically no Sunday school program by the early 70's.

By the mid-70's however, we began to turnaround, and we have been growing ever since. The average age of the Heavenly Rest parishioner has fallen dramatically (probably by 10-15 years) and the number of children has increased. We are somewhat less homogeneous today than we were in earlier times although the average parishioner is still well educated, a professional, and financially well above average. The demographics of our neighborhood reflect a parish that increasingly includes more single people (including single parents), more working women, more occupational diversity as well as more economic extremes. Presumably these demographic changes will continue to alter our parish constituency. With this increase in variety some would argue that there has come a diminution in cohesion, but because there is no longer one accepted mode, there is more acceptance of differences and more reaching out to strangers. Clearly, parishioners exude an excitement about our ministry and a commitment to experiment with alternative approaches to solving problems faced in a rapidly changing world and in a dynamic, competitive city.

CLERGY AND PASTORAL MINISTRY

The clerical staff numbers five. Three are paid directly out of the parish budget; one is paid through special grants; and one is a non-stipendiary. We also support one seminarian from General Theological Seminary.

The clergy of the Heavenly Rest are a diversified group in experience and interests, but they have a common commitment to the pastoral ministry. Alan Houghton, our rector who will be leaving, is a former businessman turned parson; he does a great deal of vocational, marriage and individual counseling. Bea Blair, our associate rector, was ordained four years ago; her active involvement in both community and social issues as well as her perspective as a mother bear heavily on her work with people. Steve Rodgers is our young assistant; he is helping people to develop their spiritual side through prayer and teaching. Sam DeMerell, a Holy Cross monk, has been assigned to Heavenly Rest on a full time basis; he concentrates his pastoral ministry on those who have addiction problems and those who are in declining health or years. Hugh Hildesley is a non-stipendiary priest who, during the week, is a Senior Vice President at Sotheby-Parke Bernet; he shares in the pastoral work as his schedule allows and is here Sundays.

"Caring" is the key word - and the clergy's commitment to that caring ministry is one of the reasons our parish is growing and is diversified. We are a family parish in the middle of a huge metropolis and that has become our identity; a place where "all sorts and conditions" of men and women and children are welcome, welcomed, and cared for.

As we look ahead, we would like the pastoral ministry to remain a focal point of our new rector's work. The successes we have achieved in these areas are due not only to the clergy's commitment but to the diversity of backgrounds and interests of our clerical staff. We would hope that this healthy eclecticism can continue.

WORSHIP

For most of our parishioners, Sunday services are the focal point of our worship. Since the mid-'70s we have had two Sunday services: 8:30 a.m. Holy Communion and the 10:30 a.m. larger parish service. Until recently we gave equal emphasis to Morning Prayer and Holy Communion (i.e., two Sundays per month of each) at the main service. In early '82, however, we began recognizing Holy Communion as the principal service and now, as an experiment, celebrate the Eucharist at the main service every Sunday, even when there is Morning Prayer (once a month).

Having used the new prayer book since it was first proposed by the General Convention, we celebrate with both Rites I and II, in all of the latter's varieties. Clearly we have an openness to varied liturgical approaches, such as sung litanies, as a means of enhancing our liturgical education and spiritual growth.

Preaching is an important part of our worship. All of the staff preach, including non-stipendiaries and seminarians. Although we occasionally have outside preachers, they are rare. We have recently instituted an experiment of having the preacher meet under the pulpit with anyone who wants to discuss the sermon after the service.

As we have broadened our exposure to different liturgical approaches, we have also significantly increased lay participation in our services. Today lay participation includes: reading of the Old and New Testament lessons; leading intercessions; presenting the elements; administering the chalice at Holy Communion by lay readers (numbering almost 20). We also have encouraged children's presence and participation in our services so that worship becomes an important and natural part of their Christian development. Moreover, infants in baby carriages regularly line the aisles in the back of the Church.

For decades healing services have been conducted at Heavenly Rest. Until recently, however, they were held only during the week. This ministry continues but now those who wish can receive the laying on of hands during our Sunday Communion services as well.

Weekday services are not large, but they are important to several of our constituencies. In the early 70's there was one service; today there are three. These are augmented and expanded during Lent, a time that receives particular attention in our worship life. Further, we have recently held home communions for all interested parishioners and they have met with some limited successes.

Music is an integral and important part of our worship activities. Charles Walker, active at Heavenly Rest and as a teacher and music director in the community for over 30 years, is both the organist and choirmaster. He directs our excellent paid choir and the Canterbury Choral Society, an organization affiliated with the Church that performs sacred music in concerts three times a year.

ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education currently takes these forms: 1) forums, 2) Bible study 3) retreats/quiet days. After Church on Sundays, forums, frequently conducted by outsiders, are held to discuss spiritual, secular and psychological or psycho-spiritual issues; they are generally well attended. Often, during Advent or Lent, forums are also held during the week on a topic of timely interest.

Bible study is held twice a week: one group meets on Sundays and one on a weekday. These groups tend to be attended by a few dedicated people.

Retreats and quiet days have become an increasingly important part of our spiritual education in recent years. Held about four times a year, they attract 25-40 people.

While our activities in adult education have grown in numbers and variety in recent years, some feel that our efforts here might be more constructively directed if someone on the staff, whether clergy or a professional lay person, were given full responsibility for these endeavors. This problem also needs addressing in the next area discussed, "Children's Education". It is a problem that is an apparent by-product of our swelling numbers.

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

The past five years have seen a dramatic growth in the number of young people who are involved with the Sunday School Program (between nursery school and sixth grade). Total enrollment in 1981-82 was about 120. An average Sunday would include 40-50 young people. In 1980 the Church began to write its own curriculum, focused both on the Bible and on day-to-day experiences. Its goal has been to develop an experientially as opposed to an intellectually focused curriculum. The three year program will cover the same stories and ideas every three years, thus giving repetition and increased depth as children mature.

On the whole, the Sunday program is sound and dynamic. The teachers are committed and the young people seem to enjoy it. Resources are being created for parents to continue the educational process at home with their children.

Up till recently, the full-time clergy have rotated, each taking the program for a year. The past two years and next year (1982-83) have been run by the same clergyman, and he finds it taking up more time than he can give it without shrinking his other responsibilities. Here, as above, perhaps we are victims of our own success and should seriously consider hiring somebody at least half time to be the education coordinator.

There are three other areas of concern at this point: 1) no male teachers; 2) inconsistency of the students because so many are away on weekends; 3) the termination of our formal program for youth with Confirmation in the seventh grade.

LAY ORGANIZATIONS

The lay organizations of Heavenly Rest are run by parish members with the support and advice of the clergy. Numbering over forty, these groups represent a remarkably wide range of interests. This rich and varied spectrum of activities serves to attract and accommodate a broader based membership than that which previously characterized the parish membership profile. The decision as well as the ability to expand horizons, try different things, and welcome new people is clearly represented by the growing numbers of individuals becoming actively engaged in parish activities.

Membership ranges from "two or three gathering together..." to over one hundred people in a single group. The organizations break down into three areas: church oriented, community outreach, and the arts.

Church related organizations include such long established activities as: Altar Guild, choirs, acolytes, parish visitors to the sick, Thrift Committee, and the Women of the H.R. There is also an increasing number of vital yet less traditional groups such as: the Shipman Club (unmarried members of the parish), single parents groups, and the Women's Network (for professional women).

Outreach groups, aside from giving money, cover a compelling range of community and societal concerns. They include foster grandparenting, gun control, disarmament, blood bank, Friday seniors' lunches, nursing home worship, refugee placement, holiday meals (parishioners providing festive church dinners for the lonely on major holidays).

Arts-related activities are participated in by both parish and community members, and serve to focus some of our energy and talent on cultural activities. In this sense, they serve as a kind of outreach program. The two major groups are: The Canterbury Choral Society and The York Players (off-off Broadway theatre).

In the future we would like to continue strong lay participation, remaining sensitive to the ever changing needs of both the Church membership and the surrounding community.

OUTREACH

Our community outreach program involves our time, our space and our money. Many of the groups involved in outreach are noted in the discussion of our lay organizations; in fact, the two are frequently inseparable. Our community efforts involve not only programs for the poor and needy but also programs involving general social needs (i.e., donating blood) and social concerns (i.e., disarmament). The clergy frequently spearhead our social involvement. Alan Houghton, for example, has recently been instrumental in organizing the Yorkville Emergency Alliance, set up to address the community's response to Federal cut-backs in social programs.

In addition to providing space for our own outreach programs (i.e., the Friday lunch program for the elderly), we also provide space, usually free of charge for programs sponsored by our neighbors. For example, Heavenly Rest is the meeting place for Manhattan's largest A.A. chapter; we provide office space for counselors treating community patients on an 'ability to pay' basis; we are home to both the Canterbury Choral Society and York Players, our arts organizations.

Finally, we give our money. Slightly less than 20% of our expenses go directly to outreach. This number includes our Diocesan Assessment and Designated Funding as well as grants by our Outreach Committee and the Women of CHR for programs helping, among others, the elderly, the poor, the learning disadvantaged, former prisoners -- all groups located in our own or near-by neighborhoods.

FINANCES

Financially, Church of the Heavenly Rest is in sound condition. Traditionally vital numbers -- endowment, pledge income, and total income -- have grown at rates greater than inflation during both the past five and ten year periods. For the past two years, operations have been essentially at break-even, and deficits in prior years (with one exception) were an acceptable and viable percentage of unrestricted capital funds.

In coordination with the National Church's "Venture in Mission," we undertook a separate three year capital campaign (1980-1982), whose goal was to raise \$700,000, including a \$100,000 gift to VIM. By June, 1982 we had raised close to \$550,000. With the exception of items currently being budgeted (roof and organ repair), the need for additional major capital expenditures is not envisioned in the near future, though the maintenance required of a structure built in 1929 will continue.

An indication of the financial strength of the Church can be seen from the following comparative statistics:

Selected Financial Statistics
(in thousands)

	<u>1981</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1971-81 10 Year Compound Annl. Rate</u>
Endowment	\$2,700	\$1,800	\$1,100	9 1/2%
Investment Income	189	67	36	18%
Pledge Income	207	136	84	9 1/2%
Total Revenues	568	344	241	9%
Expenditures	569	381	253	8 1/2%

We have placed great emphasis on the 1982 Fall Stewardship Campaign. The ambitious objective of this drive will be to increase our annual pledge income by about 50% and to return the parish on a regular basis to break-even, independent of the vicissitudes of sustained high interest rates.

THE HEAVENLY REST DAY SCHOOL

The Day School is coed with students enrolled from nursery through the eighth grade. Founded by the Church in 1930, it is now separately incorporated. It has its own Board of Trustees, although three must be from the past or present Heavenly Rest Vestry. The Rector serves ex-officio on the Board.

John Dexter, an educator by profession, is the present Headmaster of the 300 student school. The Day School owns a brownstone on 92nd Street, but the greater part of "its plant" is located in the parish house and undercroft of our Church building. The Church does not provide any direct financial support to the school; in fact the Day School currently gives the Church \$84,500 a year to cover the costs (i.e., heat, light) of operating our facilities. According to Mr. Dexter, "The Day School as part of the Heavenly Rest community benefits greatly from the use of reasonably priced space and access to the Church itself".

The relationship between the Day School and the Church of the Heavenly Rest over the years has always been a source of some conflict - spoken or unspoken - over space, its use or lack of use, its value to the constituency and its value to the community. There is great potential for mutual understanding and growth on the part of each institution which will ultimately benefit both. However, the success of both the Church and the School has caused a space problem that is likely to continue.

VESTRY

We have a rotating Vestry. Members are elected for a term of three years and are eligible for two consecutive terms. A member must then stand down for at least one year. Wardens may be elected for three two-year terms. There are eighteen on the Vestry plus two Wardens. Currently there are an equal number of men and women.

The full Vestry holds meetings once a month except in July and August. Elected by the Vestry, the Executive Committee includes the Wardens and one or two other Vestry members as well as the Rector.

CHURCH OF THE HEAVENLY REST

FIVE YEAR GOALS
1982 - 1986

Our logo symbolizes what we increasingly want to be: a Community of Christ, a Community of Caring, a Community of Concern. Within these general areas of ministry, we hope to achieve the following goals in the next five years:

Community of Christ

- o Improve and deepen the Christian, spiritual life of our parishioners and our Church.
- o Improve our adult education program through more and better attended bible classes and forums.
- o Build a vibrant, exciting Sunday School with an average attendance of 80 children.
- o Build an active youth program, including dedicated acolytes and a strong youth choir.
- o Increase laity involvement in worship services.
- o Experiment with a variety of liturgies and forms of worship to educate the parish and to deepen the spiritual commitment of our parishioners.
- o Maintain a high level of music quality in our worship services.
- o Increase the number of communicants by 25% by 1986.
- o Increase our Sunday attendance by 30% by 1986.
- o Add to our endowment by capital gifts of \$1,000,000 by 1986.
- o Increase the value of our endowment to \$4,000,000 by 1986.
- o Keep our building in good repair.

Community of Caring

- Become increasingly identified as a
 - Neighborhood, family Church
 - Friendly Church
- Strengthen our counseling capabilities.
- Strengthen our support programs for non-traditional groups such as single parents and working women.
- Increase our pledges annually by a minimum of 15%.

Community of Concern

- Increase our identification as a major neighborhood presence in dealing with the problems of the
 - Elderly
 - Alcoholics
- Continue as a leader in marshalling resources to deal with the effects of government cut-backs on our community's social service programs.
- Increase our outward giving to at least 25% of total expenses by 1986.
- Increase our commitment to "program" (as opposed to "plant") as a percent of our budget.
- Balance our budget annually.
- Complete the Fund for the New Decade Drive by 1982 and raise \$700,000.

SELECTED CHURCH OF THE HEAVENLY REST STATISTICS

<u>AVERAGE SUNDAY ATTENDANCE</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1971</u>
January	409	245	235
February	380	293	239
March	421	256	206
April (includes Palm Sunday/Easter)	667	439	368
May	274	230	152
June	148	169	113
July	104	120	67
August	103	104	63
September	247	194	98
October	344	251	197
November	407	295	193
December	373	294	186
Christmas Services	2,650	1,665	978
Average (excluding July & August & Christmas)	367	267	199
<u>BAPTISMS</u>	28	26	25
<u>CONFIRMATIONS</u>	39	23	13
<u>COMMUNICANTS</u>	1,136	694	474
<u>DOLLARS PLEDGED (\$000)</u>	207	136	84
<u>ENDOWMENT (\$000)</u>	2,700	1,800	1,100