



**Name:** Christopher Corbin

**A brief biography (150 words or less):**

The Rev. Dr. Chris Corbin grew up in Florida and graduated from Florida Southern College with his B.A., Yale Divinity School with his M.Div., and Vanderbilt University with his Ph.D. He currently serves as rector (senior pastor) of Trinity Episcopal Church in Oshkosh. Before Trinity, he served as Canon to the Ordinary, Communications Director, and Dean of the Niobrara School for Ministry for the Diocese of South Dakota. He is a founder and editor-in-chief of the magazine *Earth & Altar* and the author of the book *The Evangelical Party and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Return to the Church of England* from Routledge. His wife, The Rev. Portia Corbin, is also a priest serving St. John's Episcopal Church, New London. The Corbin household includes two daughters and three cats. In his spare time, Chris enjoys cartooning, graphic design, gardening, and traditional woodworking.



**What would you bring/offer to the Oshkosh Food Co-op Board? (1-2 paragraphs)**

The first thing I would bring to working on the Co-op Board would be my experience and connections working at a community- and service-focused organization in downtown Oshkosh. The church I serve offers support and resources to local residents across the socio-economic spectrum. One thing that unites this diversity of people is a deep commitment and connection to the local community. Almost all of my professional and personal focus is building relationships with people to help them flourish right here where they live. I would bring the local community's insights, concerns, and priorities with me, assisting the board in becoming ever more responsive and leading the Co-op to embrace its mission and vision more deeply.

Beyond insight gained from my community role, I bring experience serving on, starting, and consulting with non-profit boards, offering the possibility of increasing board effectiveness and transparency as needed. I also bring my expertise and sensibilities as a communicator and graphic designer, giving the board new avenues for mobilizing existing members to greater passion and involvement in our mission and vision as well as recruiting new members. Ultimately, these skills will be undergirded and fueled by a passion for ever-broadening democratic decision-making, community-building, and robust human flourishing.

**What is your dream for the Oshkosh Food Co-op? (1-2 paragraphs)**

My dream for the Co-op is for it to live more into its mission and vision: to strengthen the local economy more, promote health more, and build community more. Concretely, I think three areas of focus would most effectively allow us to do that. First, I'd like to see more culturally responsive and varied foods offered to meet the needs of an increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse Oshkosh community. Ideally, this increase in offerings would accompany the Co-op's serving as a hub for cross-cultural enrichment and community-building through Co-op hosted and sponsored events like cooking classes and cultural celebrations. This desire for further enrichment events gets at my second desire: to see much more expansive use of the Co-op building and grounds for community-gathering and community-building events. Finally, I would like to see the Co-op expand its membership, visibility, and community-building capacities on both sides of Jackson, looking both to the University and to other businesses and residents in downtown Oshkosh, serving perhaps as a significant bridge between these communities.

155 JACKSON, SUITE 101  
OSHKOSH, WI 54901

CONTINUED BELOW

920.312.7220  
info@oshkoshfoodcoop.com

oshkoshfoodcoop.com

a member-owned community grocery store





**Why do you think the Oshkosh Food Co-op is important to the greater Oshkosh Community? (1-2 paragraphs)**

There are, of course, obvious material benefits to the Oshkosh community that the Co-op presents—access to affordable, nutritious, and good-tasting food in the middle of a nutrition and food desert, direct reinvestment in the local economy, an increased volume of community gathering spaces, new and more visible avenues for local food producers to distribute their goods. There are also no doubt the no-less-real communal benefits from further opportunities for direct democratic decision-making. The Co-op offers the local community the privilege and opportunity of greater self-determination by allowing us to dictate our food needs rather than have them dictated by large corporations, corporations viewing locality as important only insofar as they can leverage them to maximize profits—and then only as exploitable marketing opportunities.

Beyond these particulars, though, the Co-op stands to occupy an important symbolic and inspirational place in the community. A successful Co-op, in which people from various communities, cultures, and classes can have their universal and fundamental need for sustenance adequately and responsively met, can offer a positive model to other organizations. The Co-op's flourishing can demonstrate that open and expansive democratic governance, local investment, environmental stewardship, and inclusion of the unheard and marginalized need not compete with economic sustainability and growth.

**Why cooperatives? (1-2 paragraphs)**

Because of their local governance structure, cooperatives help bolster local diversity across multiple dimensions. They offer distribution opportunities for local products likely to be overlooked by larger suppliers, both supporting local small businesses and increasing consumer access to products. In a similar way, because cooperatives are directed by people with local concerns, they can meet needs that larger organizations may deem too cost-ineffective—such as offering a full-service grocery store in a food desert, itself a problem in part resulting from certain locations being perceived as not “profitable” enough. Finally, because they are buoyed by principles of expanding and democratizing access to power, cooperatives are ideally situated to address issues of inequality and limited access in local communities.

**Please offer any additional thoughts you would like Oshkosh Food Co-op member-owners to know about you. (1-2 paragraphs)**

My interest in serving on the Co-op Board largely grew out of my experience serving on the Co-op's food justice committee this last year. This has allowed me to better appreciate the Board's work and the Co-op's capacity to be a real and significant force for good in our community. I hope that my particular constellation of skills and experiences will add to the already competent Board and the excellent work already accomplished through the Co-op's founding and opening.

155 JACKSON, SUITE 101  
OSHKOSH, WI 54901

920.312.7220  
info@oshkoshfoodcoop.com

oshkoshfoodcoop.com

a member-owned community grocery store

