

All Saints' Episcopal Church

2019 Parish Profile Supplement

Containing additional information on
our History and our Community

Whitefish & Columbia Falls, Montana

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Episcopal

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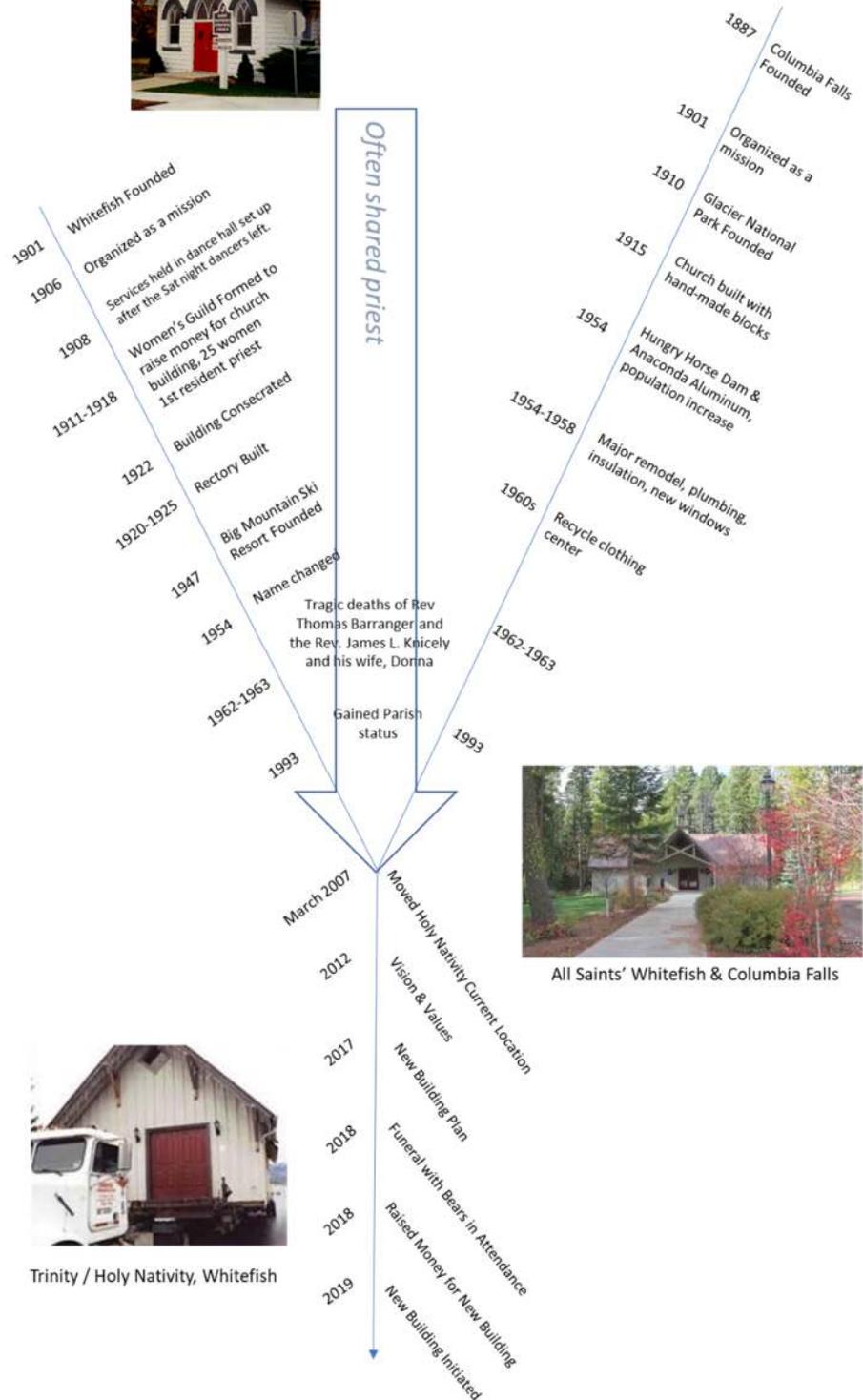
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All Saints' Episcopal Church, Columbia Falls / Whitefish, Montana

Our History



St. Matthew's
Columbia Falls



Our Story

Although the Episcopal Church officially came to Montana in 1867, almost forty years would pass before it arrived in Columbia Falls (1901) and Whitefish (1905).¹ Our 115-year history is rich; we are blessed to have people serving in leadership positions who were born, baptized, married, and retired here.

The Parish merged from two missions, one in Columbia Falls (1901) and the other in Whitefish (1906). It was a vigorous start for such a small population. The 1910 census for both towns was 1,018 people. After 88 years as missions, the two missions petitioned the diocese to be yoked and have parish status. The goal was to be able to hire a priest of their own rather than have Diocesan-appointed vicars. Although the population increased seven-fold to 7,500 people by 1990, it was still a bold move.

Part of the finance scheme included operating a carousel in Depot Park in the resort town of Whitefish. While the carousel never reached its promise, the congregations were able to support their priests and thrived under parish status.

Image 1: The Carousel in Whitefish Depot Park



In 2005, after struggling with two failing, landlocked buildings, the two parishes merged into one. The church building in Columbia Falls and the rectory in Whitefish were sold and in 2007, the Whitefish church building went on walkabout and ended up on our current 10-acre campus, which is exactly halfway between the old locations.

Since that time our membership has grown, even though our average Sunday attendance has been steady. About half of our regular attendees have joined us in the past decade. Some of our oldest members attend services held during the week at The

Springs retirement community in Whitefish. Others attend less frequently or view the service on the internet. Even those who have had to move away remain connected to us through the newsletter or seasonal attendance.



Image 2: Moving from Whitefish to Conn Rd

Early Years at St Matthew's, Columbia Falls

St. Matthew's Church might never have existed were it not for a colorful family that came to the area in the late 19th century. James A. Talbott came to Columbia Falls from Butte with the start of the town in the early 1890s. He was the town's banker and principal landowner. The Columbia Falls' Episcopal congregation first met in the Talbott's bank building and later at the Columbia Falls Odd Fellows Hall.

Image 3: St. Matthew's Columbia Falls

In the early 1900s Talbott donated money to start a building fund. The Bishop, the Right Reverend William Frederick Faber, a close friend of the family, appointed Mrs. Talbott as the first president



of the Episcopal Guild in Columbia Falls. He suggested the members of the congregation “take some responsibility” and plans for a church building were completed on June 12th, 1915, by Frederick W. Ehrig, who was either a parishioner or the brother of a parishioner. There was a stained-glass window in the east end that was memorial to Mrs. Talbot, who had died in 1909. Mr. Talbot’s son-in-law, Thomas Linden, imported a block-making machine and began building the church, using the memorial stained-glass window as a focal point. The blocks were made by local young men in a log shed under the direction of Jess LaMasters. After curing, the blocks were hauled by horse and wagon to the church site and the walls began to rise. The church was consecrated in 1929. A rectory was built on Talbott land.

During those years the church basement was used for Guild meetings and entertainment. Worship services met irregularly, with lay readers and priests coming from Whitefish or Kalispell.

The Hungry Horse Dam was built 1945-1953 and the Anaconda Aluminum plant opened in 1955. These led to rapid population growth in Columbia Falls. At St. Matthew’s changes were also afoot. Between 1954 and 1959 there was new paint inside and out. New windows were installed, doors were fixed, and a sidewalk added. The building was insulated, and a new heating system installed. Inside there was new carpet and the kneelers were upholstered. The undercroft was rebuilt, this time with plumbing.

Early Years at Holy Trinity / Holy Nativity, Whitefish

The church in Whitefish, originally called Holy Trinity, met in several places. From 1905-1906 services were held at the Methodist Church. From 1908-1913 Skyles Dance Hall was used. One story says that townspeople danced until Sunday dawn from Saturday night and a church committee would scurry in, clean up, and set up for services at one end of the dance hall. Services were sometimes held on the shores of Whitefish Lake. In 1913, the Presbyterian church offered the use of their building on Sunday afternoons.

Women played a vital role in the forming the Church in Whitefish. In 1911, Bishop Brewer appointed Mrs. L.B. Saunders as acting president to form a women’s guild which, in 1916, was organized as a chapter of The Daughters of the King. They were charged with providing a Sunday school and raising money to build a church.

The Sunday school commenced immediately; the church building was built in 1917 and consecrated in 1922. A rectory was built in 1920. One of the ladies remembered, “We had an inactive vestry, but a very active Guild in those early days.” The women organized again in the mid-1950s to replace the old “pumper” organ with an electric one.

Image 4: Holy Nativity Children c 1960



Between 1911 and 1959, besides raising money to build the church and fund the Sunday School, the women sponsored many programs for girls and young people. Among their groups included the Girl’s Friendly Society, a Young People’s Fellowship, St. Agnes Guild, and a Junior Daughters of the King.²

During the 1950s the name of the church was changed from Holy Trinity to Holy Nativity, but no one remembers why the name change came about.

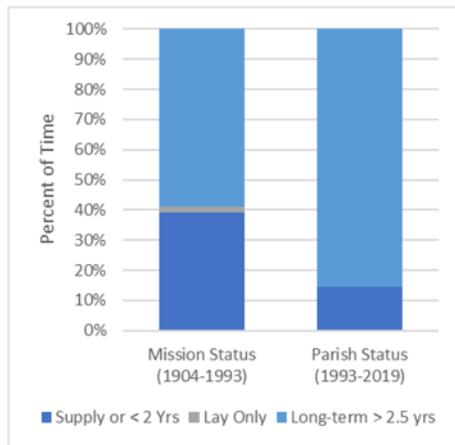
Vicars & Rectors

As is common with many small congregations, St. Matthew’s and Holy Nativity struggled to have consistent ecclesial coverage. Bishops rarely came in the early years and infrequently named vicars. Coverage was better once the buildings were built,

along with rectories, but often those sent were temporary or people who were transitioning from one type of position to another; sometimes “climbing the ladder” to larger churches.

Most of the time both St. Matthew’s and Holy Nativity shared their fate with vicars and rectors. There was also some back-and-forth flow of members. An imperfect review of the Parish registries account for as many as 55 priests. In the first 88 years of life, there were at least 30 named vicars or interims and at least three periods of 6 or more months without clergy. Like any community, we thrived with longer-term priests, which happened occasionally during the Mission years and often during the parish years.

Figure 1: Vicar and Rector Tenure by Status



Tragedy Strikes

The parish was devastated by the deaths of two priests in the fall of 1962 and winter of 1963. Father Thomas Barranger died in 1962³ and Father James D. Knicely and his wife, Donna, died a few months later in 1963 in a winter car accident.⁴ Both the Barrangers and the Knicelys were loved.

Ginny Barranger, Father Barranger’s wife, continued as a vital member of the congregation playing the organ, leading choirs and supporting the women until her death at age 87 in 2008. Following the Knicely’s death, their children left to live with their maternal grandparents but the Nicely dog Fritz, stayed. Fritz was adopted by the Beatty family that included our long-time Vestry secretary, Kathy Beatty Thomas. Kathy remembers that Fritz sired a puppy so like himself that they eventually dropped

the “Fritz, Junior” moniker and just had “two generations of Fritz.”

Figure 2: Priests Across the Years at All Saints

Years	Tenure	Vicar or Rector in Charge
1904-1914	10	H.E. Clowes, Henry Greene, Charles H. Lindley
1914-1918	4	Ralph F. Blanning
1919-1920	1	G.V. Bell
1920-1925	5	Lee H Young
1925-1926	1	George Nutt
1926-1927	1	Philip Anshutz
1927-1937	10	R. R. Price
1938-1941	3	Arthur Ward
1941-1942	1	Stanley Walsk
1942-1948	6	George Masuda (Became Bishop)
1948-1949	1	Uncertain attribution
1949-1951	2	Arnold Moulton
1951-1953	2	J. Reginald Butt
1953-1955	2	Douglas Beauchamp
1956-1956	1/2	Lay Leaders
1956-1957	1 1/2	Paul Baker
1956-1958	2	Duane V. Fifer
1958-1959	1/2	No Services
1959-1962	3	Thomas Barranger (d. 1962)
1962-1963	1/4	James D. Knicely (d. 1963)
1963-1963	1/4	Ellsworth Alexander St. John
1963-1966	3	Ray Brown (Became Dean)
1965-1967	1 1/2	Ellsworth Alexander St. John & Donald Mackay (Deacon)
1967-1975	8	Ernest Neckerman
1975-1976	2	Michael Jenkins, Paul Taylor, Arnold Carlson
1976-1978	2	Herbert Buckley
1978-1984	6	Richard Kirchoffer
1985-1986	1 1/2	Wendell Phillips
1986-1992	2 1/2	Kathy Cooper
1992-1993	1 1/4	6 Supply +Lay Leaders
1993-1996	3	Gordon Temple
1996-1998	2	Wallace Caldwell
1998-1999	2	9 Supply + Lay Leaders
1999-2001	1 1/4	Gordon Temple (Interim)
2001-2004	3	Franklin Johnson
2004-2019	15	Bradley Wirth
2019-		

Mission

Parish

In the years following these deaths, the Lake Missoula Clericus was formed, which continues to this day providing a strong support for the priests in the northwestern part of the state from Missoula to the Canadian border. The group meets monthly and not only provides support for the members, it recently offered policy to the Diocese. Additionally each year the Clericus develops a Lenten coupon book that is associated with giving in thankfulness for blessings.

Building Long-term Relationships

Even though many of the vicars' and rector's tenures were short-term (less than 2 years), long-term relationships existed. For example, Herbert Buckley (1976-1978) returned to serve as a supply priest years later. Richard Kirchhoffer (1978-1984) and his wife continued with the church after his tenure was over. He was on the vestry in 1993 when the Church appealed to the Diocese for parish status. Kirchhoffer and his wife remained in Whitefish as active members of All Saints' until his death in 2011.

In 1998-1999 the vestry realized they were facing an opening so rather than languish with uncertain coverage, they banded together and issued calls to all the priests and bishops they knew across the US. They were blessed with supply work from 9 priests and 2 bishops, several of whom had served before. One of the supply priests, Gordon Temple, who had served 1993-1996, agreed to serve as an interim from 1999-2001. Franklin Johnson was priest-in-charge 2001-2004 and continues his relationship with the Parish through friendships and supply work. In 2004 Bradley Wirth arrived as an interim but settled in to stay, serving from 2004 to 2019. Wirth's tenure is the longest in the Parishes' history. Following his retirement in 2019, Wirth continues in the All Saints's tradition of maintaining relationships through his Rector Emeritus status. During the current search, we have supply priests whom we know to cover services until a new priest is found.

Gaining Independence

As the 20th century drew toward a close, the population growth continued in the northern Flathead region and Holy Nativity and St. Matthew's marched forward. The two churches together envisioned taking on parish status in order to be able to make predictable plans for growth and strengthening the community. In 1993 (pop ~ 7,500), the two congregations jointly petitioned the Diocese for independent parish status with permission to call their own priest. It was a tumultuous time in the Diocese due to a crisis with the then Bishop's disclosure of an inappropriate sexual relationship prior to his arrival in Montana. Even amid the politics, diocesan leaders praised Holy Nativity and St. Matthews for their "lack of rankor" and after a protracted investigation granted them parish status.

Clearly, independence settled in well. The now officially yoked parishes called Gordon Temple as priest. He served three years and then returned after Wallace Caldwell for another two years. Following Temple's second stint, Franklin Johnson served three years. He was well known for his Bible Study classes and his wife, Sally, was popular with the children for her "Teddy Bear Tea Parties." Under Wirth's tenure, the two congregations merged into one parish and now is the fourth largest parish in the diocese.

The Move to Conn Road

In 2005 (pop ~9,100), frustrated by aging buildings that also were hemmed in by other buildings, the vestries (with diocesan permission) decided to sell St. Matthew's building and the rectory at Holy Nativity. The Holy Nativity church building and Memorial (parish) Hall were slated for a move to a new location. In 2006, a 10-acre lot halfway between Whitefish and Columbia Falls and was purchased for \$400,000.

On March 11, 2007 Holy Nativity and Memorial Hall were moved to the Conn Road property. The move did not go easily. There were delays in getting well and septic approval. Undaunted, the community proceeded to pave the parking lot, landscape the grounds, install sidewalks and railings, and provide new lighting in the

sanctuary. Eventually the well and septic were approved and the first service was held. In 2008 a 600-square foot addition was added to Memorial Hall to support classroom space and an additional accessible bathroom.

In 2007 the rectory at Holy Nativity sold for \$15,000 with the stipulation that the buyer remove the building and backfill the foundation. In 2008 St. Matthew's sold to the Boys and Girls Club of Columbia Falls, netting \$122,174. The proceeds from the sale of the two properties were expected to offset the cost of the new campus. Coordinating the move to a new location between the parishes was fraught with problems including the need to take an unplanned loan.

Building costs were unexpectedly high, the septic system was delayed, environmental toxins from a nearby business were found at our Whitefish site, and the move spanned the highs and lows of the 2008 Great Recession. Despite these setbacks, the Parish endured, the land was finally sold, and the \$650,000 loan was retired in 2015.

In 2017 (pop. 13,585) a plan was developed to expand the worship space to finally accommodate the two congregations and the new people who had joined. The funds needed for the expansion were easily raised in 2018 and construction will commence in 2019. The plans include two future additions to accommodate growth of the church and the projected population of 15,600 people the the two towns in 2030.

Image 5: View from Vestibule of Church



Our Home



Image 6: Above, Going to the Sun Road, GNP,
Below, Map of Northern Valley



All Saints' Episcopal Church, Columbia Falls / Whitefish, Montana

Population Demographics

Not all towns in our area have been included in past census counts. Combining census and other data, the population of the Northern Flathead County is approximately 15,446 for Whitefish, Columbia Falls, Hungry Horse, Martin City, West Glacier, Polebridge, Apgar, and Olney. The Northern Flathead Valley population is growing much faster than the county, Montana, or the U.S. from 2010 to 2018. In particular, the Northern Flathead Valley, represented here by Columbia Falls City and Whitefish City, are growing more rapidly than the Valley as a whole (18.4% and 23.1% respectively) as compared to Flathead County at 12.3%, Montana at 7.4% and the nation at 6%.

Age & Race

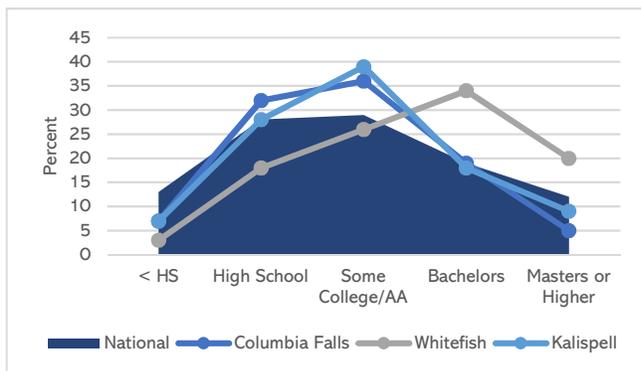
There are fewer persons under age 18 in Columbia Falls (20%) or Whitefish (16%) compared to Montana (22%) or nationally (22%). People over 65 are greater in number in Whitefish and Columbia Falls (18%) than nationally (16%) but lower than the state (19%).

The population is not racially or linguistically diverse.

Educational Attainment

Our area educational attainment exceeds the national average. Columbia Falls and Kalispell exceed the national average for some college or Associates of Arts degrees. More than half (53.4%) of Whitefish residents have at least a bachelor's degree, one third or which are in science, agriculture or technology.

Figure 3: Educational Attainment of Residents



Computers and Internet Access

Google named Whitefish the Digital Capital of Montana in 2013. Computer ownership and broadband subscriptions exceed the national average in Whitefish homes with a computer present in 89% of homes, compared 86% nationally, with broadband subscriptions at 87% compared to 76% nationally.

Employment

The unemployment rates compare similarly to the state and national rates (CF, 3.6%; WF 3.8%, MT 3.8%, US 3.7%). However, the labor-force participation is higher in both Columbia Falls (66.5%) and Whitefish (68.3%) than it is in Montana (63.1%) and the US (62.9%). The labor force participation is higher in both Columbia Falls and Whitefish than it is nationally.

Median Household Income

Median household income is higher at the County (\$51,410) level than Columbia Falls (\$44,247) or Whitefish (\$49,870) but per capita income is highest in Whitefish (\$36,666 vs \$28,379).

Veterans

There are more veterans when compared to national figures rates of service (6.6%). Columbia Falls is the highest at 11.9%, exceeding Montana's rate of 11.4% that is the highest rate of service of any state in the nation. Whitefish is above the national rate but below the Montana rate at 10.6%. The majority of veterans served in Viet Nam. There is a Veteran's home in Columbia Falls.

Disabilities and Health Insurance

There are fewer people with disabilities (.41% WF, .61% CF) than the state (.94) or nationally (.87). Additionally, more people have health insurance (92% WF, .91% CF; 90% MT and US). This may reflect the popularity of the area for retirement among active seniors who are eligible for Medicare.

Poverty

Poverty is at or below the national (12.3%) and state (12.5%) average in Whitefish (10.4%) and Columbia Falls (12.5%). The towns to the west and east of us have higher rates of poverty largely attributable to the number of older women living alone. Few people

qualified for company pensions and most are living on widow social security or veteran's benefits. Even with higher rates of poverty, the rate of homeownership far exceeds the national average (79% compared to 64%).

Cost of Living

The cost of living in the area is about 10% above the national average, largely because of housing. A \$50,000 income in the Northern Flathead Valley is equivalent to \$42,000 nationally.

Figure 4: Cost of Living Comparison

	Upper Valley, MT (CF/WF)	National
Overall Index	110.75	100
Food & Groceries	106.8	100
Housing (Homeowner)	154.7	100
Median Home Cost	\$ 289,350	\$ 216,000
Utilities	78.775	100
Transportation	77.4	100
Health	95.1	100
Miscellaneous	100.9	100
Value \$50K Income CF/WF	\$ 50,000	\$ 42,000

In addition to higher housing costs, food is about 7% higher than the national average. One food basket item that is considerably higher per pound than the national average is coffee. While there are no definitive data on market share, one possible explanation is that we spend more to support our local coffee

roaster, Montana Coffee Traders.

One way of controlling food cost and quality is through gardening and putting food by, something many parishioners do.

Transportation and utilities are notably lower. Healthcare costs are 5% less than the national average.

Housing Cost

Housing is higher than the national average but less than similar communities. As the following figure shows, the value of living in the area compares well to other areas where there are similar recreational activities and to most urban areas.

There is an increased interest in affordable housing, particularly in Whitefish where median housing costs are the highest (\$321,000 vs \$257,700 in Columbia Falls). The rapid growth of the area (Columbia Falls City 18.4% and Whitefish City, 23.1% 2010-2019) along with the general affluence of a large sector of purchasers has pushed the market toward building more expensive houses. The city governments as well as concerned citizens are stepping up to address housing options.

Owner occupied housing is higher in the County (72%) than in Columbia Falls, Whitefish, Montana or the U.S. Whitefish housing costs are higher when compared to the County, Columbia Falls, Montana or the U.S. The average household size is larger in the County (2.51 persons) than Columbia Falls (2.16) or Whitefish (2.11).

Figure 5: Median Home Value and Income



Travel to the Area

While located 130 miles from the nearest Interstate (I-90, Missoula), the Northern Valley is easily assessable by air (Glacier National Park International airport) and by rail (Whitefish Depot served by Amtrak).

Travel by Automobile

From the south or north, follow U.S. Highway 93. From the east and west, we are accessible by US Highway 2, known as the Hi-Line.

Glacier Park International Airport

GPI, with its mystifying airport code of FCA,⁵ is located five miles to the south of the church, halfway between Columbia Falls and Whitefish. GPI is the fourth busiest airport in Montana with a total of 612,607 on/off boardings in 2018, a 13.6% increase from 2017.

Image 7: Flying into GPI Airport



The airport is serviced by Delta/Sky West, United Airlines, Alaska Airlines, American Airlines and Allegiant. Year-round direct flights travel to Seattle, Salt Lake City, Minneapolis/St Paul, Las Vegas and Denver. Seasonal flights go to Portland, San Francisco,

Oakland, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, Dallas and Phoenix/Mesa. GPI is Montana's fastest growing airport with ridership increasing by 50% between 2013 and 2018. The airport can meet its monthly off-season capacity of 32,000 passengers but is expanding to meet its peak-season passenger load of 92,000 passengers.⁶

Whitefish Station Train Travel

The [Amtrak Empire Builder](#) passes through Whitefish twice per day en route between Chicago and Portland/Seattle.

Bus

The Greyhound Bus travels daily to Whitefish Depot.

By Vehicle From Canada

Travel from the northeast around the border of Glacier National Park into Columbia Falls (e.g. Del Bonita, Caroway or Coutts/Sweetgrass stations). Or from the West (British Columbia) through Roosville station, which is on Highway 93.

Recreational Activities

We are known for our recreational activities including Whitefish Ski Mountain, Whitefish Lake, and Glacier National Park. There are opportunities for horseback riding, rafting, winter snowmobiling, camping, hiking and world-class fishing.

Big Sky Water Park

A short distance across the Flathead River from downtown Columbia Falls is the [Big Sky Water Park](#) with its numerous water slides, miniature golf, and other family-oriented activities.

Glacier National Park

With over 700 miles of trails, [Glacier National Park](#) is a hiker's paradise. Glacier is filled with pristine forests, alpine meadows, rugged mountains, and spectacular lakes. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built the Going-to-the-Sun Road so everyone can experience alpine views regardless of physical ability.

Golf and Disk (Frisbee) Golf

In addition to the Winter Golf and informal Frisbee Golf course on the All Saints' Episcopal Church property, there are 4 [Disk Golf courses](#) located in the area. These include [Whitefish Assembly of God](#) church (9 holes), [Lawrence Park](#) (Kalispell, 18 holes), [Buffalo Bob's Family Entertainment Center](#) (WF, 18 holes) and the championship, 27 hole course at [Smith Lake](#), home of the PDGA C-Tier Hellroaring Open.

If you prefer your golf with a ball rather than a disk, there are 13 courses open to public play and 2 private courses in [Northwest Montana](#). Ten of the courses are less than 20 miles from the Church. Meadow Lake Golf Resort (CF, 18-holes), Whitefish Lake Golf Course (WF, 36 holes), Northern Pines, (Kalispell, 18-holes), and Glacier View Golf Course (West Glacier, 18-holes) are the four closest to the Church.

Figure 6: Golfing in the Area



Izaak Walton Inn

On the southern border of Glacier National Park in the historic [Izaak Walton Inn](#). Located about 45 miles east of Columbia Falls in the small community of Essex on U.S. Highway 2, the inn is a stop on the Empire Builder train. It is well-known for its fine dining, lodging, and outdoor recreational activities including snowshoeing and X-Country skiing in winter with hiking and fishing in the summer.

Image 8: Glacier National Park



North Fork Road

Columbia Falls provides the starting point for exploring the North Fork Road with its access points to the western entrances to Glacier Park. It's also the road to Polebridge, a self-contained small community near the banks of the North Fork of the Flathead River. Polebridge is the home of the [Polebridge Mercantile and Bakery](#) an old-style historic general store. The road itself is a journey—it's 35 miles from Columbia Falls to Polebridge and most of it is a maintained gravel road. It's worth the trip for the scenic views and the access to both Flathead National Forest and Glacier Park National Park recreation.

River's Edge Park

One of the hidden gems in Columbia Falls is the [River's Edge Park](#), a 27-acre city park with 900 feet of frontage on the Flathead River. It includes scenic trails, a community fishing pond, and a community garden.

Whitefish Mountain Resort

Skiing

In 2017 and again in 2018, [Whitefish Mountain](#) was ranked in the top 10 of the best overall resorts in the West among *Ski Magazine's* annual reader rankings and was one of *Ski Magazine's* 2019 "Resorts of the Year" for overall satisfaction.⁷ With an average annual snowfall of 300 inches and over 3,000 acres of terrain, there is plenty of space. A total of 14 lifts serve 105 trails with a vertical drop of 2,353 feet. The variety is staggering from Hellfire Run (3.3 miles long) to vast

wide open space, an agility park, a small/shy dog area and a dog-wash at the entrance.

Community Foundations

There are multiple non-profits focused on enriching the local community in the Flathead Valley. Some, like the [Alpine Theater Project](#) and the [Whitefish Legacy Partners](#), are focused on a specific benefit and others on general benefits. [The Whitefish Community Foundation](#) manages over \$28 million in assets. The Great Fish Community Challenge, is a collaborative event that has during the past three years raised over \$4.5 million in just to benefit local nonprofits. WCF helps donors give more effectively through their Donor Advised Fund Program. The focus on sustainability for nonprofits with their Permanent Endowment Program.

Arts & Events

Events

[Winter Carnival](#) (Whitefish) This 60 years old winter festival is spread weekends of January and February.

Image 10: Ski Jouring at Winter Carnival



[Cabin Fever Days](#) (Martin City) has been held in February for over 40 years.

[Family Forestry Expo](#) (Trumbull Creek Educational Forest) This weeklong event is held in the Haskall Basin, just up the road from the Church, half-way between Columbia Falls and Whitefish. It is celebrating its 30th year in 2019.

[Heritage Days](#) (Columbia Falls) is held each July to celebrate the town's history and heritage.

Farmers Markets (Columbia Falls, Thursday evenings and Whitefish Tuesday evenings). See the Farm to Table section of this profile.

[Canyon Community Dinners](#) (Hungry Horse). These festive dinners are held one Thursday each month in the Hungry Horse School.

[Feast the Fish](#) (Whitefish) This festival takes place in May culminating in the famous "Battle of the Burger" competition.

[The Event at Rebecca Farm](#) (Kalispell). The annual equine show at Rebecca Farm includes competitions in dressage, cross-country and show jumping.

[Huckleberry Days Arts Festival](#) (Whitefish) takes place in August and features three days of art, all things huckleberry, music, food completions and other festivities.

[Octoberfest](#) (Whitefish). For two fall weekends feast on German foods, enjoy Bierstube food and music and cheer competitors on at log-sawing competitions.

Night of Lights Parade (Columbia Falls). This parade is held in the downtown to kick off the Christmas festival season.

Music, Theatre & Literature

[Whitefish Theatre Company](#)

WTC began in 1978, hired a full-time artistic director in 1998 and opened I.A. O'Shaughnessy Center 1998. They mount 12 to 15 productions per year. It is a place for young and old to see a good play, listen to fine music, view local artwork, discuss a burning issue, or gather for a meeting

Image 11: O'Shaughnessy Center



[Alpine Theater Project](#)

The Alpine Theater Project was founded in 2004 by three Broadway veterans, Betsi Morrison (Broadway's *The Sound of Music*), Luke Walrath (Broadway's *42nd Street*), and David Ackroyd (Broadway's *Children of a Lesser God*). Frommer's Budget Travel Magazine, named ATP as one of the attractions that make Whitefish, Montana "One of the Top 10 Coolest Small Towns in America."

[Under the Big Sky Music Festival](#) (Whitefish) is a summer, outdoor music festival.

[Festival Amadeus](#) (Whitefish). This annual music festival spans two weekends and the week between with live opera, chamber and orchestral music.

[Whitefish Community Library](#) (Whitefish) has all of the things you expect from a library like books and children's story hours and a lot that you don't expect. For example, library staff take tots on hikes on the Whitefish Trails to help them learn about the critters they might meet there.

Team Sports

Image 12: Waveriders Swim Club



The [Whitefish Adult Hockey Association](#) sponsors 35 adult hockey leagues year round.

The [Stumptown Ice Den](#) is open year-round and hosts adult and youth hockey, public skating and figure skating.

Whitefish has been home to a baseball team since 1960. The [Glacier Twins](#) captured the Western Division Championship in 2018.

The [Wave Aquatic and Fitness Center](#), a non-profit, community based center, includes swimming activities for tots to seniors including competitive swimming.

Farm to Table

Farmers Markets

Both Columbia Falls and Whitefish have seasonal farmers markets that include food sales and other activities. The [Columbia Falls Farmers Market](#) is on Thursday evenings mid-May through September. The [Whitefish Farmers Market](#) is on Tuesday night. Both are free to attend and include food trucks, live music, crafts and Made in Montana vendors and activities.

Community Supported Agriculture

There are at least eight [CSAs](#) in the Upper Valley. Most have drop offs at the Whitefish and Columbia Falls Farmers markets. You can also pick up shares at the farms or at other pickup locations including Kalispell and West Glacier. Most of the CSAs grow certified organic produce. Shares typically cost \$500 to \$600 per share for a 20-25 week season. Some include a winter share which is typically a large supply of root vegetables delivered in the fall. Some CSAs have arrangements for discounts on meat and eggs.

Dairy & Eggs

[Half-Moon Egg Farm](#) is located in Columbia Falls. Their eggs are available at farmers markets and in some area grocery stores. [Kalispell Kreamery](#): From Moo to You, is well known throughout the Valley. Located just south of Whitefish, Headstrom Dairy sells their cows' milk so they can take care of the cows. Formerly part of a dairy cooperative, when they were notified that it was too expensive to pick up their milk, the family decided to start a creamery. Every cow at Kalispell Kreamery was born at Kalispell Kreamery.

Image 13: Rainbow over Kalispell Kreamery



Meat and Fish

Local meat is available in several places in the Upper Valley. You can visit the actual farm and the butcher shop at [Farm to Market Pork & Beef](#) where they butcher weekly to order or you can purchase from their store. Columbia Falls is home to the [Montana Jerky Company](#) and the [Perfect Cuts Specialty Meat Shop](#). While the fish are imported from the coasts, just a hop and a skip from the Church is the [Flathead Fish and Seafood Company](#). In the lower Valley is the [Native Fish Keepers, Inc.](#), of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The project not only provides healthy, fresh fish for consumption, by reducing the load of non-native trout and whitefish in the Flathead Lake, the Tribes are working to provide better habitat for native trout.

Education

[Flathead Valley Community](#)

[College](#)

FVCC is located on the northern end of Kalispell, just 12 miles from the Church. It is a two-year college that awards the Associates degree and technical programs in over 50 fields. Bachelors degrees are possible through partnerships with Montana colleges. FVCC offers customized workforce training and enriching and affordable non-credit classes for all ages. The *Running Start* program for eligible area high school students helps them start on their college education while saving a significant amount of money on tuition. Area high-school students who graduate in the top 10% of their class can receive two semesters of free tuition. Students who have completed 30 credits (one year) and are in the top 10% at FVCC can also receive two semesters of tuition waivers. In the past 18 months FVCC raised \$18M in support of the school.

[Elementary and High Schools in Flathead County](#)

There are a total of 16,473 students enrolled in public (14,493) and private (4,761 including 306 home schools) schools in Flathead county. There are public, Montessori, Christian, Lutheran and Catholic and therapy-related residential schools in the area. Based on grades from Niche, all of the schools are above

average, earning ratings from a low of B- to a high of A. As with all schools, the ratings don't tell the tale. Schools in the Upper Valley afford opportunities that many schools don't. For example, the Whitefish School District is home to the [Center for Sustainability and Entrepreneurship](#), a net-zero facility, which provides educational experiences in energy, agriculture, forestry, natural resources and entrepreneurship.

Image 14: Center for Sustainability and Entrepreneurship



[State, National and Olympic Champions](#)

[Speech and Debate](#)

In 2019, the 13-year state Class AA championship reign of Columbia Falls Speech and Debate almost came to a close until a scoring error was discovered, and their reign continues. Their rival? Whitefish. And the Class A state champion High School? Kalispell. Clearly Speech and Debate is well appreciated in Flathead County.

[Skiing & Snowboarding](#)

Education continues outside of the classroom. The Flathead Valley Ski Education Foundation is a Valley-wide nonprofit dedicated to the promotion of athletic, academic and personal excellence through competitive skiing. Whitefish has been home to three Olympians including Tommy Moe (US Men's Ski Team, 1994), Hillary Lindh (US Woman's Ski Team 1988, 1992 1996), and Maggie Voisin who was the youngest person ever to be on the US Ski team at age 15 (US Ski & Snowboard Teams, 2014 and 2018). Hillary Lindh is currently a coach with the FVSEF.

Dallas Long, a member of All Saints' is our summer Olympian (US Men's Track and Field, 1960, 1964).

Soccer is popular in our area. The Whitefish High Boys team were Class AA champions in 2018. [The Montana Flathead Rapids](#) emerged from a group of former professional and college soccer players who wanted to keep playing. They have programs at the Smith Fields Complex in Whitefish and three locations in Columbia Falls. The Rapids coach over 1200 players and run programs for players aged 4 to 104.

Project Whitefish Kids was originally organized to develop the [Smith Fields Youth Sports Complex](#) and continues with other projects for area youth.

Medical Care

The Flathead Valley is a destination medical location with two hospitals and over 400 physicians. People come to the area for care, traveling from NW Montana, Canada, and the U.S.. The medical spa industry and our beautiful area attract people who want to recover from. Below is information about just a few of our medical facilities.

Alpine Family Medicine (CF)

[Alpine Family Medicine](#) is a comprehensive family medicine clinic that has highly rated family practice staff.

Shepherds Hand (WF)

[Shepherd's Hand](#) is a nonprofit, free clinic that is open every Monday night. A free community meal is served at 5:30 (all are welcomed) and medical services begin after the meal. The clinic includes medical and acute dental care across a spectrum of medical concerns.

Glacier Medical Associates

(WF) [Glacier Medical Associates](#) provides comprehensive primary and urgent healthcare for people of all ages. Other services include pediatric medicine, behavioral health, integrative wellness and chiropractic services. There is also an onsite laboratory, x-ray, ultrasound, as well as a medical spa.

Kalispell Regional Medical Center

[KRMCC](#) is rated 9% higher than the national average of hospitals and is recognized for surgery excellence in spine and orthopedic surgery.¹⁰ Some of their specialized programs include:

- A comprehensive cancer program, accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer
- A wide range of orthopedic services
- A Neuroscience and Spine Institute
- A gynecological surgery program including advanced laparoscopic and robotic procedures
- A comprehensive cardiovascular program including a cardiac catheterization lab, electrophysiology and heart surgery
- A Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

North Valley Hospital (WF)

[North Valley Hospital](#) is known locally as the "resort hospital" because it has a feel more like a resort hotel than a hospital. But don't let the beautiful views and comfortable family accommodations fool you, NV is a real hospital where patients are first. Healthgrades awarded North Valley their top patient experience award in 2019.¹¹ There is a da Vinci robotic surgical center at North Valley. There is a sliding scale surgical discount program for those in need.

Montana Center for Laser Dentistry

[The Montana Center for Laser Dentistry](#) in collaboration with the Arizona Center for Laser Dentistry, discovered and patented the use of lasers to remove biofilm from root canal systems. In 2003 the World Congress of Minimally Invasive Dentistry recognized them for their innovative work. Today lasers are integrated across the practice from dental hygiene to surgery.

Veterinary Care

There are 10 licensed veterinarians in Columbia Falls and 11 in Whitefish who specialize in large or small animals. [Glacier Animal Hospital](#) (CF) provides routine small animal care as well as emergency care for people traveling in the area. [Whitefish Animal Hospital](#) is a large, AAHA accredited animal hospital. They offer integrative and alternative medicine services and are a referral center for animal orthopedic medicine. They support the WAG dog park with free toenail clipping on Wednesday and the Mooch Fund for adoptions. Their clinic is fully handicap accessible and they offer discounts for working service animals.

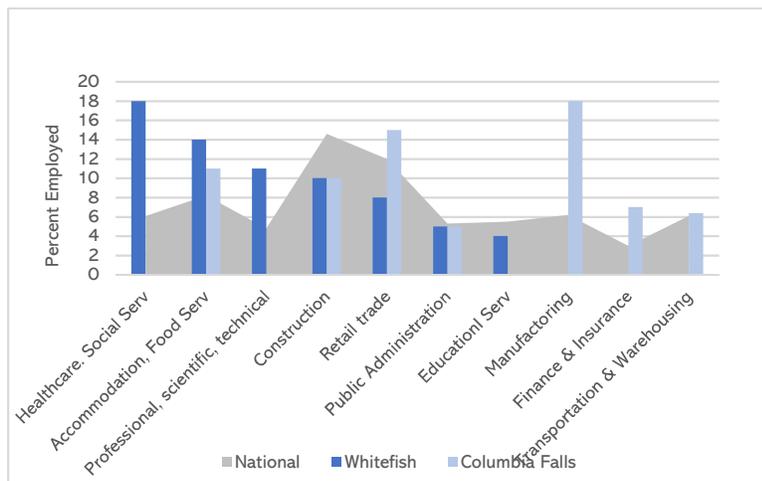
Senior Living

The Northern Flathead Valley is home to multiple independent living, assisted living, memory care, and nursing homes. The largest of these is [The Springs](#) in Whitefish that offers independent and assisted living along with memory care. The [Montana State Veterans Home](#) is located in Columbia Falls. [Beehive Homes in Columbia Falls](#) (and in [Kalispell memory care](#)) provides small, home-like living facilities. Mountain Homes is a rent-assisted independent living apartment in Whitefish. Genesis Healthcare operates a nursing home level of care facility in Whitefish. Other facilities include Hidden Meadow Memory Care and Timber Creek Village Assisted living.

Employment Opportunities

Although known primarily for its recreational opportunities, which afford a variety of paid and volunteer positions, the Flathead Valley is also home to professional opportunities with both large and small innovative businesses. Below is an incomplete list of some of our larger or more unique businesses. In general, Columbia Falls has more manufacturing and Whitefish has more Healthcare positions. On the front-line of tourism, Whitefish has more accommodation and food service positions while Columbia Falls has more retail trade.

Figure 7: Types of Employment



Communications & Technology

[Nomad Communications Solutions](#) (CF) focuses on the development of mobile communications command centers for remote connectivity in difficult situations such as wildfires and tactical operations. [Applied Technologies](#) (Kalispell) manufactures semiconductor chips and flat panels. Merlin Data Information Systems was founded in 1991 and provides solutions for finding people, businesses, and assets online. [Bullet Communications](#) specializes in wireless and satellite communications including 911 services. [NXGEN](#) provides credit card payment at point of sale. [Old Town Creative Services](#) and [Wheellie Design](#) marketing and branding with digital strategies.

Education

The largest educational employer is the [Kalispell Public School District](#) (500-1000 employees). [Whitefish School District](#) employs 200-500 people and [Columbia Falls School District](#) employs 200-500 people. [Flathead Valley Community College](#) employs 262 people.

Financial & Professional Services

[Stack Financial Management](#) (8 employees) is a federally Registered Investment Advisor (RIA) in 35 state(s). They manage \$1.2 billion and provides independent investment advisory services for 741 clients. [Glacier Bank](#) (2,525 employees) is a publicly traded regional bank founded in 2004 and headquartered in Kalispell. Its total assets are \$12.7 billion with shareholder equity at \$1.7 billion. There are two branches in WF and one in CF. [Torrent Technologies](#), (~ 100 + employees) headquartered in Kalispell, is a leader in flood insurance. [Mann Mortgage](#) (founded 1989, 200 to 500 employees) is a multistate mortgage lending company headquartered in Kalispell. [Parkside Credit Union](#) (founded 1956, 50 to 200 employees) has eight locations in NW Montana and specializes in loans.

Human Resources

[LC Staffing](#) (Kalispell, CF) LC Staffing is a state-wide company based out of the Flathead Valley. This award-winning company matches individuals with jobs in over 80 career areas.

Manufacturing and Industry

Semitool (1,000 to 5,000 employees) is a national company headquartered in Kalispell. [Converting Equipment International](#) designs and builds specialized slitter rewinders and other high speed equipment for the Label, Medical, Pharmaceutical, Nutraceutical, Fuel Cell, Solar Cell and Digital markets.

Medicine and Health

The Flathead Valley is a destination medical location with two hospitals ([Kalispell Regional Medical Center](#),

4,000 employees) and [North Valley Hospital](#) (WF, 275 employees).

Wood Products

[RBM Lumber](#) mills stock and custom wood products, including flooring and live edge wood. Weyerhaeuser (CF) is the largest employer in the CF areas. They manage forests and lumber products.

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Endnotes

We are grateful to Carl Thomas, our vestry member and treasurer for his many gifts, including his spectacular Glacier National Park photos and to Shawn Sloan, our Parish Office Administrator for her photos.

1 Many details here were found from the working notes of Leif Peterson's 2009 draft manuscript "A History of Holy Nativity & St. Matthew's Churches and How They Became All Saints' Episcopal Church." We are grateful for his details and the contribution they made.

2 Hamilton, E.I., Henderson, V. & Saunders, N. (1959). A History of Holy Nativity Episcopal Church, Whitefish, MT. Unpublished manuscript.

3 No Author. (Oct. 28, 1962). Priest found dead. *The Living Church*, Vol 145.

4 No Author. (Feb 17, 1963). Priest and wife killed. *The Living Church*, Vol 146.

5 FCA or KFCA as it was originally known, stood for Kalispell Flathead County Airport. Curiously, there is also a Flathead County Airport but there are no commercial passenger flights to that airport.

6 State of Montana Department of Transportation Montana Aeronautics Division. (2018). Air Carrier/Commuter Flights and Passengers. Author. Retrieved July 8, 2019

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