

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



St. James' Episcopal Church

knowing and serving God by serving others

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FROM THE RECTOR

This annual meeting marks my 13th meeting as the rector of this wonderful community. We have faced many challenges together and I'm sure we will face many more. Through it all, God continues to be worshipped and praised, and God's work continues not only within our Church community but, also in our community at large. We continue to be a beacon of Christ's light in the world and our actions and deportment truly embrace our mission statement "*to Know and Serve God by serving others.*" St. James is a place where God's people gather, and we meet our risen savior and commune with our triune God in word and sacrament. This would not be possible without the efforts of so many that have chosen St. James as their church home. I want to thank all that have volunteered to help with our worship services. Thank you to all the worship leaders and acolytes. Thank you to the ushers and all those who work in the Altar guild. Thank you to our choir for lending their angelic voices to the beauty of our worship. Thank you to all those that volunteer to ensure that our 10:00 am service is live streamed to the public. Every week, our Director of Music and Christian Education, Ms. Lauren Exley, as well as our Parish Administrator, Mrs. Sara Terenzi, work hard to ensure we have the tools to worship in our distinct Anglican style with their work in producing the bulletin. I believe that the music programs at St. James are second to no one and we are extremely blessed to have Lauren managing not only the music program but our fantastic Church School program as well. My ministry would not be as successful as it is without her lending her talents to this church. Mrs. Sara Terenzi has been a staunch blessing to St. James. She has taken on every assignment given her with 100% effort. Her intelligence and "can do" attitude have helped our parish in many ways. Again, I say thank you!

St. James has been blessed with a wonderful Vestry. I want to thank each and every member of the Vestry for all their hard work. I especially want to thank those leaving the Vestry this year. To my Rector's Warden Mrs. Sarah Deacle, thanks for your leadership in that capacity. Our People's Warden, Mrs. Marilyn Hastings, has served this parish in many ways and continues to do so. I would also be remiss if I didn't thank Mr. Francois Springuel for his dedication and hard work leading our Building and Grounds committee. When the Director of Parish Operations position was eliminated, it was Francois who took up most of the slack and helped with contracts and bids from contractors. He has worked tirelessly in these endeavors, and I can't thank him enough. Our new Vestry members have big shoes to fill, and I am positive that they will continue the good leadership example that has been a hallmark of those serving on the St. James' Vestry. I also want to thank Mr. Phil Tatem for his exhaustive efforts as the Treasurer of St. James. Because of your work and dedication, we are in great fiscal shape and the task will be easier for the Treasurers that will follow you in the future. Again, I say to all of you: Thank you!

The leadership and dedication of those operating our programs at St. James Outreach House is to be commended. Many thanks to Mrs. Barbara Bateman, Mrs. Candy Nyce, Mrs. Trish Rodriguez and Mrs. Maggie Brownlee who have provided great leadership and management skills in the operation of the Outreach House. Because of their efforts and the efforts of all those that volunteer there, people in need in our community get the food they need. They get cleaning supplies and toiletries. They receive much needed clothing. The Outreach House truly follows Jesus' commandment to "feed the hungry and clothe the naked" and to provide for our brothers and sisters in need. I cannot thank you and all the volunteers enough for doing this ministry in the name of St. James and in the name of Christ.

I would also like to thank Mrs. Jamie Keenan and Mrs. Kerry Timinski for their dedication and efforts coordinating our Coffee Hour that precedes our 10:00 am service. I want to thank the women of the ECW for their efforts to help beautify and maintain the spaces of St. James. A hearty thanks to our Sexton, Mr. James Downam, for his efforts around our campus and for his abilities in fixing things thereby saving the church money. I would also like to thank James' wife Karen Anderson for her efforts in planting flowers and greenery that have beautified our campus. There are many more to thank and I am sure that I will miss many of you. Please know that I didn't miss you on purpose and please know how appreciative I am for all you do.

St. James is solidly within the definition of a program parish. Our membership has increased every year that I have been here. Last year we added 13 people to the rolls and contracted 10 due to deaths and transfers. Our total membership stands at 676 members which is a reduction of 10 due to some people being made inactive who no longer attend and/or pledge. In 2024, we had 5 baptisms, and we had 10 confirmations and 8 receptions. Last year (2023) I reported that our in-person attendance was hovering around 150, in 2024 that pretty much stayed the same and we reported 149 in person attendance on the 2024 parochial report. The 2024 parochial report allowed us to report our online statistics for the first time and we averaged 53 people online each Sunday. Our combined average attendance was 202, which is a slight increase over 2023. We have experienced an increase in both attendance and membership in the first quarter of 2025 and we hope that that continues this year.

One of the biggest indicators of a healthy church is in the pledging numbers. We had pledges for \$278,000.00 in 2024 and all the pledges were met and exceeded. Our fiscal health at St. James has never been better. In 2025, the pledge exceeded \$344,000.00 and will help us to meet all our financial obligations. In 2024, we signed a contract with Providence Montessori School that gives us an income of \$50,000.00 a year and our tenant in the Kitchen, Sweet Ginger Cakery, provides us with an income of \$5,400.00 a year. These tenants help to relieve some of the financial strain on the church and help us to be more fiscally sound.

St. James has many challenges confronting us. We continue to spend money on maintenance and upkeep for buildings that are over 180 years old. As anyone who drives through our campus knows, we need a new parking lot. We are working with the Diocese to turn some of our land into housing that will give the church significant income in the future. The project is at least 3 years away and we know that we have to make some of these improvements in the meantime. Please pray for your Vestry as we try and navigate these next couple of years. The importance of your pledge cannot be understated. With your prayers and faithfulness in your support of St. James, I know that we will meet any contingency that comes our way.

It is a privilege for me to serve as your Rector. I know God has much in store for this faithful congregation and I look forward to seeing what we will become with God's help!

Faithfully,

Fr. Mike+

The Rev. Dr. Mike Sowards - Rector

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

- I. Opening Prayer
- II. Approval of Agenda
- III. Vestry and Delegate Introductions – Thanks to Francios Springuel, Sarah Deacle and Marilyn Hastings for their service to the Vestry.

Elections: Candy Nyce, Peggy Schiavo, Chris Mycek, Geoff Pinney, Barbara Bateman

Vestry Class:

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Barbara Bateman*	Tanya Millet*	David Woodrow*%
Francois Springuel**^	Sharon Hansen*	Kathy Hutchinson*
Sarah Deacle**	Gene Goff*	Sue Rice*
Marilyn Hastings**	Janice Tabbut**	Ryan Collins**

% We are electing Geoff Pinney to fulfill David Woodrow's position. David moved out of the area

*Eligible for a 2nd Term **Cycling Off ^Decided not to run

Deanery and Diocesan Representatives: Jon Yenney and Randy Rice

- IV Recognition of *Servants of St. James'*
Award the 2025 class

- V. State of the Parish Reports

- VI. Questions/Comments

- VII. Rector's Summary

- VIII. Closing Prayer & Adjournment



RECTOR'S WARDEN

Submitted by Sarah Deacle

This is usually the space where I talk about what actually happened in the last year – a close up summary. But that repeats what others will say, and since this marks the end of my service term as rector's warden and vestry member, I aim for a long-distance summary.

2024 was yet another year when I got to see how a dozen committed church members, and their leaders, did their best to help St. James be a valuable spiritual home for all of us. Just like 2019 -2023. Does that not sound flashy enough? Oh, but it is beautiful in itself. And deceptively simple sounding. Where do we target the church's *limited* time, energy, money? How does one figure out the best path forward for an old, historic building? What activities would best serve our congregation as a whole? What would best strengthen our faith? How do we improve our financial stability? (one answer: get a good school renting above Platt Hall!) How do we serve families and youth when so many activities compete for their time? How do we keep in contact with those unable to attend physically? (answer: increasingly well, with our online services, improved audio, and in-person eucharistic lay ministers.) How do we stay relevant in people's lives and keep God at the center of our work? And how do we work out general agreements on these issues without getting mired in differing opinions? Somehow we have gotten a vestry of committed church members to help in this every year for 300 years. That is an amazing testament to who we are.

It's been a pleasure to serve St James for the last 6 years with the vestry. I can't believe how much has happened in that short time. I have gotten to help the vestry and Fr. Mike guide us through financial ups and downs, covid, staff changes, program changes, building emergencies and improvements. I've seen changes in the people who make up the congregation, vestry, and staff. Sometimes there were hard decisions to be made. I have learned so much from my fellow vestry members about putting faith in action and working through a group. I have faith that as I move off the vestry, the current and new members will move it forward in even better ways. It is what we do –our mission “to know and serve God by serving others.”

Love in Christ,

Sarah Deacle

MEETING MINUTES (2024)

Submitted by Peggy Schiavo Spinozzi, Vestry Secretary

April 21, 2024

1. The meeting was opened with a prayer by Father Mike Sowards at 11:25am
2. **Vestry**-Four Vestry members are ending their terms: Chuck Rogers, Iva Ferrell, Peggy Schiavo Spinozzi and Harry Cornog. Fr Mike thanked them for their service.
Four nominees for Vestry were announced: Sue Rice, Kathy Hutchinson, David Woodrow and Ryan Collins. They were elected by acclamation.
3. **Convention and Deanery Delegates**- Jon Yenney will continue to serve; Phil Tatem is stepping down and David Woodrow was voted in to take his place.
4. **Servants of St. James**- For their outstanding service to St. James, special commendations were awarded to Nancy Richards for her service on the Altar guild, Phil Tatem for his tireless work as church treasurer and Bob Bateman for acting as Clerk of the Work when the Outreach House was built and warmly welcoming Fr. Mike when he first arrived.
5. **State of the Parish Report**- Fr Mike reported that numbers of members continue to rise and average Sunday attendance is rebounding following the pandemic.
In 2017 avg Sunday attendance was 175 and is now 199. Online viewership is strong and helps to increase in person attendance. Some watch from distant states.
6. **Treasurer's report**- Phil presented financial data showing that there was a \$104K deficit in 2023 due to lower pledge income, no daycare space income as well as the increased expense from the new boiler in Platt's Hall. Another deficit is anticipated for 2024, however we are seeing more pledges and will have rental income from the daycare space starting in August.
 - A. We have a fully funded endowment and a cash cushion
 - B. Our Income is mostly from pledges, also from investments
 - C. Expenses- worship & education (44%), property & operating (27%)
Varies according to what needs to be repaired in our historical building
 - 1.) Savings incurred by secretary taking over some bookkeeping tasks
 - D. **Parish Giving**- St James gave about 16% of our income to outreach Ministries
Fr Mike believes that a fair amount would be 10% (Biblical tithe) to give to the National Church. This is under discussion in the greater church.
Overall, we have received more money from the Diocese in the form of grants (cemetery, Glebe house, Outreach) than we have sent them.
 - E. Outreach receives about \$28k per year (\$19.5K from parish). They also get "in kind" donations of food, clothing etc. which do not show in the records.
They also have applied for and been awarded \$16.5K in grants.

- F. Bequests- Over the past 5 years we have received \$1.5 million which has contributed to the financial health of the church. Phil encouraged all to think of this when doing estate planning.
- G. In 2024, we will start receiving rent from a Montessori school who will be our new tenant in the second floor daycare space. This will bring in about \$50K/year.
- H. Additionally, we have begun to work with the Diocese to monetize the Glebe House property while maintaining ownership of the land.

7. How St. James' serves the Community

- A. Cub scouts, Boy scouts, AA, Vets in Recovery, Outreach House, Community garden, Crop walk, CT Ministerium-help with heating oil, etc

8. How St. James' serves our Parish

- A. Choir, Parish life activities, ECW, Good Book club, Church School, Chicken BBQ, YouTube services, Christ & Coffee, Theology on Zoom, Foyer Gatherings, Youth activities., etc

9. Committee reports

- A. Buildings & Grounds activities have included 2 Blue jean Sundays, 2 eagle Scout projects, Community Garden, Cameras and Solar panels at Outreach House, new main heating unit in church, New Glebe house roof and garage doors, updates on 2nd floor in preparation for new tenant
 - 1.) Due to budget constraints, some maintenance has had to be deferred such as the parking lot, shutters on church and new AC unit in church
 - 2.) Glebe House is in very poor repair, rarely used and would cost many thousands to repair. We are working with the Diocese Property committee to best decide its future and what to do with the land to generate revenue. They have funds for start-up costs. There is some interest in partnering for a potential project on the property by a neighbor.
- B. **Education Program**- Lauren stated that church school is a very important aspect of church life. We have 50 registered students and 15 teachers. Fr. Mike conducts adult education weekly in Christ & Coffee and Theology on Zoom.
 - 1. Lauren has a number of youth group events such as a s Mystery Dinner, Trunk or Treat, Egg Hunt and hopes to create more inter-generational opportunities.
 - 2. Music- there are various choirs for adults, kids, teens as well as for soloists.
 - 3. Many thanks to Lauren for her talent and creativity in education and music
- C. **Outreach House**- Last year OH distributed 35,000 pounds of food, personal care items and cleaning supplies and average of 80-85 families per month.
 - 1.) OH has been awarded \$33k in grants this year
 - 2.) In addition to donations from our parish we receive from local stores area churches, schools and other food partners.

Questions and Answers

1. What are we doing about the deteriorating statue of St James in front of the church? Termites and time have left it in unrepairable condition. Gene Goff said he will remove it with equipment.
2. Vestry Retreat- Fr Mike announced that on May 4th there will be a retreat meeting of the new vestry. They will discuss a new capital campaign to fund need repairs such as the parking lot, shutters, new AC system, painting the church and repairs on the History center.

The meeting was adjourned.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Submitted by Mark Schultz, Treasurer

We had a \$45,000 deficit that was lower than expected (\$76,000).

Due to your pledges, income was above expectations. Outreach House donations were almost \$20K over budget as well. The Hofsas Trust and our investments in the Church Foundation are continuing to yield a steady income. Having second-floor tenants also provides us with more steady income.

Our expenses were \$20K higher than budgeted for 2024. The largest over budget expense was for Pilgrimage (\$30K budget, \$40K cost). The other over budget item was offset by additional income: Outreach House.

The vestry continues to review ways to enhance our revenue and further control our expenses.

Revenue

- We will feel a full year's worth of income from the new tenant for the upstairs space.
- We are working with the Diocese to explore ways in which the Glebe House and attached property can be used to generate revenue for the parish. This is a few years out.
- We continue to search for and apply for grants for capital projects and Outreach funding

Expenses

- We are looking for savings whenever contracts are renewed (generally a three-year cycle)
- We no longer employ accounting services. These are being handled by admin staff and volunteers.

Overall, our cash position is sound. Giving in December 2024 and January 2025 were above expected leaving us in a good cash position for now. Our endowment remains well funded, allowing us to weather a financial downturn.

Pledging units increased slightly from 112 to 114, but our pledged income rose significantly due to the match. Continued growth in both pledging families and pledged income are important for continued financial stability.

Looking Forward

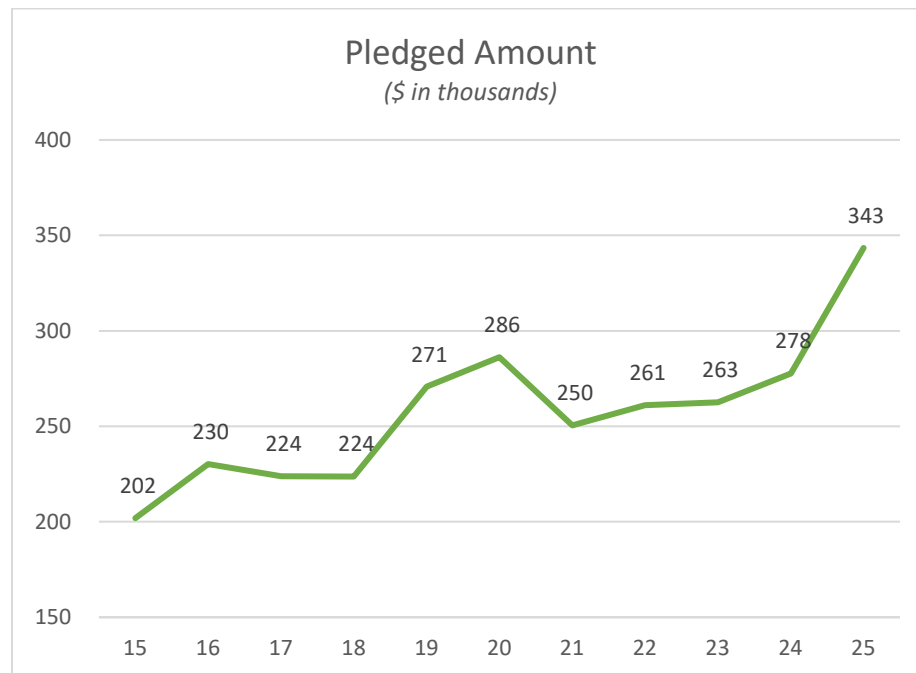
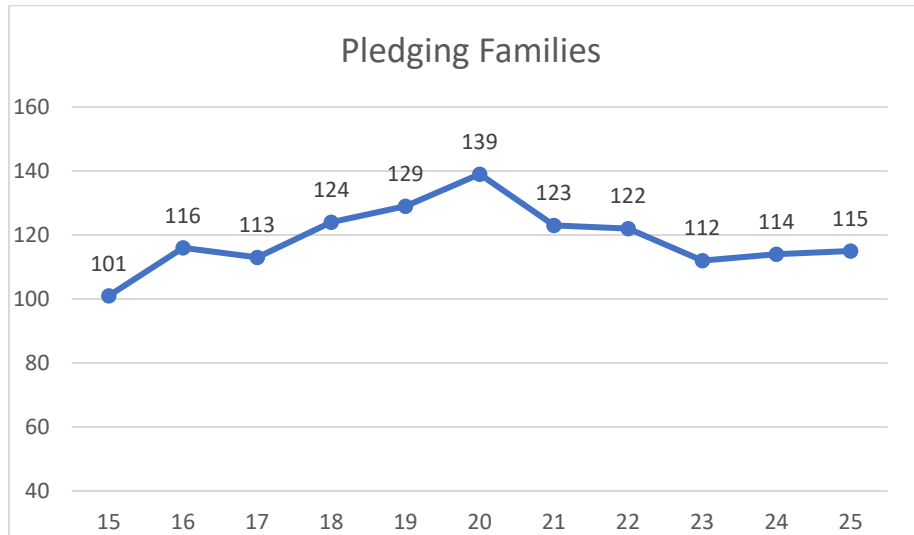
While the 2025 budget forecasts a smaller deficit than past years, we still need to be able to handle any curveballs that may come our way due to the age of our building. We all know that the driveway and parking lot need work. How that work is funded may greatly impact our financial strength this year.

We continue to work with the diocese on a long-term plan to monetize the Glebe House and related properties. While it is too soon to predict what the impact will be and when it will be felt, I am optimistic that it will ultimately be of significant financial benefit to the parish.

Pledges continue to be the most important part of parish income. Your continued financial support for St. James' is vital in allowing us to continue our mission "*to know and serve God by serving others*". If you have not yet returned a pledge card for 2025, please do so.

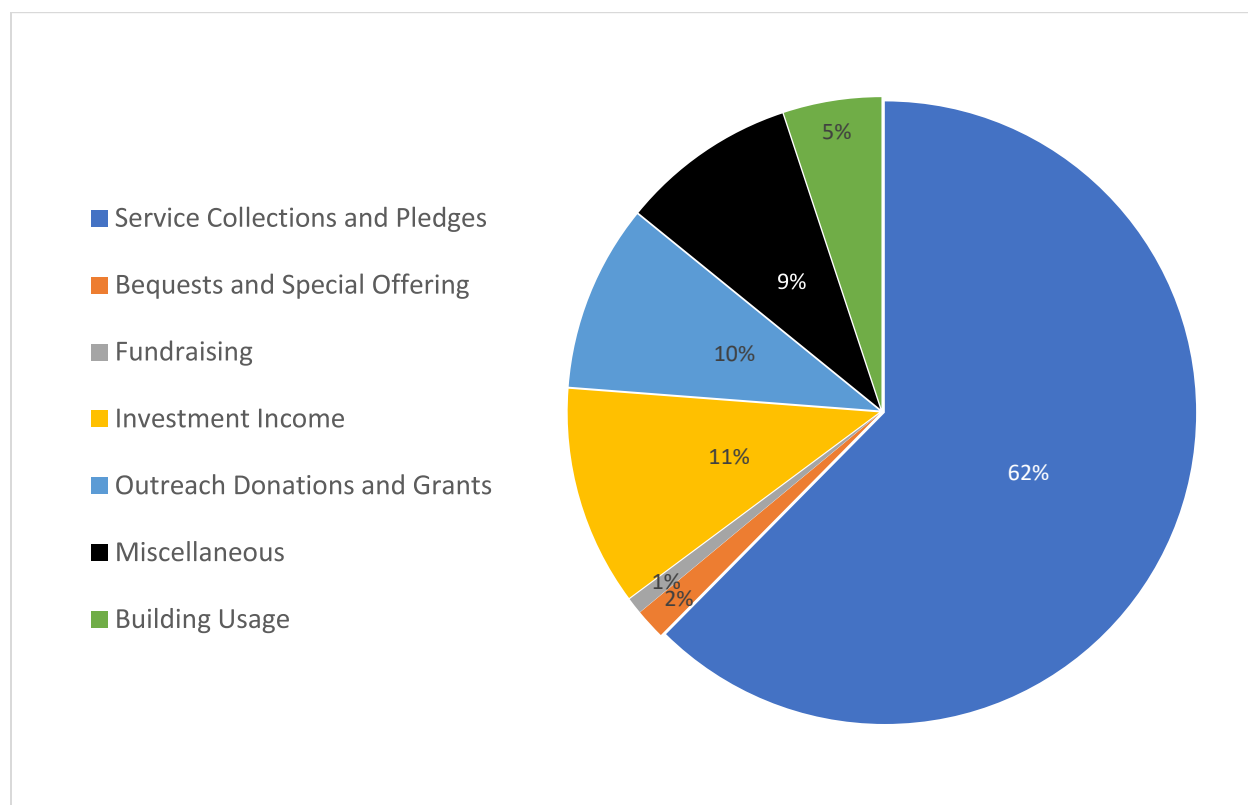
PLEDGING

We have 115 pledging families for 2025 (as of April 1st). This is a minimal increase over last year, however, our projected pledge income is \$343,000, \$65,000 more than 2024.



INCOME OVERVIEW

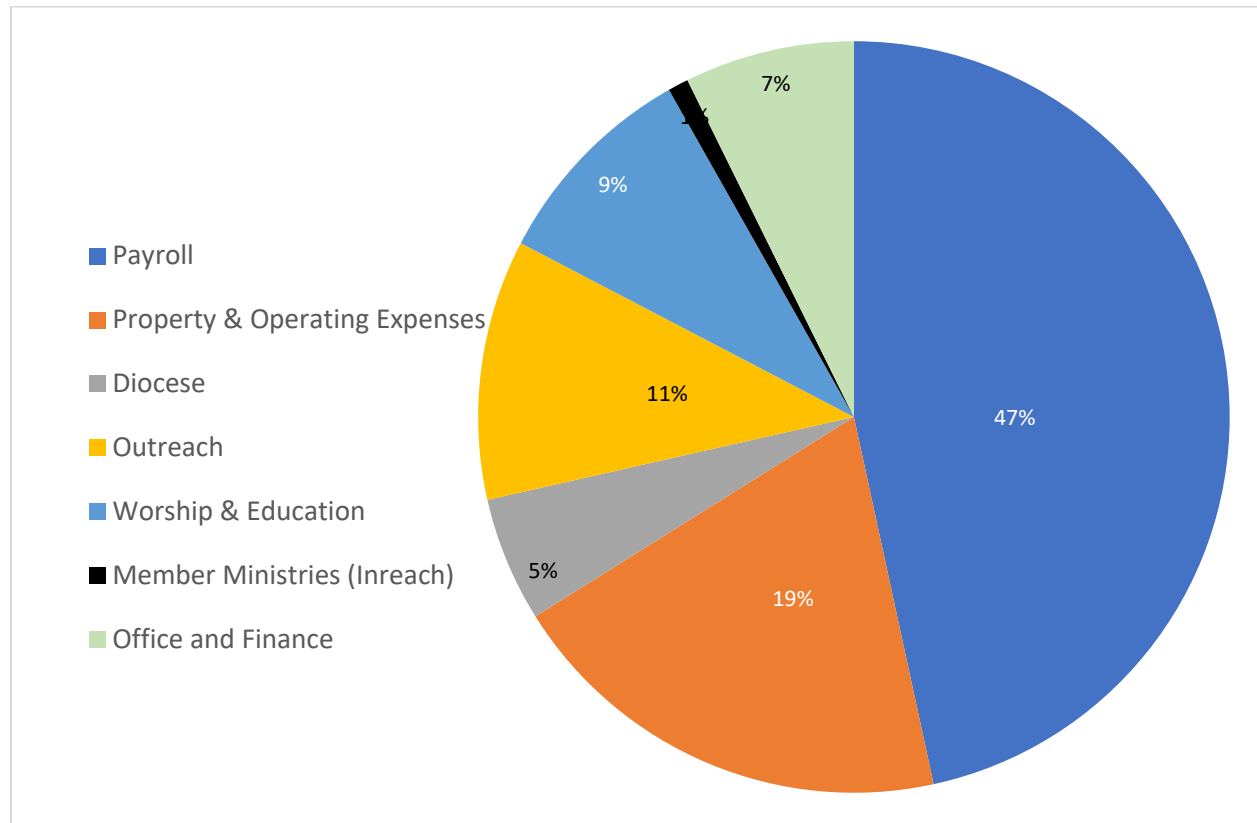
Our 2024 income totaled \$521,136. As the chart shows, pledges are our largest source of income. **Pledging remains the cornerstone of St. James' financial well-being..**



	2024	%
Service Collections, Pledges	325,212	62%
Bequests, Special Offering	8,211	2%
Fundraising	4,426	1%
Investment Income	59,313	11%
Outreach Donations, Grants	50,239	10%
Miscellaneous	47,252	9%
Building Usage	26,483	5%
Total:	521,136	

EXPENSE OVERVIEW

Expenses were higher than anticipated this year. Our largest unplanned expense was second floor upgrades for tenant.

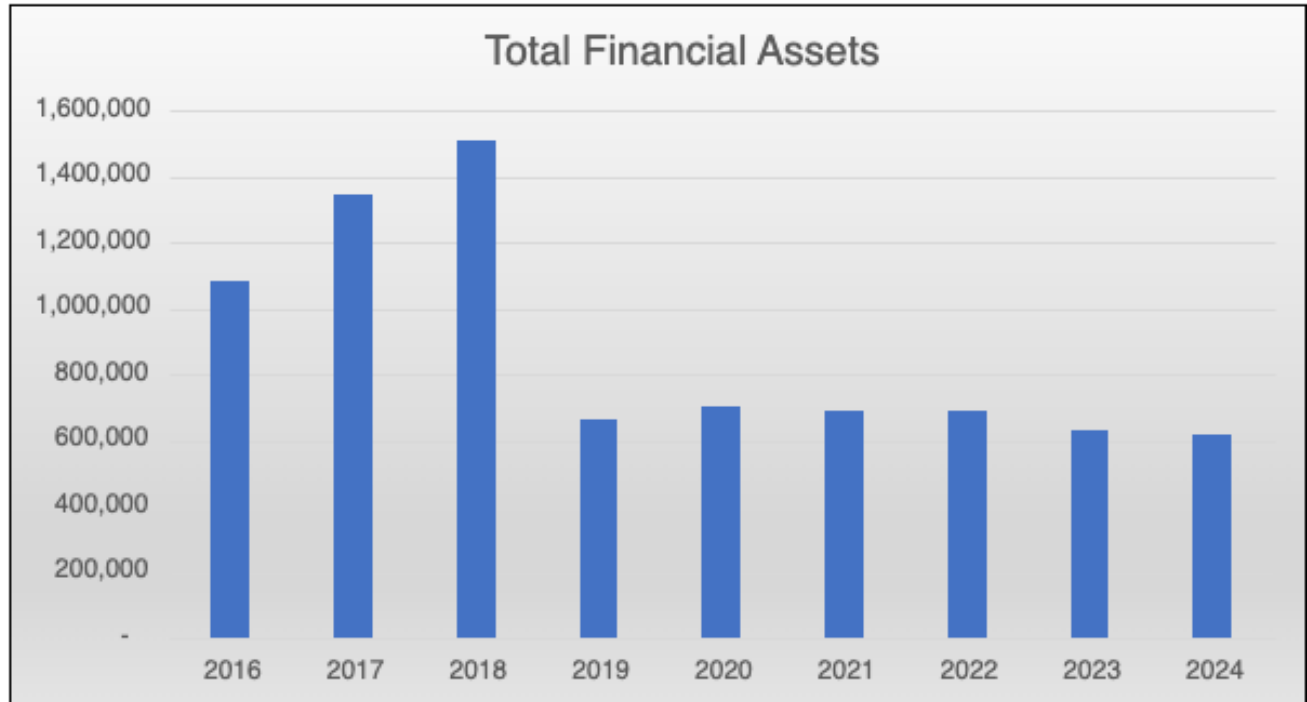


2024 Expenses

	2024	%
Payroll	263,814	47%
Property, Operating Expenses	110,389	19%
Diocese	30,371	5%
Outreach	63,384	11%
Worship & Education	51,843	9%
Member Ministries (Inreach)	4,989	1%
Office and Finance	41,376	7%
Total	566,167	

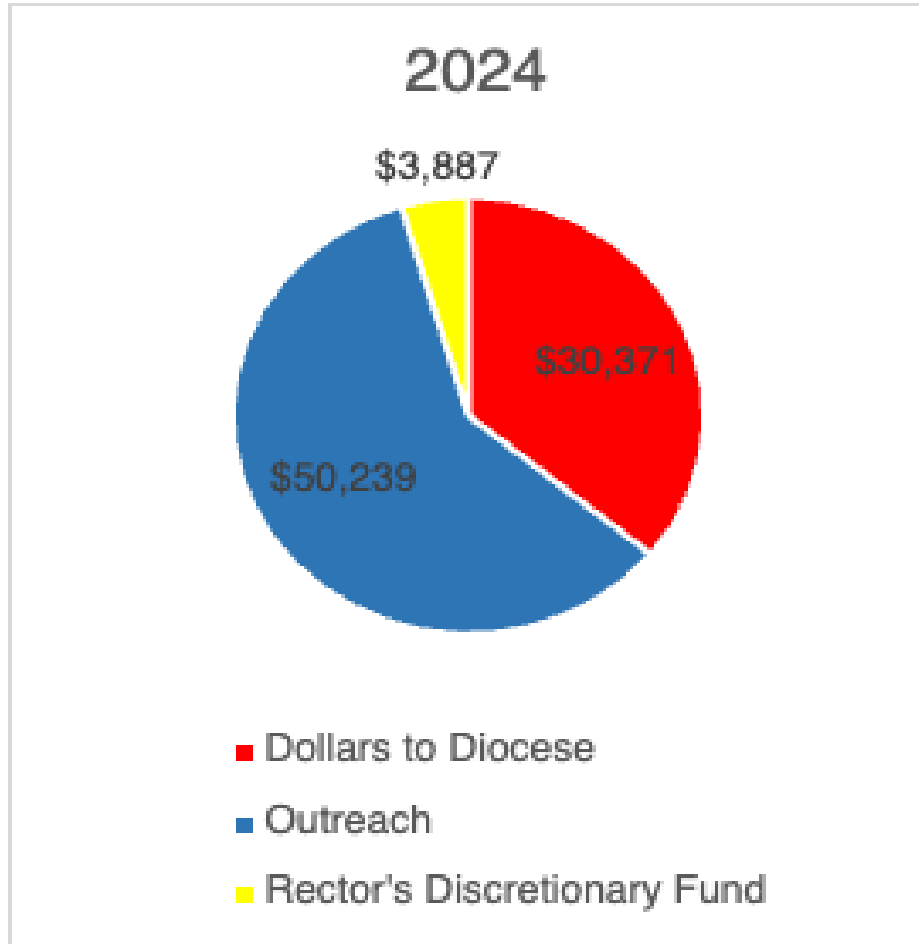
FINANCIAL ASSETS OVERVIEW

Total Parish assets fell this year as expected given the deficit. Still, we retain a solid financial asset base going forward and our investments continue to provide us with additional income.



GIVING OVERVIEW

Our commitment to serving others remains strong. We gave \$84,497 of our revenue to outreach ministries. This represents 16% of our income.



BEQUESTS

Income from trusts and bequests continues to be an important part of our financial picture. Since 2011, estate income has provided St. James' with over **\$1.4 million** (see chart). Those funds have been crucial in maintaining the health of our parish plant and ministries. In addition, the Hofsas Trust set up for the benefit of St. James' by Robert and Ada Doris Hofsas generates approximately **\$37,000 annually** for general parish purposes.

Estate	Year	Distribution
Mary Cronmiller	2011	\$25,000
Dorothy Eschuk	2012	\$5,000
Mary Fields	2013	\$25,000
Kathryn Hansberry	2014	\$63,830
William & Muriel Elliott	2016	\$10,000
William Hammonds	2017	\$5,000
Deborah Marsteller	2017	\$753,203
Isabelle Pettit Seaman	2017	\$187,900
Grace Faber	2019	\$5,785
Georgette Griffith	2019	\$5,000
Robert & Ada Doris Hofsas	2019	\$59,247
Alatha Sherrod	2021	\$84,816
Alatha Sherrod	2022	\$243,531
TOTAL:		\$1,473,311

BUDGET 2025

Budget Overview: 2025 Budget
January - December 2025

Revenue	
400000 Service Income/Collections	
400010 Collections - Cash	10,500
400020 Pledges/Donations	340,000
400030 Holy Days	2,300
Total 400000 Service Income/Collections	352,800
401000 Special Offering Income	
401010 Flower Donations	4,200
401020 Memorial Contributions	3,000
Total 401000 Special Offering Income	7,200
402000 Fundraising Income	
402010 Fundraising - Net	5,000
Total 402000 Fundraising Income	5,000
403000 Capital Campaign Income	
403010 Capital Campaign	0
Total 403000 Capital Campaign Income	0
404000 Outreach Income	
404010 Outreach House - Donations	30,000
404020 Outreach House - Grants	0
404030 Outreach - Miscellaneous Donations	500
Total 404000 Outreach Income	30,500
405000 Other Income	
405010 Building Usage	55,000

405030 Miscellaneous Receipts	10,000
Total 405000 Other Income	65,000
420000 Trust Income	
420010 Hofsas	38,000
Total 420000 Trust Income	38,000
430000 Investment Income.	
430010 Church Foundation	22,000
Total 430000 Investment Income.	22,000
440000 Interest Income	
440010 Interest - Non-Investment	100
Total 440000 Interest Income	100
Total Revenue	\$520,600
Expenditures	
501000 Education	
501010 Pilgrimage	0
501020 Adult	1,000
501030 Youth	3,000
501040 Education Activities - Other	0

Total 501050 Youth Group	0
Total 501000 Education	4,000
502000 Member Ministries	
502010 General Parish Activities	5,000
502020 ECW Expenses	3,500
Total 502000 Member Ministries	8,500

502100 Worship	
502110 Altar Supplies	600
502120 Altar Guild Flowers	3,600
502130 Organ Maintenance	300
502140 Music Maintenance - Other	200
502150 Music Program	1,700
502160 Stewardship	600
502170 Prayer Books	0
502180 Nursery Expenses & Supplies	200
502190 Worship - Other	500
Total 502100 Worship	7,700
503000 Outreach	
503010 Outreach - Food & Clothing	305000
503020 Outreach - Other	1,000
Total 503000 Outreach	31,500
510000 Operating Expenses	
510010 Gas & Electric	20,000
510020 Sewer/Water	2,600
510030 Trash Collection	7,700
510040 Pest Control	1,200
510050 Fire Company/Extinguishers	400
510060 Cleaning Services	10,800
510070 Snow Removal	10,000
510080 Landscaping	26,000
510090 Repairs & Maintenance	15,000
510100 Sexton Supplies	250

510110 General Maintenance & Supplies	650
510120 Capital Improvements	40,000
510200 Fundraising Expenses	2,000
Total 510000 Operating Expenses	136,600
520000 Finance & Administration	
520010 Internet/Telephone /Cell	4,950
520020 Copy Machine - Lease	2,900
520030 Copy Machine - Repair	4,000
520040 Office - Supplies	4,600
520050 Office - Equipment	2,000
520060 Postage	600
520070 Professional Fees - Accountant	5,000
520080 Professional Fees - IT Services	2,500
520090 Professional Fees - Other	0
520100 Software Subscriptions	4,500
520110 Casualty Insurance	9,200
520120 Vanco Expense	1,400
520121 Vanco Expense - Credit Card Fees	1,000
520130 Vestry Discretionary	1,000
520140 Advertising	2,000
520150 Miscellaneous Expenses	1,000
Total 520000 Finance & Administration	46,650
530000 Compensation	
530010 Rector	
530020 Rector Wages	62,449
530030 Rector's 403b Pension	0

530040 Rector's Diocesan Pension	18,441
530050 Rector's Health/Life Insurance	24,500
530060 Rector's Housing	40,000
530070 Rector's Automotive	0
530080 Rector's Education Expense	1,500
530090 Rector's Professional Expenses	500
Total 530010 Rector	147,390
530100 Lay Staff	
530110 Parish Director - Wages	35,280
530140 Organist/CE Director - Wages	51,485
530150 Organist/CE Director Pension	2,575
530160 Organist/CE Dir Medical	27,888
530170 Supply Clergy/Choir Director - Wages	3,000
530180 Sexton - Wages	5,000
530190 Nursery Attendants - Wages	1,500
Total 530100 Lay Staff	126,728
Total 530000 Compensation	274,118
530500 Personnel Expense - Other	
530510 Payroll Taxes Employer Paid	6,374
530520 Workers Compensation Insurance	1,100
530530 Certification Expenses	450
530540 Mileage & Tolls	40
530550 Payroll Processing Fees	2,800
530560 Conference and Convention Fees	600
Total 530500 Personnel Expense - Other	11,364
540000 Discretionary Expenses	

540010 Rector's Discretionary Fund	3,600
540020 Deacon's Discretionary Fund	0
Total 540000 Discretionary Expenses	3,600
550000 Outside Ministry Support	
550010 Contributions - Seminaries	0
Total 550000 Outside Ministry Support	0
600000 Sacred Gifts	
600010 Sacred Gifts - Diocese	30,371
Total 600000 Sacred Gifts	30,371
Total Expenditures	\$554,403
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$ -33,803

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

No official report has been submitted this year - please reference slides during slideshow presentation.

A WORD FROM OUR SEXTON

2024 was busy both with weekly maintenance and upkeep from last year's improvements.

We routinely perform the needed maintenance to replace lightbulbs, toilet seats, and things that just wear out from normal use.

We caulked many windows this past year, and improved the grounds through gardening.

I look forward to continuing to maintaining St. James' for all current and future parishioners.

James Downam

OUTREACH HOUSE

Submitted by Barbara Bateman & Marilyn Hastings
Vestry Liaisons – Outreach Commission

St. James' Outreach House continues to be an important source of assistance for our neighbors in need. With inflation pushing food and housing costs ever higher, the numbers of registered households increased in 2024 to 165 at years end. Of those households totaling 545 persons, 264 were adults 18-60 years, 75 were seniors and 215 were children. Many families shopped the permitted twice each month, while others visited only once a month or more sporadically as their needs dictated. Fortunately, Outreach House did not have to reduce service hours or the amount of food distributed as some smaller pantries have been

forced to do. Our pantry shelves were well stocked through the generosity of St. James' parish members and wide spread community support. Monetary donations in 2024 were in excess of \$50,000, of which \$10,000 was in the form of a grant from St. Andrews Lutheran Church's Outreach Commission and \$2500 from the friend of one of our volunteers. These funds earmarked for the purchase of personal care products and cleaning supplies



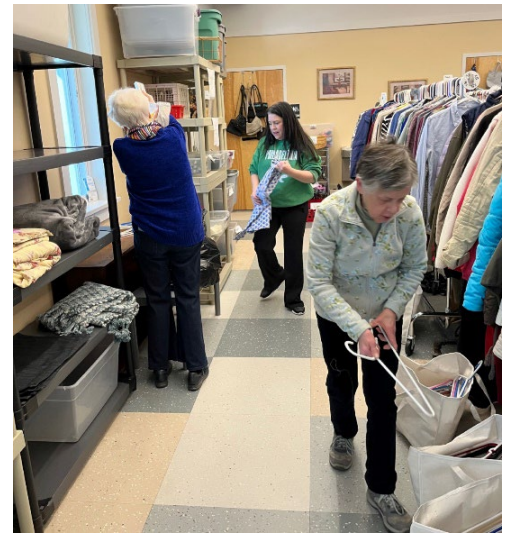
were received late in the year and will ensure our ability to provide such items in 2025. The remaining funds received throughout the year came in the form of a \$2800 food grant from the MontCo AntiHunger Network, \$2845 from Redner's Market/Collegeville celebrating their grand opening, \$800 raised through fund raising, and the remainder through donations from local businesses, churches, service and social organizations, various school sports teams and organizations, and numerous caring individuals.

In-kind donations of food, diapers, personal care items and cleaning supplies increased substantially from 35,000 lbs. in 2023 to more than 51,000 lbs. in 2024. This reflects the value the wider community places on our work. To keep our shelves filled, in-kind donations were supplemented with similar items purchased as needed using the \$3,000 monthly Outreach Food and Clothing Budget funded by the grants and corporate/individual monetary donations mentioned above.

Special occasion donations provided for distribution of school supplies to 133 students, Thanksgiving turkeys to 86 families, Mitten Tree gifts to 142 children and Walmart gift cards to 64 households without children. As in other years community generosity allowed clients

to shop for loved ones in our Christmas Shop stocked with new gift items for children and adults.

Outreach House Clothing Room remained a source of seasonal clothing for men, women and children, providing not only wearing apparel but also shoes, women's handbags and when available blankets and bed linens. Several organizations conducted in season drives for needed winter coats. Our faithful sorters worked Monday and Wednesday mornings often faced with a mountain of clothing and shoe filled plastic bags. Clothing more than gently used and unsuitable for offering to clients was passed to a recycling company with proceeds used to assist with food purchases. Those plastic bags from donations were also recycled to a local church collecting them under a Trex Company program aimed at keeping plastic waste out of the environment.



To give a public face to Outreach House a quarterly newsletter was published and provided to donors from the community, volunteers and members of the parish. It was also made available at multiple fund raising events, on St. James' website, and wherever the opportunity for display presented itself.

Outreach House operated, as it has from its inception, staffed totally by volunteers. The value of the 3,076 hours (parishioners 1,761/community 1,315) provided by these dedicated givers of time cannot be estimated. As a small token of thanks the Outreach House Advisory Board hosted a Christmas Party for the volunteers and celebrated them in the 2nd quarter 2024 Outreach House Newsletter noting April as National Volunteer Month.



Members of the parish who have not visited the Outreach House are invited to do so. We encourage you to come and see how we are able, with your help, to fulfill both our mission and the mission of St. James' by serving those in need.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN (ECW)

Submitted by: Doreen Mayconich

ECW Board:

Doreen Mayconich - President

Diane Sartori - Vice President

Sandy Hassinger - Secretary

Jean Branco - Treasurer



All women of the church are automatically members of ECW. We come together in prayer and fellowship, now holding four meetings a year in addition to the Tea. A business meeting is followed by an activity that helps bring us together in fellowship such as a craft project, a speaker, and even chair yoga!

The primary mission of ECW is to help beautify and maintain Platts Hall and the kitchen. We have several fundraising activities that help support this mission. These fundraising activities include: The Annual Spring Tea, Soup Sales, Boscov's coupon sales and Basket Raffles.

The following are the accomplishments of ECW this past year:

- Replacement of the dated window treatments in Platts Hall and the large bathroom with bright new blinds (expense\$1864).
- The annual Spring Tea was enjoyed by many featuring handmade tea sandwiches, soup, scones, biscotti, and an array of delicious desserts. A basket raffle was also held. (\$1146 in ticket sales)
- The ECW kitchen committee spent over 30 hours throughout several weeks in the summer cleaning and reorganizing the kitchen. All cabinets were emptied,

cleaned, reorganized, purged and additional shelving was added. (expense \$230.10)


- The dishwasher was serviced and evaluated to be in good working order and is now ready to be used for events. (expense \$230)
- The kitchen range was professionally cleaned (expense \$700)
- The annual Boscov's Friends Helping Friends coupon sale was once again a success (\$300)
- The annual soup sale was very successful, as always, with many women contributing their soup making skills and members of the church supporting the sale and enjoying delicious homemade soup (\$591)
- The December meeting participants, in addition to enjoying a fun meeting, donated \$310 in grocery gift cards for Outreach Clients
- A nice new cover for the piano was purchased by ECW (\$302)
- ECW contributed to the redoing of the floors in Platts Hall (\$1100)

Our ECW goals for next year continue to be the ongoing maintenance and beautification of Platts Hall and the kitchen, Outreach projects, increasing the ECW meeting participation and exploring new activities for fellowship. We will also be re-working the ECW By-Laws to bring them up to current standards.

ADULT EDUCATION

Submitted by Father Mike Sowards, Rector

There were two offerings for adults seeking a greater understanding of their faith last year in 2024. The first offering is our Wednesday night Zoom meeting entitled **“Theology on Zoom”** which meets between 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Here we continued with our exploration of the New Testament,



**IT'S
THEOLOGY
ON ZOOM!!**

Please join Fr. Mike for a virtual
Adult Christian education
experience on Wednesdays
at 7:30 PM.
Let's discuss theology!
Everyone is welcome!

and continued to investigate such things as: What is the theology being proposed in this Book? What were the issues facing the different communities (i.e. Rome, Corinth, Galatia and Ephesus)? How is its composition and style different from the other New Testament writings and/or epistles? We spend a lot of our time together reading scripture and

discussing what insights the Holy Spirit has given us. This class is still ongoing and will continue until the New Testament has been read in its entirety and then we will start with the Gospel of Matthew again.

The second offering is on Thursday mornings at 11:00 am and is entitled “**Christ and Coffee.**” In this offering, we meet in the Parish Hall over coffee and treats to discuss the lectionary readings for the upcoming Sunday. We look at the historical, cultural, and theological undertones of the readings and then we open up the floor for discussion and insight. We have had as many as 20 attend this offering and I am pleased with the tenor and vitality of the discussions. This is a Program Year class that begins each September and ends at the end of May.



ALTAR GUILD

Submitted by Nancy Richards

The Altar Guild of St. James serves the church and assists the rector by preparing the altar for all church services including weddings, funerals, and church holidays.

The nine ladies of the guild have many different roles. Before services, members work in teams of two or three to place memorial flowers, set for eucharists, polish brass and silver, change liturgical hangings, and make sure readings and bulletins are in place. Afterwards, the volunteers launder the linens, wash wine glasses, and store communion vessels in the sacristy before leaving the church.

Our dedicated altar guild members are honored to serve this beautiful and historic church and to maintain the gifts we have inherited. Although we have several new volunteers, we would welcome new altar guild members to serve with us.

If you are interested in joining the altar guild, please contact Nancy Richards at 610-728-5649 or n.richards2@verizon.net.

Questions about flower donations should be directed to Marilyn Hastings at 610-322-2556 or Marilyn.hastings@verizon.net



USHER REPORT

Submitted by Francois Springuel

Ushers continue to serve at the 10 am service. We currently have 8 volunteers in the rotation and are always looking to add more. Ushers are being scheduled for all services during high holy days to help with seating and flow. Please let Francois know if you are interested in being added to the rotation!

PARISH LIFE

Submitted by Sharon Hansen

Member Ministries continued to focus on making sure new members of St. James' feel welcomed and part of our community. Plans are being made to reach out to those who are new to us in the past few years. We also look forward to offering a special welcome for new members at our Annual Picnic to be held in June. We will be collaborating with the Fellowship ministry on future events for our members.

FELLOWSHIP

Submitted by Sue Rice & Tanya Millet

Fellowship is an integral part of St. James. Our interaction with each other allows us to serve God and serve others in a meaningful way. All our ministries intertwine. We find fellowship at Christ & Coffee, working at the Outreach House, Theology on Zoom, the Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner & the list goes on.....

- This year we have increased the amount of special coffee hours with additions of Veterans Sunday and Donut Sunday before Lent. On these days we have also had a mini coffee hour after the 8 am service. A special thanks to Jaime Keenan & Kerri Timinski for making sure that every weekend is covered.
- Chicken BBQ was a huge success! Thanks to Rob Samtmann for his excellent organizational skills. He programmed the whole process making it easier for his replacement. Janice Tabbut has graciously accepted chairperson responsibilities for this year.
- We had a special dinner for the Vets in Recovery group. We thanked them for all their service to this country and for all the contributions to St. James which is quite impressive- clothes, backpacks, & food drives.
- Christmas is a special time for St. James with the Christmas Pageant Reception and Christmas Eve Dinner. Thanks to Kerri Timinski for cooking the turkey & ham. Thanks to the volunteers who made side dishes & desserts for these events.
- We are trying something different with Foyer Gatherings. We would like to have 4 per year. Two in parishioner's homes & two in an outside venue. May 17th will be hosted by the Drexler's. In October we will find an outside venue . We are always looking for members to host!
- The St James Book Club meets the 2nd Monday at 1:30pm in October, December, February, April & June. Thank You Barbara Kimball for leading this group. Everyone is welcome to join! We will announce June's book in Gatherings and post it on the bulletin board.

- Janice Tabbut is our Yoga instructor who has chair yoga classes on Tuesdays at 3:30 pm. All are welcome to attend.
- Our Lenten Cleaning project was to bring the members together to clean areas of our church that need some attention. Thanks to Jean Branco for organizing this project.
- ECW is its own Ministry but they have donated the money to clean Platt's Hall floor, kitchen floor and service the kitchen stove. Always appreciated.

Upcoming Events: Keep the date!

May 17th- Foyer Gathering at Sandra & George Drexler's house.

June 29th- Church Picnic

September 20th- Annual Chicken BBQ

October 18th- Foyer Gathering (outside venue or volunteer)

Anyone up for organizing a Golf outing?

Thanks to everyone who has supported and worked on these events. We are grateful for those who have volunteered their time, energy and abilities to make these activities fun and meaningful for all of us.

YOUTH EDUCATION AND MUSIC

No submission this year by Lauren Exley, Director of Christian Education and Music - due to her recent car accident. Father Mike will review these areas during the meeting.