

# The Episcopal Church in Gunnison Valley

*A partnership of  
The Church of the Good Samaritan, Gunnison  
and All Saints in the Mountains, Crested Butte*

## The Beginning



The Gunnison Country was a region in the central Rockies that had remained unsettled and isolated from development until 1879. The high mountain passes and severe winters hampered travel into the area. It was land cherished by the Ute Indians as a summer range. It offered hunting, fishing, grazing, cool fresh mountain air, clean water, and open spaces. In the fall, when the nights turned cold, the bands of the Ute tribe would head for lower, milder valleys to the south and west for the winter.

The City of Gunnison, located at the confluence of the Gunnison River and Tomichi Creek, developed as a supply hub for miners seeking their fortunes of gold and silver in the hills and mountains surrounding the Gunnison Valley. The first sustained rush into the valley came in 1880 with both Gunnison and Crested Butte becoming established as towns. Following the miners came ranchers and timbermen. Businesses opened to support the growth in the valley. The establishment of newspapers spread the news of mines to be claimed and fortunes to be made. Schools opened and several good hotels were built. Another sign that the town would endure was the establishment of organized religion in the Gunnison Valley. The Episcopal congregation in Gunnison dedicated the old stone church, our present-day Church of the Good Samaritan, on Christmas day, 1882. There has been an ongoing Episcopal presence in the valley ever since. The drawing of Church of the Good Samaritan, below, is done by Susan Anderton, a well-known artist in Crested Butte and a member of All Saints in the Mountains.



# Our Congregations—Who We Are

## Our Identity

Good Samaritan and All Saints in the Mountains are small, friendly, welcoming, and inclusive church families.

Good Samaritan has seen cycles of change over the years. Like many small communities, we have seen families grow up and the children leave town. Within those cycles we have transitioned from a strong, younger congregation with lots of children to an aging congregation with fewer children. We are excited that we are beginning to see younger



families joining the church again. One other important element of our congregation is that we have a number of summer residents who attend worship services regularly throughout the summer and fall and support our church through participation in activities and giving. As a small congregation, the members know one another and are supportive of each other. Our Coffee hour following the 9:00 service, offering good food, conversation, and fellowship, is well attended.

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Babb Hall, Church of the Good Samaritan

Six year-round families comprise All Saints in the Mountains core congregation. When in Crested Butte, a dozen or so second homeowners attend weekly services and faithfully contribute to our annual stewardship efforts. By nature, they are active members of their local Episcopal communities, serving as lay ecumenical leaders and vestry members. Many are graduates of EFM. These seasonal parishioners bring their deep experience in larger Episcopal parishes to All Saints, and our small mission church benefits from their presence. While we aren't able provide the wide-ranging opportunities found in larger Episcopal churches, we do offer a warm, intimate worship experience that is very meaningful.

## Things We Value

In the gospel of John, Chap. 13-34, Jesus gives us “a new commandment..., that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”

We value the love of Jesus and strive to live our lives based on this commandment.

In the opening sentences of the Service of Holy Baptism we profess:

There is one Body and one Spirit;  
There is one hope in God’s call to us;  
One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;  
One God and Father of all.

We state our beliefs in the Baptismal Covenant, concluding with the commitment to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being.”

We value the dignity of every human being and we strive to respect each person as a member of the body of Christ.

We promise to conduct our relationships based on these core values and to be held accountable for our actions in an open, honest, and loving environment.



## Where Are We Being Called?

*“Being a Christian is not essentially about joining a church or being a nice person, but about following in the footsteps of Jesus, taking his teachings seriously, letting his Spirit take the lead in our lives, and in so doing helping to change the world from our nightmare into God’s dream.”*

— Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

Although both congregations have separate mission and vision statements adopted by the Vestry and/or Bishop’s Committees, both statements are remarkably similar. As a partnership, The Episcopal Church in Gunnison Valley acts to include, care, seek, and serve.

### **Good Samaritan**

We seek to live up to our name and be Good Samaritans to those in our community that are in need, both physically and spiritually.

*Mission:* To be present, supportive and attentive to one another and to those in our community. To love others as we are loved by God.

*Vision:* We at Good Samaritan believe that God is active in this world in a creative and loving way. As Christians, we believe God can work through us—through our hearts and hands—to make this world a better place. As Episcopalians, we strive to worship in a liturgical, sacramental and engaged way. We believe that our church community is a system of relationships, always changing and always in need of understanding and care.

At our heart is a set of core values we act upon in our communities—both the community-at-large and our more intimate church family. We want to treat each other with respect, even when we do not agree and find ourselves in conflict. We want to be gentle and accepting of all who come our way. We want to hold one another up with prayer and presence. Taking these things together, we want to enrich our church community and to find ways for each of us to be active in service as we follow Jesus on our journey of faith.

Understanding our church family in this way, as a living, changing set of relationships, we affirm the need for ongoing, careful assessments and evaluations as we attempt to know and guide our church family. Lastly, we understand Good Samaritan as a local and unique expression of the Biblical charges to all Christian churches: to express the love of God in our worship, fellowship, proclamation, education, and ministry.

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**All Saints in the Mountains** mission is to “be the Body of Christ as an inclusive, caring community to the people of Crested Butte and beyond as we proclaim the Light and Love of God by seeking and serving Christ in all people.”

We believe that God loves everyone—no exceptions. In response to God’s love, we act in accordance with our mission statement to bring people’s hearts to God.

We seek God’s face in everyone we meet. Everyone is welcome.



Sanctuary, Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan, Gunnison CO

## Our Ministries

Good Samaritan and All Saints in the Mountains ministry and outreach efforts are a result of many individual talents, creating opportunities for corporate service. While our congregations may be small, they are designed in a way that enables all to participate in God's call to a deeper connection to self, parish, and the larger community.

### Good Samaritan:

**Worship-** Rite 2, with both hymns and contemporary music, fills the sanctuary most weeks. There is lay participation in the readings and prayers of the people. Our Altar Guild is diligent in taking care of the sacraments and decorating the altar with fresh flowers. Our monthly Taizé evening candlelight ecumenical service allows additional opportunity for quiet reflection with music and prayer. We have offered a Tuesday morning Eucharist and prayer service for many years, as well as a Wednesday morning contemplative prayer group. Throughout Covid restrictions, we have consistently offered "well-attended" twice-monthly Zoom services.



**Formation**-Good Samaritan, at different times, has offered Bible study on Sunday mornings and book studies throughout the year, especially during the Lenten season.

**Outreach**-At least once per month, we encourage parishioners to bring a food offering for the local food pantry. Monthly community dinners provide social and food nourishment for attendees. Parishioners involve themselves in other service projects through their memberships in Rotary, the Senior Center, and Habitat for Humanity.

**Youth**-We have weekly Sunday school for youth who are in attendance. We hope to increase the numbers of families at Good Samaritan and include more youth offerings.

**Stewardship**-Good Samaritan sends out an annual pledge request from the Bishop's Committee, in the fall of each year. Additionally, if there is a specific need inside or outside of the congregation, members are informed of the opportunity. We've found that people often like to donate to a specific item or project, in addition to their regular offering. Those attending Zoom services have been encouraged to fulfill their pledges.

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## All Saints in the Mountains

**Worship**-Rite 2 with occasional live music or recorded sacred music. All Saints uses traditional hymns with a keyboard during summer and winter months and no music the rest of the year. However, since Advent of 2020, we have incorporated recorded sacred music at our Evening Prayer and Compline services. We hope to offer a weekday-evening gathering and are exploring an Evensong service featuring local jazz musicians.



Community gathering at Center for the Arts' outdoor stage, Crested Butte

**Formation** – Currently, All Saints is not offering Christian formation programs. However, we are using this time of transition to research ways to involve others. David Sudderth, a member of the Bishop's Committee, has developed All Saints Adventures (ALL), a program to provide opportunities for spiritual experiences using community-building activities in a wide variety of ways. Before the pandemic, ALL hosted "All in the Kitchen" where children came together to create a meal under the tutelage of a

professional chef, coordinated groups of Nordic skiers to deliver fresh produce to remote "off the grid" community members, and organized an overnight retreat at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory.

**Outreach** - Crested Butte was hit hard in March of 2020 when Vail Resorts, the parent company of Crested Butte Mountain Resort, shut down ski operations without warning, just before Spring Break, due to an outbreak of Covid-19. The economic impact was immediately felt across our community: from wait staff at empty restaurants, to hotel housekeepers and front desk staff without guests, to ski instructors without students--all left without a source of income. The All Saints congregation generously opened their wallets to create a Covid-19 Fund which granted cash gifts of \$100 for groceries, rent, even gasoline to allow people to leave for safer surroundings.

**Youth** – All Saints, being a small mission, currently has few families with children. Nonetheless, the ALL program, developed by David Sudderth, brought together his children, along with other area children to participate in the program. We are looking grow membership with families in the North Valley and begin to have more youth offerings.

**Stewardship** - All Saints has maintained faithful pledging households during this entire period, despite not having clergy and despite having reduced services during the pandemic lockdown. All Saints has funded specific outreach projects, such as the Covid-19 Fund, with moderate success.

## Who We Are Seeking

We are looking for a priest to guide the Episcopal Church in Gunnison Valley; someone who will

- provide pastoral leadership
- have a presence in our communities
- encourage growth
- present sermons that are empowering.

It is important that this person desires a mountain lifestyle and enjoys serving rural communities.



## Our Communities in Gunnison Valley

Nestled in our valley, you'll find 4 small mountain towns: Gunnison, Almont, Crested Butte, and Mt. Crested Butte. While being a geographically large county, our population is relatively low due to the foresight of land management, ranches, and extensive National Forest and Bureau of Land Management lands.

The Gunnison Valley has thrived since its founding. Ranching has remained a mainstay to the economy and the life of the county. Western Colorado University, founded in 1901 as Colorado State Normal School, was the first college on the western slope. Today, it has the distinction of delivering a personalized education with small class sizes, unique research opportunities, over 100 areas of study, including the new College of Engineering—all in a rural Rocky Mountain setting. It has an enrollment of



approximately 3,200 students, with 2,750 undergraduates and 450 graduate students. The University adds a dimension of youth and diversity to our community as well as opportunities for community members to take advantage of concerts, sports events, theater, and extension courses. In addition to the University, both Crested Butte and Gunnison have performing arts centers which offer world class programs to the valley. There are excellent libraries in both communities, each having strong support from "Friends of the Library" groups. This year, Gunnison has started construction on a new library building as well a major renovation to the Gunnison / Crested Butte Regional Airport.

Outdoor recreation is at the heart of the Gunnison Valley lifestyle. The rivers and forests offer fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, horseback riding, climbing and camping. Blue Mesa Reservoir, 8 miles west of Gunnison is the largest lake in the state, where boating, fishing, windsurfing and sailing are very popular. Every year in July, the City of Gunnison hosts Cattlemen's Days, home to its 120+ year old PRCA rodeo which pays homage to the ranching culture in the valley. In addition, there are top-notch golf courses at both ends of the valley. The winter season offers Nordic and alpine skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, ice fishing and ice skating.

Crested Butte is situated at the north end of the valley. As one drives the 27 miles north to Crested Butte, the topography changes from a broad valley to the high peaks that surround the towns of Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte, home to Crested Butte Mountain Resort. CBMR offers excellent skiing and family vacation experiences. Crested Butte is also known for mountain (Fat Tire) biking and the annual wildflower festival, as well as many other special events that make Crested Butte a year-round destination. Further up-valley from Mt. Crested Butte, in the old mining town of Gothic, is Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory. Founded in 1928, RMBL has become an internationally renowned center for scientific ecological research and education.

# Our Staff

## Bishop Committees

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