

# New Kensington Anglicans find new home

**TRIB** LIVE [archive.triblive.com/news/new-kensington-anglicans-find-new-home/](http://archive.triblive.com/news/new-kensington-anglicans-find-new-home/)

Mary Ann Thomas

July 24, 2013



Erica Dietz | Valley News Dispatch

After splitting from the Episcopal diocese five years ago and court battles over ownership of local church buildings, the Rev. John Bailey stands in the sanctuary of the new Christ Our Hope Anglican Church at its location in Harrison on Tuesday, July 23, 2013.



Erica Dietz | Valley News Dispatch

After splitting from the Episcopal diocese five years ago and court battles over ownership of local church buildings, the Rev. John Bailey stands in the sanctuary of the new Christ Our Hope Anglican Church at its location in Harrison on Tuesday, July 23, 2013.

Details

Reaching out

Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh Bishop Dorsey McConnell appointed the Rev. Norman "Chips" Koehler from St. Thomas, Oakmont, and Alice Ramser of New Kensington to lead efforts to identify and meet all current or former members of St. Andrew's.

Koehler will celebrate the Eucharist at St. Andrew's for several Sundays, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Sunday. An introductory meeting will follow the service.

No decision on the future for St. Andrew's has been made, according to Rich Creehan, the diocese's spokesman.

Email Newsletters

TribLIVE's Daily and Weekly email newsletters deliver the news you want and information you need, right to your inbox.

It's a new day for Christ Our Hope Anglican Church — formerly St. Andrew's Episcopal church — as it moves into a new house of worship at a former Methodist church in Harrison.

Christ Our Hope will celebrate its first services in its new home, at 929 Painter Ave., on Sunday. Services are scheduled for 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.

The congregation of about 80 worshippers is leaving St. Andrew's, 1090 Edgewood Road, in New Kensington after failing to come to an agreement to buy back the New Kensington church building, according to the Rev. John Bailey, pastor of the former Episcopal church that is now known as Christ Our Hope.

St. Andrew's was one of 41 breakaway Anglican parishes scattered throughout Western Pennsylvania that left the fold of the Episcopal Church in 2008 in the wake of the election of an openly gay priest as bishop of New Hampshire.

Biblical teaching on salvation and other issues caused the split as well.

Those churches moved under the umbrella of the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh.

“God helped us find this property,” Bailey said. “It seemed like the right place and at the perfect time. We find it to be a wonderful home for us to start a new ministry.”

According to Rich Creehan, spokesman for the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, the Anglican congregation at St. Andrew's has informed the dioceses that they will move voluntarily to a new place of worship.

“St. Andrew's is joining several other properties that have been returned to the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh in recent years after civil courts affirmed the diocese as the rightful owner,” he said.

“The transition in New Kensington is progressing smoothly and on amicable terms,” Creehan said.

Although it split from the Episcopal church, the Anglican congregation continued to worship in the St. Andrew's sanctuary while ownership and other issues wound through the courts.

In November 2011, Commonwealth Court upheld an Allegheny County Court decision that the Episcopal Diocese should retain the properties it owned before the split.

Twenty-four Anglican parishes have been negotiating with the Episcopal Diocese for church properties.

During those several years, the Anglican congregation stayed rent-free at St. Andrew's, keeping up maintenance and paying the utilities, according to Bailey.

Then when the Anglican churches lost their lawsuit and then appeals to retain their churches and other assets, the Anglican congregation at St. Andrew's started to look for another place to worship in 2011.

"They did not force us to leave," Bailey said. But the congregation couldn't settle on an amount with the Episcopal Diocese to buy St. Andrew's church, he said.

He declined to release any sales figures discussed.

The Anglican congregation appealed to St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brackenridge to rent worship space last year, but St. John's parish voted against the move, according to the Rev. Jerome Panzigrau, pastor of St. John's.

In April, after finding the former Methodist church in Harrison, 92 percent of Bailey's flock voted to leave the current church building for 929 Painter Ave., which they recently bought for about \$111,000, according to Bailey.

"I would like to thank God for affording us this opportunity to continue a ministry in the Alle-Kiski Valley," he said. "Now, we've arrived at the other side of the rainbow."

The church continues its community outreach with the Sonward Soccer camp and a pumpkin party for area youths. The church also presents "Lifetree Café," where people of faith gather weekly to exchange stories and discuss topics relating to life and faith.

Mary Ann Thomas is a staff writer for Trib Total Media. She can be reached at 724-226-4691 or [mthomas@tribweb.com](mailto:mthomas@tribweb.com).

Details

Reaching out

Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh Bishop Dorsey McConnell appointed the Rev. Norman "Chips" Koehler from St. Thomas, Oakmont, and Alice Ramser of New Kensington to lead efforts to identify and meet all current or former members of St. Andrew's.

Koehler will celebrate the Eucharist at St. Andrew's for several Sundays, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Sunday. An introductory meeting will follow the service.

No decision on the future for St. Andrew's has been made, according to Rich Creehan, the diocese's spokesman.

Email Newsletters

TribLIVE's Daily and Weekly email newsletters deliver the news you want and information you need, right to your inbox.

