

CENTER FOR FAMILY SERVICES

Adoption Services

11 East Mount Royal Avenue, 3rd Floor

Baltimore, MD 21202-2753

(410) 659-4050 * Fax (410) 659-4060

Dear Prospective Adoptive Family:

We are glad that you contacted us to learn more about the many ways to build your family by adoption. We feel honored to assist you in exploring adoption. Catholic Charities is a private, non-profit child placement agency with a long history of experience in providing both domestic and international adoption services.

Through our international adoption services, we are currently placing infants and children of all ages who are from Korea, Philippines, China, India, Ethiopia, Russia and Eastern Europe. We can assist you to adopt a child from another country on a case-by-case basis. Through our domestic adoption services, we place infants who are usually under six months of age.

Because of the wide range of choices and the complexity of adoption today, we offer monthly information meetings, where you can learn about the children available for adoption, time frames, costs, and unique aspects of raising adopted children. This meeting will help you better understand the array of options and select the program that is best for your family. Attendance at this meeting is necessary before you apply to Catholic Charities.

Please feel free to call us at 410-659-4050 with any further questions or visit our website at: www.cc-adoptions.org . We have a caring, experienced, and professional staff who can help you. We look forward to meeting you and helping you to explore building your family through adoption.

Sincerely yours,

The Adoption Staff

Cover Letter

Rev. 11/08



Catholic Charities

Resource & Training *Treatment Foster Care * Pregnancy, Parenting and Adoption Services * International Adoption Services



Accredited by the Council on Accreditation

Frequently Asked Questions



What sets us apart is the extensive support & guidance offered by our experienced adoption professionals through all phases of the adoption process.



The Child and Family Division of Catholic Charities has professional staff, high standards of excellence and continuous quality improvement practices.

**Catholic Charities
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Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Phone: 410.659.4050

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E-mail: families@cc-md.org

WHY SHOULD WE CHOOSE CATHOLIC CHARITIES?

What sets Catholic Charities' adoption services apart is our experience, excellence, and reputation. Catholic Charities has a staff of caring professionals, including some who are adoptive parents, with over 100 combined years of adoption experience. We have placed approximately 3900 children born in the U.S. since our services began in 1943, and 3000 children born in other countries, since 1979. We are accredited by the Council on Accreditation for Family and Children's Services, (COA) and were one of the first agencies to receive Hague Accreditation in 2008. Hague Accreditation attests that Catholic Charities is in substantial compliance with the Hague Convention, an international treaty created to ensure that intercountry adoptions are in the best interests of children. We are well known for our excellent adoptive parent preparation and our ongoing support throughout the process.

WHO ARE THE CHILDREN?

Catholic Charities provides both domestic and international adoption placement services. Through international adoption services, we place infants, toddlers, older children, and biological sibling groups. These children include healthy children and those with special needs who are identified by cooperating agencies overseas. These children are primarily from Korea, the Philippines, China, India, Ethiopia and Russia who have become legally free for adoption because their birth parents are unable to care for them. Through our domestic adoption services, the children placed are primarily Caucasian, African American, and biracial infants, including both healthy infants and those with risk factors in their background or other special needs. In most cases, childless applicants may not specify the gender of their prospective adopted child. The exception is China, where nearly all the healthy children needing families are girls. If adoptive applicants have a child of one gender, they may specify the opposite gender for adoption for some countries. If they have both a boy and a girl, they may not specify a girl for adoption. Due to the unique nature of domestic adoption, gender preferences are generally not possible to honor.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO ADOPT?

Through our international adoption services, placements are currently made within one to two years from the completion of the home study, depending on the country. The time frame for placement through our domestic adoption services is difficult to predict. There is no waiting list where prospective families "work their way to the top." Because birthparents are involved in selecting the adoptive parents for their children, waiting times vary. In our experience, most birthparents select a family who reflects the race and/or ethnic background of their child. Catholic Charities embraces this approach because of the benefits for all parties in the adoption. We encourage prospective adoptive parents to learn more about this at our regular information meetings and through recommended readings.

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DO WE HAVE TO BE CATHOLIC?

Catholic Charities has no religious requirements. However, some international sources do have religious requirements.

DO I HAVE TO BE MARRIED?

There are some international programs which accept single applicants. All couples must be married for a minimum of three years at the time of the application. Our experience in domestic adoption is that most birthparents prefer married couples and are choosing adoption, among other reasons, so that their child can have the benefit of two parents. However, single applicants are considered on a case by case basis.

WHAT ARE THE AGE REQUIREMENTS?

Catholic Charities' minimum age for adoptive parents is 25. For international adoption, the agency prefers that clients be under 50 years old for most children. International sources may have more restrictive requirements and older parents might only be considered for an older child. The maximum recommended age for domestic adoption services through the agency is 45.

CAN WE PURSUE INFERTILITY TREATMENT AS WELL AS ADOPTION?

We know that many families begin to learn about adoption while still involved in infertility treatment. However, we believe that couples need to discontinue infertility treatment before proceeding with the adoption process. Our goal is to ensure total commitment to adoption and full acceptance of the adopted child. The emotional strain of infertility treatments may interfere with the couple's ability to commit to the adoption process. Due to the limited number of children available through domestic adoption services, only couples who have experienced infertility will be accepted. Childless couples or those with only one other child are eligible to work with this program. However, this requirement does not apply to those adopting internationally, and those adopting minority children or children with special needs.

CAN I ADOPT IF I HAVE A PREVIOUS ARREST?

Some criminal histories will prevent applicants from adopting. These include serious crimes such as murder, kidnapping, and crimes against children. Other offenses will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and our decision will take into consideration when the offense occurred, mitigating circumstances, and current functioning. All offences, including arrests that were not prosecuted, juvenile records, and expunged records, must be disclosed.

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CAN WE ADOPT IF WE HAVE HAD A SERIOUS ILLNESS OR MENTAL HEALTH CONCERN?

Applicants must be in good physical and mental health with normal life expectancies. Catholic Charities requires additional documentation for applicants with significant medical conditions, psychiatric treatment, individual, and/or marital counseling, past or present. If drug/alcohol or other addictions/dependencies have been a problem, at least three consecutive years of recovery must be demonstrated in addition to participation in either a specialized addictions treatment program and/or a Twelve Step program. Depending on the circumstances, Catholic Charities may also request an additional evaluation by appropriate specialists. The information provided from these sources will assist the agency in making a complete assessment.

CAN WE PURSUE MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF ADOPTION AT A TIME?

Upon beginning the adoption process with Catholic Charities, clients are required to work exclusively with our agency and withdraw their applications from other adoption agencies. Through the international adoption services, clients usually work with only one international source at a time. The home study in all adoptions is prepared for the specific type of adoption – i.e. domestic or international -and is country specific in content. However, approved parents may decide to move between agency programs after a period of time or under certain circumstances.

HOW MUCH PARENTAL LEAVE IS EXPECTED AFTER PLACEMENT?

Our policy on parental leave has evolved through the years of witnessing the successful bonding and attachment in families when parents invest extended time and attention to the needs of their newly adopted child. Therefore, we require that one parent take at least a three month maternity/paternity leave following placement. This may be shared by both parents in monthly or six week increments and includes travel time when required. We prefer a longer parental leave for families adopting children over the age of 12 months or with special medical needs. Older children and those with special needs often experience a more complex and challenging adjustment, and they usually need more time before entering substitute care.

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SPECIAL ISSUES:

- **Discipline and Corporal Punishment:** Catholic Charities adheres to the policy on physical punishment mandated by the Maryland Department of Human Resources, the agency which licenses private child placing agencies. DHR has articulated a clear policy against the use of corporal punishment of foster and adopted children (available on request). Please be aware that as adoptive parents, you must make a sincere and genuine commitment to developing a disciplinary policy which does not involve corporal punishment.
- If you are interested in adopting domestically, and do not meet our agency's age, infertility and size of family guidelines, you may be interested in learning more about our "Identified Adoption" services.

HOW DO I/WE GET STARTED?

Attend one of our Pre-Adoption Information Meetings (AIM). This information-packed session provides you with an in depth review of the adoption process, and of the adoption options that are available to you. The session dates and registration form are available at: <http://www.cc-adoptions.org/orientation-sessions.html>

Some comments from past participants in our sessions:

- "Great presentation! One of the best we've seen (of five!)"
- "I was extremely impressed with the knowledge base, communication, and presentation skills of all the social work professionals."
- "Nicely paced....packed with information, emotional reinforcement, and education."
- "Very professional and informative!"

The Adoption Process



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ADOPTION INFORMATION MEETING (AIM)

In order to begin the adoption process with Catholic Charities, you need to attend our adoption information meeting. Applications will be available at the conclusion of the meeting.

APPLICATION

The staff will review your application, and, if necessary, will explore any significant background issues (prior arrests, physical or mental health issues, abuse/neglect, addictions). You will then be matched with your social worker, who will guide you through your adoption journey. She will send you an outline to help you write a brief autobiography. After you send in your autobiography, your social worker will contact you to schedule a preliminary interview. The preliminary interview begins the Family Assessment (home study) process.

FAMILY ASSESSMENT AND EDUCATION (HOME STUDY):

Catholic Charities has the responsibility of assessing prospective parents' suitability for adoption, and for preparing them to be the best adoptive parents possible. Our assessment and education process includes individual and couple interviews and a home visit which are scheduled on weekdays during regular working hours. These meetings help your social worker get to know you well and help you to develop a personalized adoption plan. In addition, you will attend two full weekday adoption education classes, where you will meet other prospective adoptive families and will learn about the unique issues and challenges of being an adoptive family.

SERVICES AFTER THE HOME STUDY AND BEFORE PLACEMENT:

We have found that the waiting period before your child's placement can be one of the most difficult times for you. Catholic Charities offers continuing opportunities for support, education, and contact with other waiting families and our staff. We offer an Infant and Toddler Care course for adoptive parents, a Babies and Bonding Course, and we provide a monthly support group for waiting parents, in addition to ongoing individual support from our staff.

When you receive information about a child, we can provide referrals to medical and developmental professionals to help you to interpret and evaluate the information.

Adoption Process



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POST-PLACEMENT SERVICES:

Following the placement of your child, we will provide post-placement services for six to twelve months, to help you and your child adjust to each other. Your social worker will meet with you in your home and in our office. We will also assist you to finalize your child's adoption in court, and to apply for your child's United States citizenship, if necessary.

SERVICES AFTER ADOPTION FINALIZATION (POST ADOPTION SERVICES):

Your adoption journey does not end with finalization in court. At Catholic Charities, we believe that adoption is a lifelong journey, and we are committed to providing ongoing post-adoption services for all members of the adoption circle – birthparents, adoptive parents and adopted persons – at all stages of your family's life.

These post-adoption services include annual social and cultural events for adoptive families, workshops for adoptive parents and children on topics related to the unique aspects of adoption, teen groups, brief counseling and consultation services for adoptive parents, international intermediary services, preparation of non-identifying genetic and background information for adopted persons, search, reunion and intermediary services, and ongoing support and counseling for birthparents after a plan of adoption is complete.

International Adoptions



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Since 1979, when Catholic Charities began placing children from Korea, we have placed over 2500 children from a variety of foreign countries with loving adoptive families.

Catholic Charities is careful to work only with government approved or licensed child placement agencies or representatives in the foreign countries from which we place children. We currently have child-placing agreements with agencies or representatives in Korea, and the Philippines. We also work with other U.S. based agencies that have similar agreements with child-placing sources in China, Russia, India, and Ethiopia.

In some cases Catholic Charities will assist with adoption of relative children who live in foreign countries. Applicants and the children must meet U.S. Immigration guidelines.

Prospective adoptive parents are provided pre-adoption counseling, assessment, education and training to prepare them for the unique challenges of adoptive parenting. Intensive support and guidance both individually and through our monthly support group is offered throughout the waiting period and after placement.

International Adoptions - Advantages



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THE ADVANTAGES OF WORKING WITH CATHOLIC CHARITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICES

What sets us apart is the extensive support & guidance offered by our experienced adoption professionals through all phases of the adoption process. The advantages of working with Catholic Charities' International Adoption Program include:

- Our thorough education and training for prospective parents, which is well-received by our families, helps you to prepare for adoptive parenthood
- Our ongoing support for adoptive parents throughout the process, which is offered by your social worker and through our monthly waiting parent groups, until a child is placed in the home
- Our program matches you with one social worker throughout the process who provides you with personalized services
- Prospective adoptive parents know in advance what the agency fees are and international fees are paid, on your behalf, to approved programs overseas, prior to travel
- Our knowledge and experience in providing ethical adoption services and supportive counseling to adoptive parents over many years
- Our excellent relationships with foreign adoption sources and cooperating agencies
- Our valuable resources for medical and developmental pre-placement child referral assessments
- Our commitment to the lifelong needs of those touched by adoption through ongoing post-legal adoption services for adoptive parents, adoptive families and adopted persons

Please come and learn more about this option at one of our monthly adoption information meetings. And don't hesitate to call us at 410-659-4050 to speak to one of our social workers, who can answer your questions and provide further information about international adoption at Catholic Charities.

INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION PROGRAMS

Catholic Charities has direct relationships with child placement agencies in the following countries:

KOREA – Holt Children’s Services, Seoul, Korea

Children:

Where cared for:

Average wait from approved homestudy to arrival:

Eligibility:

Infant boys and girls 8-12 months old

Foster homes

12-24 months (depending on gender requested)
(effective 8/09) - subject to change

Married couples only (3 year marriage)

Age 25–43.5 for healthy infant boys.

Age 25-42.5 for healthy infant girls.

Childless couples or those with one child for boys;

Only couples with one Korean-born adopted son may request a girl; (exceptions for Korean-American couples)

Maximum Body Mass Index of 35

PHILIPPINES – Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Quezon City, Philippines

Children:

Where cared for:

Average wait from approved homestudy to travel:

Eligibility:

Older infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers, school-aged children, some siblings groups

Orphanages (95%) Foster homes (5%)

18-24 months – (effective 8/09) - subject to change

Married couples married 3 years or longer;

Single women for children aged 7 and older

Minimum age 25 – The younger parent should be no more than 45 years older than the child to be adopted

Affinity with some Christian denomination preferred.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES WORKS WITH OTHER UNITED STATES AGENCIES TO PLACE CHILDREN FROM THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES:

CHINA

(through Holt International Children’s Services, Eugene, Oregon 541-687-2202/ www.holtintl.org and Wide Horizons for Children, Waltham, Massachusetts 781-894-5330/ www.whfc.org)

Children:

Where cared for:

Average wait from dossier registrations to travel:

Eligibility:

Older infants and toddler girls

Orphanages and/or Foster homes

3-4 years (effective 8/09) - subject to change

Married couples, at least 3-year marriage; single women at least 30 years old, up to 50. No history of mental health problems, arrests, or DUI/DWI within 10 years.

Maximum Body Mass Index of 40

CHINA’S CHILD OF PROMISE

(through Holt International Children’s Services, Eugene, Oregon. 541-687-2202 www.holtintl.org

Children:

Where cared for:

Average wait from dossier registration to travel:

Eligibility:

Older infants and toddler girls and boys with very minor medical special needs.

Orphanages and/or foster homes

6 – 9 months (effective 8/09) - subject to change

Married couples, at least 3-year marriage; at least 30 years old, up to age 55. No history of mental health problems, arrests, or DUI/DWI within 10 years.

Maximum Body Mass Index of 40.

ETHIOPIA

(through Wide Horizons for Children, Waltham, Massachusetts 781-894-5330/ www.whfc.org)

Children:

Where cared for:

Average wait from dossier to travel:

Eligibility:

Infant boys and girls, aged 6 months and older, Toddlers, preschoolers, school-aged children.

Horizon House, a small orphanage sponsored by Wide Horizons for Children.

12- 15 months (effective 8/09) - subject to change

Married couples married three years or longer, single women. Applicants must be between the ages of 25 and 55.

INDIA

(through Wide Horizons for Children, Waltham, Massachusetts 781-894-5330/ www.whfc.org and Maine Adoption Placement Services, Portland, Maine 207-775-4101/ www.mapsadopt.org)

Children:

Toddlers

Where cared for:

Orphanages, some foster care

Average wait from approved home study:

12-15 months (effective 8/09) - subject to change

Eligibility:

Married couples at least 3-year marriage

Aged 25-45

Couples of Indian descent preferred

RUSSIA & EASTERN EUROPE

(through Wide Horizons for Children, Waltham, Massachusetts 781-894-5330/ www.whfc.org and Maine Adoption Placement Services, Portland, Maine 207-775-4101/ www.mapsadopt.org)

Children:

Older infants, toddlers, preschoolers; school-aged children; boys and girls

Where cared for:

Orphanages

Average wait from approved dossier to first travel:

12-15 months until first trip (lasting 1 week), then 1-3 months until second trip (lasting 2 weeks) – (effective 8/09) - subject to change

Eligibility:

Married couples, at least 3-year marriage; Single women

Aged 25-50

OTHER AGENCIES OR FOREIGN SOURCES:

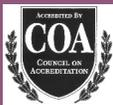
Catholic Charities also works cooperatively with other adoption agencies/sources who place children from a variety of countries. For more information about any of these sources, please call our office. We also work with families who have located their own legitimate source in any country that permits international adoption. Catholic Charities' international sources in Korea and the Philippines will not accept homestudies from other agencies and prefer that Catholic Charities conduct the homestudy directly. Please call us with any questions about this requirement.

Catholic Charities also provides home study and liaison services for families who wish to adopt relative children from overseas.

Domestic Adoptions



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Catholic Charities of Baltimore has provided pregnancy services and domestic adoption services as a licensed agency since 1947, and as part of the Church's mission in Baltimore since 1923. Adoption has evolved and changed a great deal since then. We are known in the community as a leader in providing innovative services to all those involved in adoption. These services extend well beyond the legal completion of the adoption in court. We are proud to offer comprehensive, life-long services to birthparents, adoptive parents and adoptees.

Through our Pregnancy, Parenting and Adoption Services, we provide supportive counseling to expectant parents facing unplanned pregnancies to help them make life-affirming decisions about parenting or adoption. For those choosing to parent, services are oriented toward preparing them to meet the responsibilities of rearing a child. Birthparents who make an adoption plan are encouraged to play an active role in selecting the adoptive family for their child. With the assistance of our caring staff, both adoptive parents and birthparents determine an adoption plan that is comfortable for them. Ongoing counseling is available to birthparents and their families as long as they need it. Legal and medical assistance is also provided.

Prospective adoptive parents are provided pre-adoption counseling, assessment, education and training to prepare them for the unique challenges of adoptive parenting. Intensive support and guidance both individually and through our monthly support group is offered throughout the waiting period and after placement.

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THE ADVANTAGES OF WORKING WITH CATHOLIC CHARITIES FOR DOMESTIC ADOPTION SERVICES

What sets us apart is the extensive support & guidance offered by our experienced adoption professionals through all phases of the adoption process. The advantages of working with Catholic Charities' Domestic Adoption Program include:

- Our thorough education and training for prospective parents, which is well-received by our families, helps you to prepare for adoptive parenthood
- Our ongoing support for adoptive parents throughout the process, which is offered by your social worker and through our monthly waiting parent groups, until a child is placed in the home
- Our small program size and having one social worker guide you throughout the process enables staff to know you well and provide you with personalized services
- Prospective adoptive parents know in advance what the agency fees are, and placement fees are only paid when a child is placed in your home
- Our knowledge and experience in providing ethical adoption services and supportive counseling to expectant parents/birthparents over many years
- Short-term pre-adoptive foster care for newborns available immediately after birth, while birthparents reconsider or reaffirm their adoption decision
- Intermediary services to facilitate communication between birthparents and adoptive parents
- Our compassionate professional counseling for birthparents is available for as long as it is needed
- Our commitment to the lifelong needs of those touched by adoption through ongoing post-legal adoption services for adoptive parents, adoptive families and adopted persons

We have learned that there are many unnecessary fears and misconceptions about domestic adoption today. Please come and learn more about this option at one of our monthly adoption information meetings.

DOMESTIC AGENCY FEE SCHEDULE
(Effective 7/07)

APPLICATION FEE: \$300.00

This fee is paid at the time of application and is *non-refundable*.

SERVICE FEES:

This fee schedule is based on the combined annual income.

Fees are paid in increments and refunds are made if services are not completed, based on services already provided.

COMBINED FAMILY INCOME:

	Under \$ 45,000	\$ 45,000/ \$ 59,999	\$ 60,000/ \$ 79,999	\$ 80,000/ \$ 99,999	100,000/ \$ 119,999	\$ 120,000/ \$ 139,999	\$ 140,000/ \$ 159,999	Over \$160,000
Home Study Fee (due at application interview)	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
Program Fee (due at approval)	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Placement Fee (due at placement)	\$ 4,000	\$ 5,500	\$ 8,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 14,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 16,000
<u>Total Fees</u>	<u>\$ 8,500</u>	<u>\$10,000</u>	<u>\$12,500</u>	<u>\$ 14,500</u>	<u>\$ 16,500</u>	<u>\$ 18,500</u>	<u>\$ 19,500</u>	<u>\$ 20,500</u>

The Home Study Fee covers pre-adoptive counseling, preparation, education/training and assessment services.

The Program and Placement Fees cover the operating costs of the adoption program including the waiting parents' support group; services and counseling for birthparents; intermediary services; locating birth fathers and obtaining necessary consents; guardianship expenses and other legal expenses (excluding finalization costs); interim foster care; and post-placement services.

Fees are subject to revision during the adoption process. In addition to the agency fees, occasionally birth related medical expenses may be added to the cost of the adoption.

DIRECTIONS TO CATHOLIC CHARITIES' ADOPTION OFFICE

11 E. Mt. Royal Ave., 3rd floor
 Baltimore, MD 21202
 410-659-4050

From North Baltimore County:

Take I-83 South to the St. Paul Street exit, bear left to St. Paul, not right to Mt. Royal. Go one block south on St. Paul to Preston Street. Turn right on Preston. Go one block. Turn right on Charles. Go one block. Turn right on Mt. Royal Avenue. Go ½ block to the second alley on the right (Lovegrove Alley). Turn right into Lovegrove Alley. Our parking lot is on the right. **You may park in any space that is available.**

From Washington D.C. and South:

Take I-95 North to Russell Street. The ramp will take you directly onto Russell Street in the direction you want to go. After you have gone about a mile (and have passed both the M&T Bank Stadium and Oriole Park) Russell Street goes into an “S” shaped curve. Stay with the main flow of traffic. When the turn straightens out, the street has changed to Paca Street. Stay on Paca for about six blocks. Turn right on Mulberry. Stay on Mulberry for another five blocks. Turn left on Charles. Travel about 10 blocks to Mt. Royal Avenue. Turn right on Mount Royal. Go ½ block to Lovegrove Alley. Turn right on Lovegrove Alley. Our parking lot is on the right. **You may park in any space that is available.**

From Frederick and West:

Take I-70 East to I-695 South. Stay on I-695 until you reach I-95 North. Then follow directions above.

If there are no spaces available on the Mt. Royal lot, there is on-street parking available on Charles Street, Mt. Royal Avenue, Preston Street or St. Paul Street.

OR

You may park in our Preston Street lot (down the alley – cross over Preston Street – parking lot is on your left). You may park in any space marked CC-CFS.

Christ Church Alley

1	5	9	13	17	21	25	29	33	37	41	45	49
CC-CFS	X	X	X									
2	6	10	14	18	22	26	30	34	38	42	46	50
CC-CFS	X	X	X									
3	7	11	15	19	23	27	31	35	39	43	47	51
CC-CFS	X	X	X									
4	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40	44	48	52
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Love Grove Street