

ANNUAL REPORT 2026



St. James' Episcopal Church

knowing and serving God by serving others

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FROM THE RECTOR

I can't believe that this is my 14th annual meeting here at St. James. We are blessed people and we attempt to be a blessing to others. This generosity is reflected in not only our mission statement, to know and serve God by serving others, but also in our activities. There are many people to thank for all the hard work that goes on here at St. James'. I want to personally thank our Rector's warden, Mrs. Sue Rice, for her leadership to me and to the Church. To all members of the St. James' Vestry who have volunteered their time and talent to serve. Many thanks to the Leadership of Mrs. Barbara Bateman, our Outreach House Coordinator, and to all the volunteers that make that program such a vital part of the ministries here at St. James'. To all those who have given their time and talent on our various committees such as building and grounds, parish life and communications, thank you for all that you do. I want to thank all that work to ensure our worship experience is the best that it can be. Thank you to all the worship leaders and acolytes, to the ushers and to those who work in the Altar guild. Thank you to our choir for lending their talents and leading our music and enhancing our worship. Thank you to those dedicated to ensuring that our 10:00 am service is live streamed to the public.

Much thanks to our Parish Administrator, Mrs. Sara Terenzi, and to our Director of Music and Christian Education, Ms. Lauren Exley, who work tirelessly to create our bulletin thus enabling our worship experience. I have stated in the past that I believe that the music programs at St. James' are second to none and we are extremely blessed to have Lauren managing not only the music program but our fantastic Church School program as well. Again, thank you Sara and Lauren for all that you do for St. James.'

We the people of St. James' continue to strive to be Christ-like in our community and to fulfill his commandments and the vows made at our baptism to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and minister to those in need. A special thanks to Mrs. Maggie Brownlee and to her dedicated cadre of Eucharistic Visitors. Her dedication to this ministry and the dedication of her team ensure that the shut-ins and those who have mobility issues stay in contact with the church and have the opportunity to receive that sacrament of communion. I have heard from many what a blessing this ministry is to people and how much it is appreciated.

Our Christian Education programs and Church School are running wonderfully thanks to the leadership of Ms. Lauren Exley who also serves as our Christian Education Director. The Adult Christian Education classes, both on Wednesday night as well as on Thursday morning "Christ and Coffee" continue to be well attended.

To our Sexton, Mr. James Downam, thank you so much for all that you do around our campus. James is a master at fixing things and has saved the church much money. James and his wonderful wife, Karen, work constantly to beautify our campus by planting flowers and plants, many from their own garden to present St. James in the best light. 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. The kitchen floor looks wonderful! I know that I am missing many. Please know how much I love and appreciate all that is happening in this wonderful place. As I have stated in the past, these actions reflect the very best of the Episcopal Church and our Christian tradition. I could not be prouder to be a part of this community.

As I stated last year, 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 17 people to the rolls and contracted 6 due to deaths and transfers. Our total membership stands at 697 members, which is increase of 11 from last year. When I got here in 2013, our reported in-person attendance was averaging 130. Since the pandemic, we have been hovering around these 130 averages of in person attendance and in 2025 that pretty much stayed the same and we reported 129 in person attendance on the 2025 parochial report. The total average attendance for the 2025 parochial report was 176. This was due to us having an online attendance averaging 47 people a weekend. We have experienced an increase in both attendance and membership in the first quarter of 2026, 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 \$344,724.00 in 2025 and all the total pledges received exceeding that amount by over \$30,000.00. Our fiscal health at St. James has never been better. Our fiscal well-being is due in large part to our outstanding Treasurer, Mr. Mark Shultz. Mark and his team work constantly to ensure our reports are accurate and that the bills get paid on time. We are still waiting for all of the pledges to come in for 2026 but, it looks like we will meet or exceed our pledge from last year. Our contracts with Providence Montessori School and with Sweet Ginger Cakery, continue to provide over \$58,000.00 of income per year and helps to relieve some of the financial strain on the church and helps us to be more fiscally sound.

In 2025, the Vestry and I embarked on a Capital Campaign to fix some of the major building and grounds issues with the property. There were five major projects that the Capital Campaign meant to address. Those projects are:

- Paving and re-striping the parking lot
- Replacing the AC in the Sanctuary
- Replacing the rotten windows upstairs in the School and the History Center
- Fixing outdoor lighting and lighting back of parking lot
- Painting the whole exterior of the church including all trim

The total goal for the Capital Campaign was \$235,000. I am pleased to announce that we exceeded our goal by over \$35,000.00. As of March 1st, 2026, we have completed all of the projects, with the exception of painting of the exterior of the church. All of us have benefited from the new parking lot and the lighting that has been installed. The painting of the church will commence in the Spring just after Easter. Because of your generosity, we have not gone into debt and have monies available to meet the rest of our obligation. Thanks to all who have made this campaign such a success.

St. James will continue to be a place that strives to meet whatever challenge that comes our way. We expect to spend money on maintenance and upkeep for the 180-year-old building. We continue to work 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. As I stated last year, the importance of your pledge cannot be understated. With your prayers and your support of St. James, I know that we will meet any eventuality that comes our way.

It continues to be 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 the future brings!

Faithfully,

Fr. Mike+

The Rev. Dr. William “Mike” Sowards
Rector, St. James’ Episcopal Church

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

- I. Opening Prayer
- II. Approval of Agenda
- III. Vestry and Delegate Introductions – Thanks to Janice Tabbut and Sharon Hansen for their service to the Vestry.

Elections: Gene Goff, Tanya Millet, Karen Anderson, Bill Kilgour

Vestry Class:

Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027
Tanya Millet*	Geoff Pinney*	Barbara Bateman**
Sharon Hansen*	Kathy Hutchinson*	Peggy Schiavo*
Gene Goff*	Sue Rice*	Chris Mycek*
Janice Tabbut**	Ryan Collins*	Candy Nyce*

*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 2026 class
- V. State of the Parish Reports
- VI. Questions/Comments
- VII. Rector's Summary
- VIII. Closing Prayer & Adjournment



RECTOR'S WARDEN

Submitted by Sue Rice

As your Rector's Warden, I'm grateful for the chance to share a summary of what we have accomplished together this past year.

Last year with our Capital Campaign, we set out with a straightforward goal: to make our church home safer, more welcoming and better equipped to serve us. I believe that we have done that and more.

The biggest challenge was repaving the parking lot and the driveway. We all remember the cracks, uneven areas and huge potholes that made it difficult to maneuver- walking & driving. What a change in how different it feels driving in each week.

We also upgraded the lighting across the campus. The new LED fixtures make it brighter, warmer and more energy efficient.

We installed new windows on the second floor, complete with protective capping. This not only brightens the upstairs spaces but also seals and protects the frames from weather. This will reduce future maintenance for some time to come.

In the church proper we have replaced the aging A/C unit with a new more energy efficient one. We were proactive in replacing the old one before it completely failed.

The History Center was in need of some repairs. New windows were also installed. These updates honor our rich history in this our 325th year.

Still ahead is the full exterior painting of both the church and the History Center. We will see the prep work needed and the removal of the old shutters very soon. I think we are all very excited to refresh the look. I believe it will be inviting to our community.

A truly generous donation made it possible to purchase and install a brand new sound system. This has optimized our streaming capability. I think it's been a game-changer, allowing those who cannot be here in person to join us fully in worship. We are connecting people with the word of God.

Phase 3 of the cemetery restoration project was completed last summer. There were 74 headstones that needed cleaned & restored. We honor the faithful that have gone before us.

Looking forward, the Diocesan Transformation Team is now actively devising plans for what can be done with the Glebe House property and adjacent land. We are waiting for their ideas to determine the best way to utilize this area and be good stewards of this resource.

The Vestry Commissions have done amazing work. I hope their own reports show you the full scope of their dedication to our shared mission: ***Knowing and Serving God by Serving Others.***

Thank you all & may God continue to bless and guide this wonderful community.

MEETING MINUTES (2025)

Submitted by Kathy Hutchinson, Vestry Secretary

May 4, 2025

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Father Mike.

1. A motion was made and unanimously approved to accept the meeting agenda.
2. **Convention and Deanery Delegates** – Jon Yenney and Randy Rice were approved by acclamation.
3. There are 4 openings this year for **Vestry**. Father Mike thanked Sarah Deacle, Marilyn Hastings, and Francois Springuel for their years of service to the vestry. Additionally, an open position resulted from former parishioner David Woodrow's move.
 - a. Chris Mycek, Candy Nice, Geoff Pinney, and Peggy Schiavo were nominated for vestry. A motion was made and accepted to close nominations. All 4 members were elected by acclamation.
 - b. Barbara Batemen was also presented to serve a 2nd term on the vestry and was approved via acclamation.
4. **Servants of St. James** – Special commendations were awarded to Francois Springuel for his work on building and grounds, Diane Santori for her efforts to beautify Platt's Hall thru ECW, Cathy Maris for her dedication to the church and Outreach House, and Chuck Rogers for his work on financial committees and as a choir member.
5. **State of the Parish**
 - a. Maintaining an 1838 Church building, an even older History Center and cemetery, the Glebe House, along with the Outreach House, presents its challenges. St. James has accomplished a lot in recent years: new church roof, A/C, upgraded electrical, and construction of the Outreach House. Future significant expenditures that will be required: church parking lot paving, exterior church painting and shutter replacement, upstairs church window replacement, church HVAC, and replacement of windows in the history center, as well as potential columbarium development. We are fortunate to have our pledging families, income from the endowment fund, revenue sourced from the school, and the potential future income from development of the Glebe House property. Planning for these efforts will be a vestry priority.
 - i. Father Mike informed the parish of the Diocesan Transformation Project which exists to help parishes identify and implement potential income generating opportunities. In partnership, St. James will look to develop the Glebe House and land adjacent into an apartment complex. We have received offers for the land, but that would only yield a limited finite income. This will be a multi-year effort that will require zoning approval. The diocese will pay all up-front costs in return for a % of rental revenue.

- b. St. James has 670 registered members, with 115 pledging families, and an average Sunday attendance(ASA) of 202. The ASA includes in person worship and those viewing the service within 24 hours. Some of our viewers are out of the area and have donated. We may need to define an associate membership for these out of the area viewers who pledge and determine if any voting rights exist.
6. **Treasurer's Reports** - Mark presented an overview indicating our deficit was \$45K, lower than the projected deficit of \$77K.
- a. **Pledging** - While pledging families minimally increased for 2025, projected pledge income aided by the matching gift is \$65K higher than 2024. Mark reviewed ways to help increase benefit to St. James: checking for company match, reducing fees assessed by VANCO by donating monthly vs weekly, if cash or check donation and miss a service, drop the donation in the mailbox, stock gifts, and legacy donations (thru will, life insurance, etc...)
 - b. **Income** - Our income for 2024 was \$521K, with pledging the largest source at 62%. With both the pledging increase and a full year school tenant, 2025 income will increase.
 - c. **Expenses** - expenses in 2024 were \$566K, which was higher than anticipated due to the unplanned 2nd floor renovations for the new school tenant. Payroll represented the largest expense at 47%. Outreach House expenses were 11%; the remainder of Outreach funding comes from donations and grants. For 2025, Mark was able to cut expenses by eliminating the paid accountant for bank reconciliation and stabilize our cash outlay by making our contribution to the diocese over 10 months rather than all in 1 month. Thanks to Janice Tabbut for assisting in the bank reconciliation.
 - d. **Financial Assets** - Given the deficit, our overall financial assets decreased in 2024. Our endowment fund remains healthy, over \$500K.
 - e. **Parish Giving** – The parish committed 16% of our income to the Outreach House, Diocese, and to the rector's discretionary fund.
 - f. **Bequests** – Income from trusts and bequests are an important part of our overall financial health. St. James received \$37K in 2024 from the Robert and Ada Doris Hofsas trust.
 - g. **2025 Budget** – a \$33K deficit is projected for 2025.
7. **St. James' service to the community** – Use of the building and grounds to the Cub & Boy Scouts, AA, Vets in Recovery. We also support the community thru the Outreach House, participating in the CROP Hunger Walk, and the Collegeville-Trappe ministerium to raise funds for heating oil and gas cards.
8. **St. James' service to the parish**

- a. Enhance Worship by participating in: altar guild, worship leaders, acolytes, ushers, counters, streamers, music, choir, Theology on Zoom, Christ & Coffee. A special thanks to Ron Davis for stepping up in Lauren's absence and to David Deacle for helping to digitize the music.
- b. Supporting our programs: Vestry, ECW, Coffee Hour, Yoga, Book Club, Chicken BBQ, Foyer Gathering, Christmas Eve dinner, Shrove Tuesday pancakes, Youth Group, among others.
- c. Our sexton James helps reduce expenses by fixing things before any outsourcing. He and his wife Karen have also helped beautify the outside with various plantings.

9. Education

- a. Youth - Due to Lauren's injury, no formal report was made. Father indicated that Lauren has customized a curriculum spread over 3 years that covers the Shell, Cross, and Chalice to prepare youth for confirmation. This curriculum is now being used in 7 other diocesan churches.
- b. Adult – Theology on Zoom is held via Zoom or Wednesday nights and Christ and Coffee is held Thursday Mornings in Platt's Hall. All are welcome to attend.

10. Committee Reports

- a. Building and Grounds held 1 Blue Jean Sunday in the fall, which saves the parish an estimated \$4-6K in leaf clean-up. Continual review for opportunities to lower expenses, including modifying trash removal schedule, allowing acreage to become a meadow beyond the community garden, intent for vendor maintenance RFPs to last 3 years(with due diligence annually for fair market value.
 - i. Eagles Scouts performed both a cemetery and community garden clean-up.
 - ii. 2nd floor renovations were completed including toilets, floor replacement, painting, new radiator covers, and signs. The full cost was < than 1 year's full rent.
 - iii. Removed the termite damaged St. James statue
 - iv. Completed 2 Phases of the 3 Phase cemetery project to restore damaged head stones
 - v. New Sound System was installed.
 - vi. Received and accepted bids to reseal the Outreach House parking lot.
 - vii. In process of receiving bids for paving the church parking lot.
- b. **Outreach House** – With the rising cost of goods, the number of client households rose to 165, supporting 545 total people. Fortunately, no cuts were needed to shopping hours, nor food quantity allotted. Run by 4 volunteers, and

supported by numerous volunteers, 3,076 hours were donated by parishioners and community members.

- i. In-kind donations of food, diapers, personal care items and cleaning supplies weighed 51K pounds in 2024, an increase of 16K from 2023.
 - ii. Monetary donations exceeded 50K. Sources of income: corporate and individual giving, grants, and fundraising. Special occasion donations provided school supplies to 133 students, Thanksgiving turkeys to 86 families, mitten tree gifts to 142 children, and gift cards to 64 households with no children.
 - iii. Aside from food, the Outreach House is also a source of clothing, shoes, and accessories for many clients. Donations that are not suitable for clients are recycled, as are the thousands of plastic bags donations are received in.
- c. **Episcopal Church Women (ECW)** – All women are members. Four meetings were held in fellowship to plan events and enjoy crafts. The following fundraising events were held to support the mission of maintaining and beautifying Platt's Hall and the kitchen: Annual Tea, Soup Sales, Boscov's Coupons, and basket raffles. This year, the blinds in Platt's Hall were replaced, the kitchen range cleaned, the dishwasher serviced, and the floors in both rooms deep cleaned and waxed. Additionally, gift cards were provided to the Outreach House.
- d. **Fellowship** – A few new events were initiated in 2024. A special dinner was held to recognize the vets in recovery group for all they do for St. James. Special coffee hours were added to recognize the veterans in our parish and another for donuts prior to Lent. Additionally, a Lenten cleaning project was held. Special thanks to Jaime Keenan and Kerri Timinski for covering coffee hours and to Rob Santmann for a successful Chicken BBQ and assisting Janice with the transition this year.

11. **Questions** – Father Mike asked for questions. None were received.

12. **Rector's Summary** – Father Mike summarized that we are a welcoming parish, dedicated to community, facing some challenges ahead, but also presented with some opportunities. As we are years away from the potential income from an apartment complex, we need to address multiple capital expenditure needs. He has asked parishioners for their thoughts on a capital campaign and would welcome any feedback.

13. **Closing Prayer and Adjournment** – A motion was made and approved to adjourn the meeting. A closing prayer was offered by Father Mike.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Submitted by Mark Schultz, Treasurer

We had a \$20.3K surplus that was higher than expected. We finished \$54K better than the budget. Due to your regular and capital campaign pledges, income was above expectations (\$203K). Outreach House donations were almost \$28K 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 for the whole year also provides us with more steady income.

Our operating expenses were much higher due to the capital campaign, but handled from the additional pledges. 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

- This will be our second full year of income from the new tenant for the upstairs space.
- We continue to work 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 still a few years out.
- We continue to search for and apply for grants for Outreach funding. One from the diocese that we have had in the past was denied this year.

Expenses

- We are looking for savings whenever contracts are renewed (generally a three-year cycle)

Overall, our cash position is sound. Giving in January and February 2026 put us in a good cash position for now. Our endowment remains well funded, allowing us to weather a financial downturn.

Capital Campaign pledging exceeded our expectations. Our goal was \$235K and actual pledges were over \$293K. As of early March, we received \$192K. Painting the church exterior (over 50K) is the biggest project left. We also need to pay back the Diocese loan.

Pledging for 2026 has been a challenge. Our message was to give the same amount as last year. I think because of that message, returning pledge cards became a lower priority for some. For those that I see have continued to give, I have made their 2026 pledge the same as 2025. Continued growth in both pledging families and pledged income is important for our continued financial stability.

Looking Forward

While the 2026 budget forecasts a smaller deficit (10K) than in past years, we still need to be able to handle any curveballs that may come our way due to the age of our building and snow removal.

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, we are 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 2026, please do so.

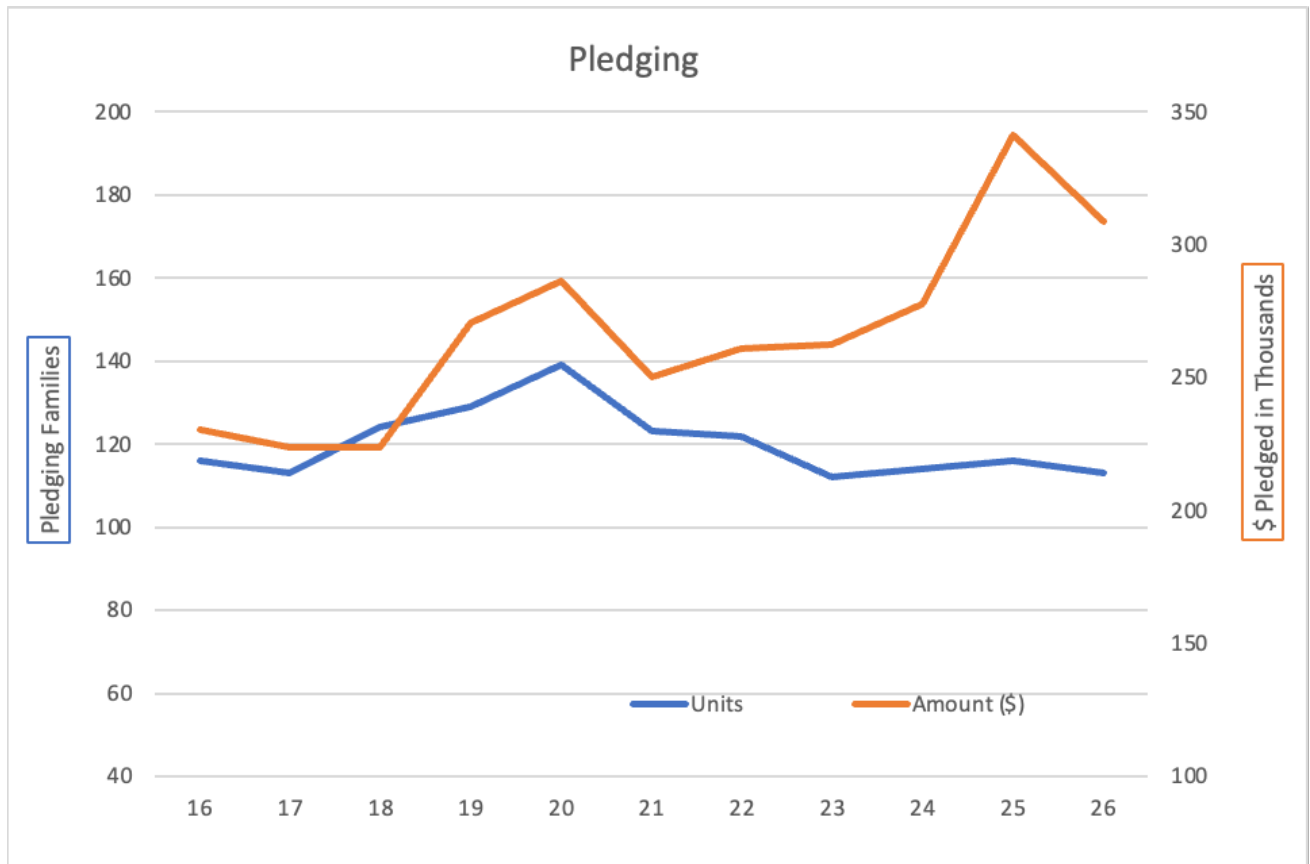
Charts and additional information can be found on the following pages.

PLEDGING

We had **116** pledging units in 2025, down from 117 in 2024. The pledged amount increased from \$280K to \$311K. Our actual pledge receipts were \$344.7K due to the match.

We have **113** pledging families for 2026 (as of April 1st). This has decreased since last year. Our projected pledge income is \$308,634.

Year	Units	Amount (\$)	+/-	+/-
15	101	201,905		
16	116	230,267	15%	14%
17	113	223,934	-3%	-3%
18	124	223,752	10%	0%
19	129	270,725	4%	21%
20	139	286,182	8%	6%
21	123	250,470	-12%	-12%
22	122	261,054	-1%	4%
23	112	262,510	-8%	1%
24	114	277,630	2%	6%
25	116	341,354	2%	23%
26	113	308,634	-3%	-10%

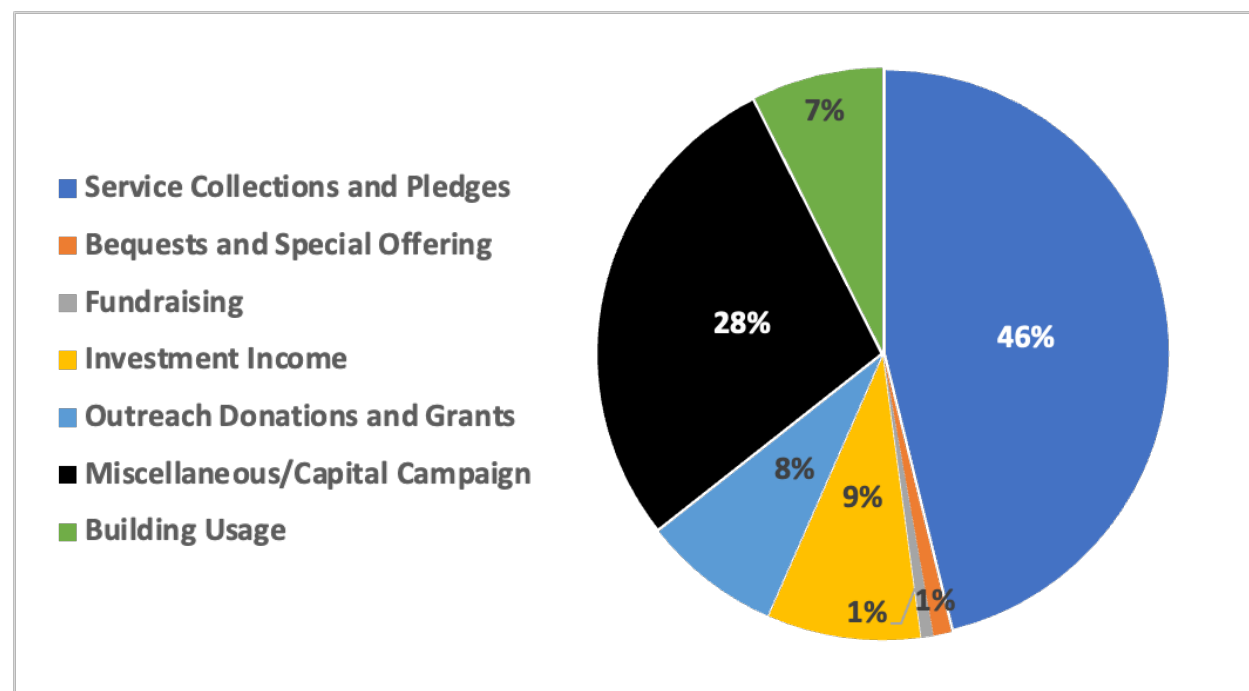


INCOME OVERVIEW

Our 2025 income totaled \$760,972. As the chart shows, church and capital campaign pledges were our largest source of income. **Pledging remains the cornerstone of St. James' financial well-being.**

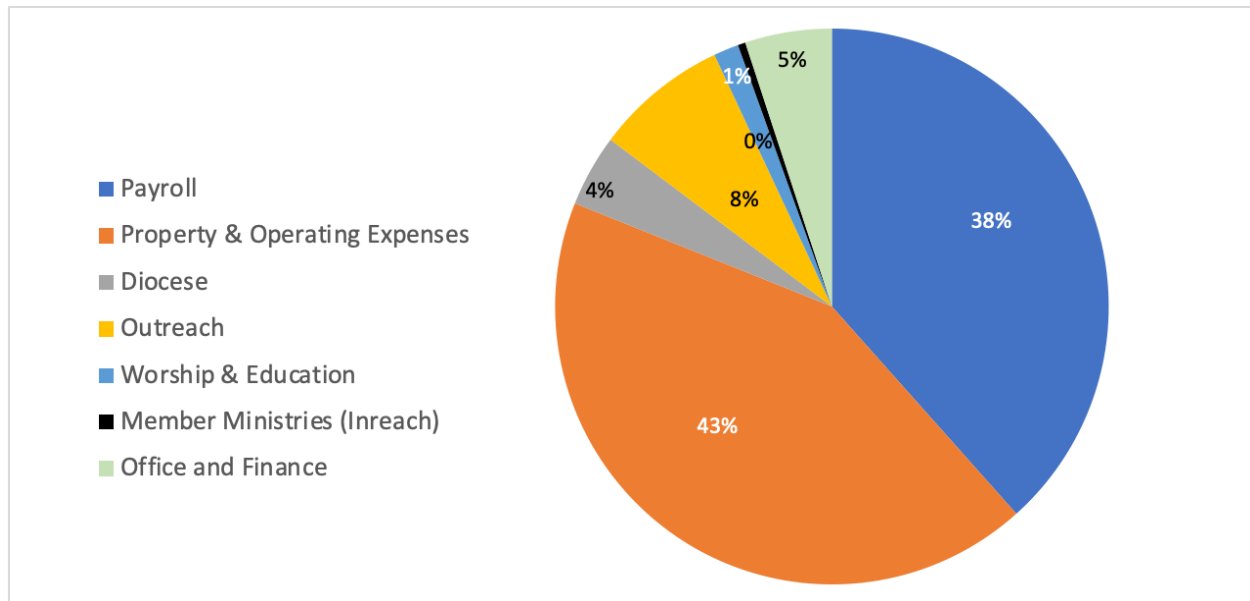
2025 Income				
	2025	%	+/-	+/-
Service Collections and Pledges	351,151	46%	25,939	8%
Bequests and Special Offering	7,850	1%	(361)	-4%
Fundraising	5,223	1%	797	18%
Investment Income	66,460	9%	7,147	12%
Outreach Donations and Grants	59,346	8%	9,107	18%
Miscellaneous/Capital Campaign	214,150	28%	166,898	353%
Building Usage	56,792	7%	30,309	114%
Total:	760,972		239,836	46%

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EXPENSE OVERVIEW

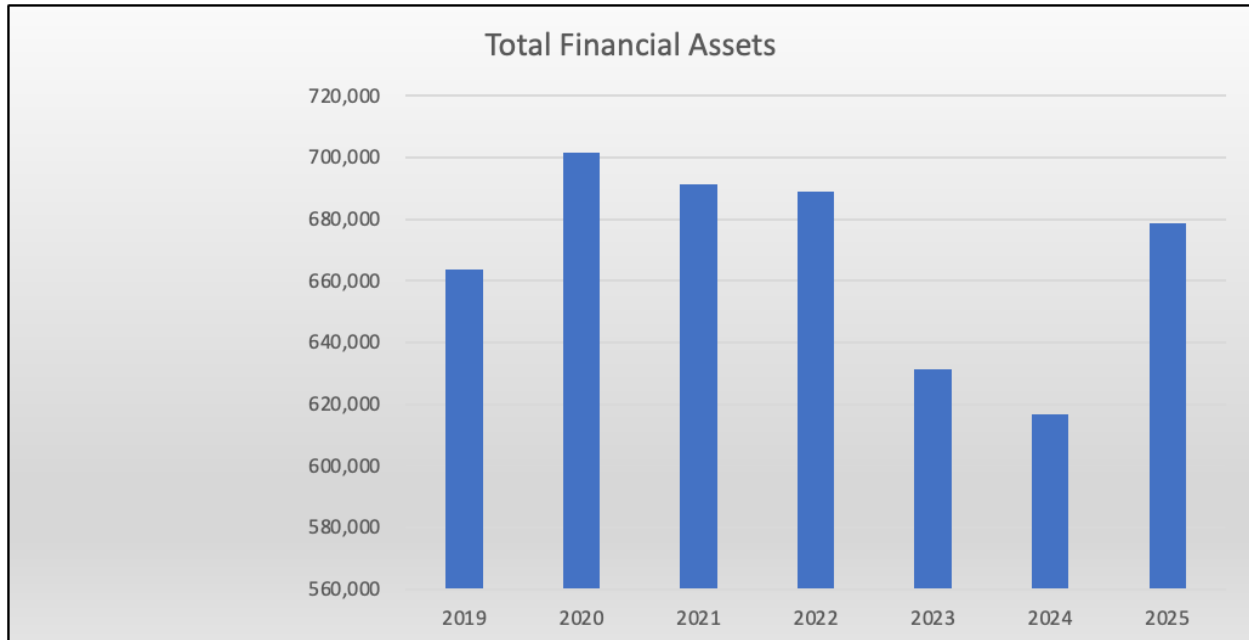
Expenses were much higher due to the Capital Campaign. Capital Campaign and Outreach House spent more than expected but were covered by larger than expected giving for these two initiatives.



	2025	%	+/-	+/-
Payroll	284,486	38%	20,672	8%
Property, Operating, CC Expenses	316,119	43%	205,730	186%
Diocese	31,076	4%	705	2%
Outreach	57,620	8%	(5,764)	-9%
Worship & Education	10,846	1%	(40,997)	-79%
Member Ministries	3,291	0%	(1,698)	-34%
Office and Finance	37,564	5%	(3,812)	-9%
Total	741,002	31%	174,835	31%

FINANCIAL ASSETS OVERVIEW

Total Parish assets grew considerably this year due to Capital Campaign pledges and Investment growth. Number includes new short-term account and Diocese loan. We retain a solid financial asset base, and our investments continue to grow and provide us with additional income.



2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
192,210	202,425	215,730	347,966	134,973	91,708	109,516
471,367	499,055	475,360	340,871	496,474	525,054	569,112
663,577	701,480	691,090	688,837	631,447	616,762	678,628

GIVING OVERVIEW

Ways to Give:

1. **Cash, Check** – 100% goes to Church
2. **Stock, Mutual Fund, ETF donation (Gift of Stock)**– goes through Church Foundation, 100% to church plus tax advantages. Form is on our website.
3. **VENMO** – great for consistent giving throughout the year. Fees - \$.45 per transaction, 1% from bank account, 3% most credit cards, 4% AMEX
4. **Qualified Charitable Distribution** – Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from IRA straight to church – 100% to church and tax break for giver.
5. **Donor-advised Fund (DAF)** - best for a higher-than-normal income year to handle charity giving for multiple years but tax break immediately.

Feel free to reach out to treasurer and/or your financial or tax advisor for what works best for you. All of you make our church possible!

BUDGET OVERVIEW

2026 Budget
January - December 2026

Revenue	
Prior year surplus	66434
400000 Service Income/Collections	
400010 Collections - Cash	7,500
400020 Pledges/Donations	340,000
400030 Holy Days	1,500
Total 400000 Service Income/Collections	339,000
401000 Special Offering Income	
401010 Flower Donations	4,700
401020 Memorial Contributions	3,000
Total 401000 Special Offering Income	7,700
402000 Fundraising Income	
402010 Fundraising	5,000
Total 402000 Fundraising Income	5,000
403000 Capital Campaign Income	
403010 Capital Campaign	65,000
Total 403000 Capital Campaign Income	65,000
404000 Outreach Income	
404010 Outreach House - Donations	42,000
404020 Outreach House - Grants	0
404030 Outreach - Miscellaneous Donations	500
Total 404000 Outreach Income	42,500
405000 Other Income	

405010 Building Usage	56,700
405030 Miscellaneous Receipts	9,000
Total 405000 Other Income	65,700
420000 Trust Income	
420010 Hofsas	38,000
Total 420000 Trust Income	38,000
430000 Investment Income.	
430010 Church Foundation	36,000
Total 430000 Investment Income.	36,000
440000 Interest Income	
440010 Interest - Non-Investment	100
Total 440000 Interest Income	100
Total Revenue	\$675,434
Expenditures	
501000 Education	
501010 Pilgrimage	3000
501020 Adult	500
501030 Youth	4,750
501040 Education Activities - Other	0

501050 Youth Group	500
Total 501000 Education	8,750
502000 Member Ministries	
502010 General Parish Activities	6,000
502020 ECW Expenses	3,500

Total 502000 Member Ministries	9,500
502100 Worship	
502110 Altar Supplies	1,200
502120 Altar Guild Flowers	4,500
502130 Organ Maintenance	300
502140 Music Maintenance - Other	600
502150 Music Program	1,700
502160 Stewardship	600
502170 Prayer Books	500
502180 Nursery Expenses & Supplies	200
502190 Worship - Other	1,900
Total 502100 Worship	11,500
503000 Outreach	
503010 Outreach - Food & Clothing	50,000
503020 Outreach - Other	1,000
Total 503000 Outreach	51,000
510000 Operating Expenses	
510010 Gas & Electric	21,000
510020 Sewer/Water	3,000
510030 Trash Collection	6,000
510040 Pest Control	1,600
510050 Fire Company/Extinguishers	1,000
510060 Cleaning Services	10,800
510070 Snow Removal	10,000
510080 Landscaping	35,000
510090 Repairs & Maintenance	10,000

510100 Sexton Supplies	600
510110 General Maintenance & Supplies	1,500
510120 Capital Improvements	20,000
510130 Major Capital Improvements	75,000
510200 Fundraising Expenses	2,000
Total 510000 Operating Expenses	197,500
520000 Finance & Administration	
520010 Internet/Telephone	5,000
520015 Cell phone	250
520020 Copy Machine - Lease	4,000
520030 Copy Machine - Repair	0
520040 Office - Supplies	5,200
520050 Office - Equipment	2,000
520060 Postage	600
520070 Professional Fees - Accountant	10,000
520080 Professional Fees - IT Services	3,300
520090 Professional Fees - Other	150
520100 Software Subscriptions	5,500
520110 Casualty Insurance	11,000
520120 Vanco Expense	1,400
520121 Vanco Expense - Credit Card Fees	1,700
520130 Vestry Discretionary	1,500
520140 Advertising	8,000
520150 Miscellaneous Expenses	1,000
520160 Loan Interest Payments	816
Total 520000 Finance & Administration	61,416

530000 Compensation	
530010 Rector	
530020 Rector Wages	76,485
530030 Rector's 403b Pension	0
530040 Rector's Diocesan Pension	20,967
530050 Rector's Health/Life Insurance	23,400
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	162,852
530100 Lay Staff	
530110 Parish Director - Wages	36,585
530140 Organist/CE Director - Wages	54,059
530150 Organist/CE Director Pension	2,704
530160 Organist/CE Dir Medical	30,532
530170 Supply Clergy/Choir Director - Wages	3,000
530180 Sexton - Wages	4,835
530190 Nursery Attendants - Wages	1,872
Total 530100 Lay Staff	133,587
Total 530000 Compensation	296,440
530500 Personnel Expense - Other	
530510 Payroll Taxes Employer Paid	7,500
530520 Workers Compensation Insurance	1,100
530530 Certification Expenses	450
530540 Mileage & Tolls	40

530550 Payroll Processing Fees	3,500
530560 Conference and Convention Fees	600
Total 530500 Personnel Expense - Other	13,190
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	100
Total 550000 Outside Ministry Support	100
600000 Sacred Gifts	
600010 Sacred Gifts - Diocese	32,222
Total 600000 Sacred Gifts	32,222
Total Expenditures	\$685,218
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$ -9,784

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Submitted by Gene Goff

A lot of improvements were completed or begun in 2025.

- The old wooden windows in the second-floor school have been replaced with energy efficient vinyl clad windows and the exterior trim has been capped to weather proof the trim. In the long term, this will save us maintenance costs and energy costs for heat and A/C.
- The windows in the history center have also been replaced with new windows and the exterior trim has been capped. In the long term, this will save us maintenance costs and energy costs for heat.
- To facilitate better audio for our service pod cast, a new sound system has been installed in the sanctuary.
- The third phase of the cemetery head stone restoration has been completed.
- The exterior lighting around the church and parking lot has been updated to LED long lasting, energy efficient lights on new timers to enhance the visibility at night and save on energy and maintenance cost.
- The windows of the Outreach House have been tinted to reduce the glare and the need for A/C during the summer saving us money.
- We contracted a new landscape maintenance company. This is saved us substantial money in that the last company charged us for mowing when it wasn't needed. The new company only charges for mowing as needed saving enough money to have them do the Fall clean-up instead of using volunteers and we still saved money over the past years.
- We had the large, rotting silver maple in the cemetery removed before it fell apart and damaged head stones or hit someone.
- We had some of the trip hazard low spots and holes in the cemetery filled in. There are more spots that need to be filled in. This will be done as the weather and financing allow.
- The crumbling parking lot was finally re-done. The old asphalt was removed, the base was repaired as needed and the lot was restriped. This was, by far, our largest project of the year. We expect have the surface last another 15 to 20 years.

Projects coming up in 2026 (some have been completed):

- Replacement of the kitchen floor.
- Replacing the A/C in the sanctuary.
- Exterior painting of the church building.
- Replacing the church shutters.
- Continuing re-grading of the cemetery.
- Repair of the cemetery fence.

A WORD FROM OUR SEXTON

Submitted by James Downam

I have been privileged to be your Sexton for the last 5 years. During this time, many projects have been accomplished. This last year alone I repaired a rotten window sill in the balcony, repainted the Bilco doors to the basement, painted the sign supports by the driveway, painted the lamp posts adjacent to the driveway, caulked cracks in the sanctuary and repainted the window sill behind the piano, just to name a few projects.

Weekly, I vacuum the pew cushions to maintain them for longevity. I empty the outside trash cans by hand to save the church money on disposal costs. When using the trash cans, please be kind and make sure the trash is bagged. Additionally, I picked up some janitorial responsibilities for the Outreach House to reduce costs on the weekly cleaning contract.

Monthly, I reapply Old English stain to the exposed wood on the pews to maintain a polished finish. The weekly cleaning of crayon and pencil marks from the pews with chemical cleaners necessitates this process.

Quarterly, I walk the cemetery to ensure old seasonal decorations are removed and the trash cans are emptied.

Special Projects are completed on an ongoing basis - recently the bookcases in Platt's Hall were secured to the wall to prevent tipping. As we have tiny humans congregating in the hall regularly, I make a point to improve safety conditions where I can.

Maintenance of the property is what I've been tasked with within my capacity, but it takes a village. Sometimes you may see something that needs attention that I may not see. Something broken or a light bulb that has failed, it could literally be anything. If you see something, please say something with a work request to the office administrator. The forms are in the cubby holes outside of Fr. Mike's office.

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

OUTREACH HOUSE

Submitted by Barbara Bateman & Candy Nyce
Vestry Liaisons – Outreach Commission

It is hard to believe that in 2025, Outreach House began its 6th year of assisting our neighbors in need in our “new” building. In both the first (2019-2020) year and this 6th year, Outreach House faced crises. Only a few months into 2020, the volunteer staff faced the challenge of providing service during the COVID pandemic. And provide they did, by rolling up their sleeves and rolling grocery shelves to the parking lot so that all who came could receive emergency supplies.

In the fall of 2025, Outreach House clients were faced with the results of a government shutdown and, for some, the loss of SNAP benefits. **Our client base increased by 29 families from August through December 2025.** Outreach House, with the support of St. James’ parishioners and the local community, was able to meet the increased demand. With minor adjustments, assistance was and continues to be provided.

It is difficult to overstate the role St. James’ parishioners and the local community played in this challenging year. Financial support and in-kind donations surged in response to the increased need to an extent we could not have anticipated. Each dollar, can of peas, or piece of clothing was received with joy as requests for assistance grew. **Some area pantries reduced hours...Outreach House kept its regular schedule.**

Significant financial support made possible the purchase of supplies not received in in-kind donations. A \$10,000 grant from St. Andrews Lutheran Church, awarded in December 2024, and an additional \$3,500 individual donation, both earmarked for the purchase of personal care items and cleaning supplies, covered 75% of these anticipated 2025 costs.

More than \$50,000 in unrestricted funds were donated over the course of the year. Among these were the Kimberton Whole Foods Register Roundup (\$10,370), a Nourish Montco Food Purchase Grant (\$ 3,500), Perkiomen Valley School District Foundation (\$ 2,000), CROP Walk (\$ 2,000+), local businesses (\$ 4,000+), and area churches (\$ 4,000+). Gifts from individual donors exceeded \$30,000.

In-kind donations grew as shown in the chart below. Here too, parish and community generosity were on display.



Outreach House

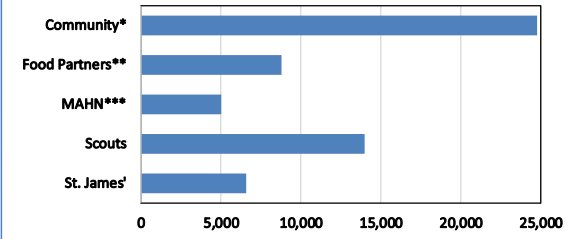
A Ministry of St. James' Episcopal Church

Outreach House is able to open its doors to our neighbors in need with the generous support of St. James' and our local community.

- Received in-kind donations in excess of 58,000 pounds, exceeding expectations.
- Average 395 individuals served per month from an average 172 monthly visits.
- Provided: Easter gift cards to 82 shoppers, box fans to 22 households, school supplies to 131 students, Thanksgiving turkeys for 75 tables, Mitten Tree gifts to 212 children, Xmas gift cards to 57 single-person or adults-only households.



Pounds of Food Donated



Donor	Pounds of Food Donated (approx.)
Community*	25,000
Food Partners**	9,000
MAHN***	5,000
Scouts	14,000
St. James'	6,000

* Community includes other Churches, Service Organizations, School Clubs & Sports Teams, Businesses, and Individuals

** Food Partners include Costco, Kimberton Whole Foods & Wawa

*** Montco Anti-Hunger Network



Outreach House continued to operate with a 100% volunteer staff. Members of St. James' and the community at large spent more than 3,000 hours processing groceries, sorting clothing, picking up and delivering goods, and assisting clients.

To keep Outreach House visible and aware of area needs and resources, members of the Outreach House Advisory Board attended quarterly meetings of the Intercounty Coalition of the Montco Anti-Hunger Network. Outreach House hosted two of these meetings in 2025. Members have also participated in meetings of the Core Community Council sponsored by the Food Policy Council of Montgomery County. All avenues continued to be explored to identify possible revenue sources through these county connections and beyond.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN (ECW)

Submitted by Sandy Hassinger

Membership in ECW (Episcopal Church Women of St James) is bestowed upon all of the women of St James' Church, and whose purpose is to relate the entire womanhood of the parish to the whole goal of the church through a program of worship, study, service, gifts and fellowship.

ECW OFFICERS:

President - Sandy Hassinger

Vice President - Diane Sartori

Treasurer - Jean Branco

Recording Secretary - Peggy Schiavo

Average attendance at meetings - 17

ECW has continued to support the maintenance, upkeep and improvements to the kitchen and Platts Hall through our established fund-raising projects including:

Annual Spring Tea which in May 2025 had a record attendance of 54

Bosco's Friends Helping Friends Shopping Pass Sales

Annual Autumn Soup Sale and the addition of a second Winter/Spring Soup Sale

With money raised through these fund-raisers, ECW was able to contribute 50% of the money needed to replace the microwave oven and 70% for the new kitchen flooring. Additionally, time was spent in the autumn to spruce up the kitchen counters and cupboards, as well as the shelves in Platts Hall. During the 2025 Lenten season, a deep cleaning of the building was organized and carried out.

Finally, at the December ECW meeting, 32 gift cards were donated to the Outreach House, and will be distributed to their clients at Easter.

The ECW Bereavement Committee assisted with one Funeral Luncheon this past summer.

In the upcoming year, ECW is hoping to be able to assist with replacing hallway flooring, as well as the carpet in the nave.

Meetings occur 4 times annually in October, December, February and April with the Annual Tea being held every May. As always, we are hoping that additional women in the congregation will join us at meetings, and contribute their time and talent in the mission of ECW.

ADULT EDUCATION

Submitted by Father Mike Sowards, Rector

There were two offerings for adults seeking a greater understanding of their faith last year in 2025. 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

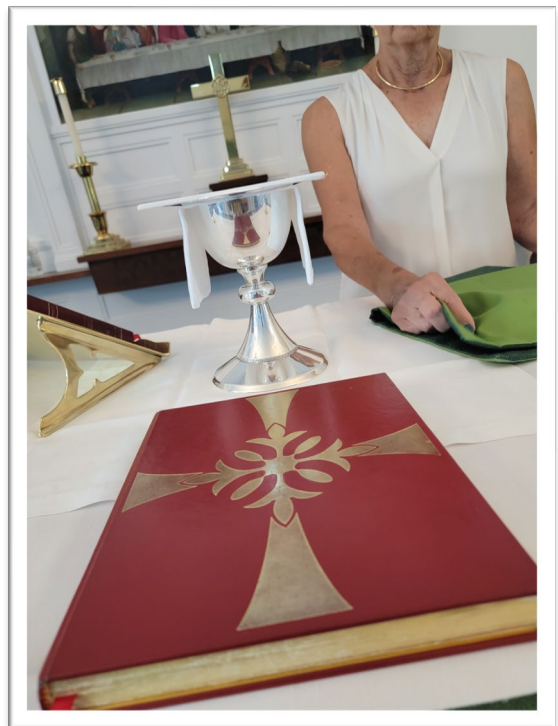
The Altar Guild of St. James serves the church and assists the rector by preparing the altar for all church services including weddings, funerals, and church holidays.

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



PARISH LIFE

Submitted by Peggy Schiavo

The Parish Life Committee plans fellowship events for the church throughout the year believing that the friendships and support we find with each other are strong parts of belonging in the church community. Some of the activities from the past year are:

Organizing weekly coffee hours and hosting special coffee hours, Foyer Gatherings, Chicken BBQ, Welcome Back Sunday, Veteran's Coffee Hour, Christmas Pageant Reception, Donut Sunday and Pancake Supper, Church Picnic, and new this year, the Chili Cook-Off. We liaison with other groups in the church such as ECW, The Good Book Club and the hosts of Foyer Gatherings.

Activities can change from year to year with new ideas welcome for the church to socialize together.



NEW MEMBER MINISTRY

Submitted by Chris Mycek & Geoff Pinney

The New Member Ministry at St. James continues to focus on extending a warm and intentional welcome to those newly arriving in our surrounding community. Under the leadership of Chris and Geoff, this ministry seeks to embody the hospitality of Christ by reaching out beyond our walls and inviting others into the life of our parish.

Outreach and Engagement

Over the past year, we have maintained a consistent presence in the local community through the distribution of “Welcome to the Neighborhood” packets. These packets include information about St. James, our worship life, ministries, and opportunities for fellowship and service.

Using data sourced from Realtor.com—provided by a member of our parish—we have been able to identify recent home purchases within a 10-mile radius of St. James. This has allowed us to target our outreach in a thoughtful and timely way, focusing on individuals and families who are newly settling into the area and may be open to establishing new community connections.

Activity and Reach

In 2026, the ministry has distributed an average of approximately 12 welcome packets per month, resulting in over 140 households reached throughout the year. Each delivery represents not only an invitation to St. James, but a small act of presence and welcome offered in Christ’s name.

Ministry Reflection

This work continues to remind us that evangelism in the Episcopal tradition is rooted in hospitality, presence, and invitation rather than persuasion. By simply showing up and extending a welcome, we participate in God’s ongoing work of gathering people into community.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, we hope to:

- Continue and possibly expand the radius or frequency of outreach
- Explore ways to follow up with those who receive packets
- Invite additional parishioners to participate in this ministry of welcome

Closing

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve in this ministry and for the support of the parish in helping St. James remain a place where newcomers are not only greeted, but truly welcomed.

YOUTH EDUCATION AND MUSIC

Submitted by Lauren Exley, Director of Education & Music

Dear People of St. James',

Without a doubt, 2025 was a challenging year, both for me personally and for our entire St. James family. My accident on April 14th, 2025, just as we were beginning Holy Week, altered the course of the remaining year. Given the depth of my responsibilities covering both the Music and Education program, it was inevitable that changes would need to be made. Events were modified. Volunteers scrambled to step into new roles. There was an immediate understanding that all would be well, even if things didn't go quite according to plan. I am a person who thrives on detail and I take pride in my preparations for Holy Week. (Yes, it is true that as I was lying in the emergency room, I apparently insisted on telling Fr. Mike where I had stashed all the prepared Easter eggs.) Though being in the hospital that week was heartbreaking for me, I was truly at peace knowing that everything would be taken care of by my wonderful St. James family.

Beyond knowing that my work responsibilities were being tended to, I also felt your love in the weeks and months that followed the accident. It was an extensive and challenging recovery, and even as I write this in March 2026, it isn't quite complete. But through it all, I have felt everyone's love and understanding. Your love filled my hospital room with so many flowers that the nurses were having trouble finding more shelf space. Your love sent me cards that covered my walls and reminded me that I wasn't alone. Your love generously gave financial support for a wheelchair ramp so that I would be able to leave the hospital and return home to Ollie. Your love fed my family for countless weeks, making the burden of life a little easier to bear. You brought your love with you on visits, sent it in texts, and mailed it in letters. As my mind struggled to stay afloat, you lifted me up in ways I cannot begin to describe. You have all given me a gift I can never hope to repay and bestowed a blessing I will attempt to pass on.

The Youth Education, Youth Fellowship, and Music Program reports you are about to read would not have been possible without the support of many. Without a second thought, Ron slid back onto the organ bench and played Holy Week with just a few days' notice and then covered the organ for nearly 5 months. For someone who was supposed to be enjoying his retirement, this was a huge request. But that is who Ron is - giving through and through. A person of immeasurable kindness with musical talent to spare.

Tanya, Betsy, Jaime, and Kerri carried out all my plans for youth programming. They made sure that the Easter Egg hunts, Maundy Thursday youth event, Junior Choir, and Holy Week Passport programs happened. It's not easy to execute plans that exist in someone else's brain, but they did it masterfully! Our amazing Church School teachers kept class running for the remainder of the school year. (Thank you for reading my rambling emails from the hospital, trying to tell you where to find the supplies for each

week!) I am so grateful to have a group of dedicated teachers, and our youth are blessed to have you in their lives.

Despite not having their Director, the Choir continued to share their gift of music. After months of rehearsals, they were determined that nothing was going to stop them from singing the music we had prepared for Holy Week and beyond. I am very honored to be their director, and I am grateful beyond measure for their support for me.

Behind the scenes, the church continued to support me financially. The Vestry voted to keep my pay at 100% while on disability, paying 33% out of pocket while disability insurance covered the rest. With all the unexpected financial costs that come with an accident of this size, it was a blessing to have a little less to worry about.

Since I returned to work in September, Fr. Mike has made it clear that healing is my first priority. Without hesitation, he has allowed a flexible schedule that makes it possible for me to do my work while still attending many hours of physical therapy each week. There is an understanding that my work will be done, though not on quite the same schedule as before. This flexibility and understanding have been paramount in my ability to continue healing.

While there is no time of year that one would welcome an accident of this magnitude, I am thankful that my absence was mostly during the summer months. As the summer typically has a slower pace than the program year, the impact was primarily felt in my own preparation for the year ahead and the effect on current events was minimized. I did not have dedicated time for planning during the summer months, so when I returned in September, I took on the challenge of planning events at the same time as executing them.

Despite being out of the office for nearly 5 months, a great deal was accomplished across all areas of Youth Education, Youth Fellowship, and Music throughout 2025. I launched several new programs, both at the beginning of the year and after my return in Fall 2025. New initiatives for 2025 included:

- Updated pew activity bags
- A Holy Week passport program
- A Church School attendance challenge
- A new Episco-Tots group for babies and toddlers
- 2nd - 5th grade youth group meetings
- Finalizing our curriculum and making it available on our website
- Writing and organizing an intergenerational Christmas Pageant

Of course, I continued to grow existing programs, make improvements where needed, and remained dedicated to serving the people of St. James'. No matter what our future brings, I know that our programs will continue to thrive in the years ahead with the love and support of the people of St. James'.

With a grateful heart,

Lauren Exley

Youth Education and Youth Fellowship Report

Church School

Throughout **Spring 2025** our classes completed Units 3 and 4 of our Chalice Year curriculum, a series of lessons that center on Eucharist in the Episcopal Church.



The Primary class learned that Eucharist is a time for us all to gather as a church family and share a special meal. They also learned how we pray together as a church family during worship and as individuals at home. Students practiced many forms of prayer, including the “Lord’s Prayer”.

The Elementary class studied “why” and “how” we celebrate Eucharist, focusing heavily on the liturgical structure of the service. Students became familiar with the history and use of our prayer book, with a

goal of seeing the *Book of Common Prayer* as a resource for personal prayer and spiritual life in the years to come.

The Middle School class studied practices that support a person’s spiritual life. At a time when choices surrounding spiritual life become more and more their own responsibility, these lessons encouraged students to commit to living a Christian life through worship and personal faith practices. Students also studied the lives of people who have responded to a call from God. Students considered the challenges and dangers that are present when following God and were given tools to help them seek out and follow God’s call in their own lives.

The High School class completed a youth adaptation of Bishop Curry’s Way of Love curriculum, with a goal of incorporating the spiritual disciplines of Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, and Rest into daily life. Students also completed their unit on Climate Justice, with a goal of students seeing the work of Climate Justice as a response to their baptismal covenant.



Thank you to our teachers for Fall 2024 - Spring 2025!

Primary (PreK - 1st): Karen Charpentier and Katie Skonier

Elementary (2nd - 5th): Sarah Deacle and Tanya Millet

Middle School (6th - 8th): Cat McElroy and Ben Millet

High School (9th - 12th): Jodi Kohar and Laura Wingerter

Substitutes: Carole Exley, Kathy Hutchinson, Christina Ilgen, and Jeannine Pinaula

Throughout **Fall 2025** our classes completed Units 1 and 2 of our Cross Year curriculum. This series of lessons prepared students for their future in-depth study of Worship, which occurs during Unit 3.



The Primary class began the year with a study of an Old Testament family that worshipped and followed God over generations. Students learned that they can also worship and follow God as part of God's family. Later, students learned what happened before Jesus was born and that, like Mary, they can also say "yes" to God. Students also began to see Jesus as a teacher and discussed how to trust God and love others.

The Elementary class heard stories of Old Testament heroes who worshipped and followed God in difficult situations. Students were challenged to follow God in their own lives and considered how they can be agents of change in a struggling world. Students also considered what it means to live a Christian life. Through their study of the "Sermon on the Mount", "Golden Rule", and "Great Commandment", students considered how they can follow Jesus' teachings and live a life of love.

The Middle School class studied Old Testament communities who followed God in uncertain times. Students recognized the qualities of people who follow God and discovered the gifts they possess that allow them to follow God. They then studied the lives of people in the early church community, hearing how the early believers struggled to build a community amid persecution and conflict. Students were challenged to recognize a gift they possess and take an active role in growing the church today.



The High School class participated in a scripture study, utilizing the book "Blessed to Bless". Students investigated the literary and historical context of Scripture and learned to interpret Scripture through a variety of lenses to strengthen both understanding and personal faith.

Thank you to our teachers for Fall 2025 - Spring 2026!

Primary (PreK - 1st): Karen Charpentier and Katie Skonier

Elementary (2nd - 5th): Sarah Deacle and Tanya Millet

Middle School (6th - 8th): Cat McElory and Ben Millet

High School (9th - 12th): Jodi Kohar and Laura Wingerter

Substitutes: Carole Exley, Kathy Hutchinson, Jeannine Pinault, and Sue Rice

Registration and Attendance Information

For the 2025-2026 school year, we have 44 registered students in PreK - 12th grade and 20 families involved in our program. There are 8 students registered for the Primary Class, 14 students registered for the Elementary Class, 12 students registered for the Middle School Class, and 10 students registered for the High School Class. On average, 39% (Spring 2025) and 53% (Fall 2025) of our registered students attended Church School every week.



Church School Curriculum and Website

When I first began serving as the Education Director, I was tasked with searching out and implementing a curriculum that was rooted in the Episcopal faith and, specifically, the Baptismal Covenant. Though there are several curriculum options available for the wider Protestant faith, they are designed to be applicable to many traditions. Most center

around bible stories without including content specific to our theology and worship. The *Episcopal Children's Curriculum* and *Episcopal Curriculum for Youth* were existing programs available for free from Virginia Theological Seminary. The content reflected our goals; however, the lessons themselves were outdated and needlessly complex. Over the last 9 years, I have painstakingly adapted and modified the curriculum into a streamlined version of the original. Additionally, after working with Fr. Mike to identify a complete list of our goals for faith formation at St. James', I wrote new content to better reflect those goals. I have also created an extensive collection of printables and activities that seek to provide meaningful experiences rooted in theology. After 9 years of work, I have finally completed our curriculum.

Over the years, as others in the Diocese have learned about our unique curriculum, I have had many requests to share the contents. I began sharing the curriculum with other churches through individual shared folders and emails. As the full curriculum was not completed yet, this was not a streamlined process. After the curriculum was completed, I began creating a permanent solution by organizing our curriculum on our website. (After 9 years of content floating around my hard drive, this was not a small feat!) Our curriculum, including lessons and printables, is now available for free on our website for all. Parishioners, prospective families, and formation leaders at other churches have access to the curriculum and can see specifically what our children and youth are learning in Church School at St. James'. Additionally, this creates a perpetual resource for our own use. Future Church School teachers will always have access to their lessons and materials.

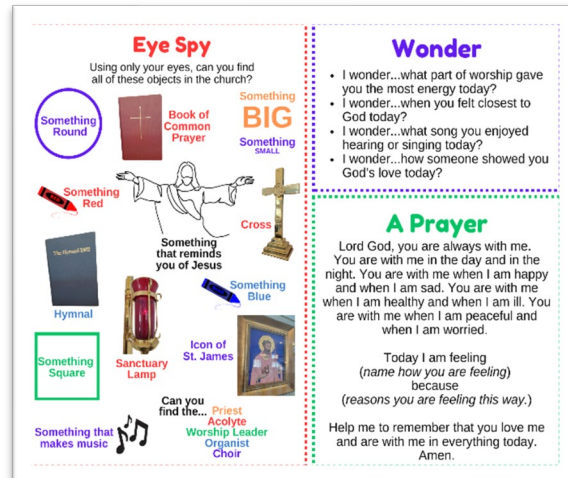
You can view our curriculum on our website at stjames-episcopal.org/curriculum



Pew Activity Bags

In January 2025, I began the process of updating our activity bags that are available for children during worship. Previously known as “sheep bags”, I wanted to provide more options to support a child’s worship experience and make it easier to maintain the contents. Our bags now have items that can be used to help a child pray, listen for God, and interact with the service around them. Items include a drawing

tablet, finger labyrinth, bubble popper, stuffed lamb, activity book, box of crayons, and a selection of books for older and younger children. A laminated card provides suggestions for the use of each of these items, as well as an “eye spy” game, wondering questions, and prayer.



Holy Week Passports

Historically, youth attendance is low at Holy Week services. While I certainly understand the difficulty from a scheduling standpoint, I’m always looking for ways to encourage families to give their children the gift of a Holy Week experience. In 2025, I introduced a “Holy Week Passport”. Youth earned a sticker for every Holy Week service they attended. Those stickers then translated into points that could be used to purchase prizes on Easter Sunday! Thank you to everyone who helped give out stickers and prizes on Easter Sunday!

“Donut” Attendance Challenge

To encourage more regular attendance in Church School, I initiated a “Donut Attendance Challenge”. Every week, classes would earn a number of “sprinkles” based on the percentage of registered students that attended. If over 75% of registered students attended the class, students would earn 4 sprinkles that week. If less than 25% of students attended the class, students would earn 1 sprinkle that week. The sprinkles were tallied on the youth bulletin board. When a class reached 15 sprinkles, they earned a class donut party! This reward system proved popular, and students loved celebrating with donuts!



Episco-Tots

In Fall 2025, we held our first ever Episco-Tots gathering! This special class just for babies and toddlers (and their caregivers) provides an opportunity for our littlest members to come together as a community and learn about their faith. The 45-minute-long class introduces a variety of songs, movement activities, and stories. Seasonal activities are planned for the Christmas and Easter season, and a special emphasis is placed on introducing concepts important to the Episcopal faith. The topic for our Fall 2025 gathering was “God made me!” The children sang songs and heard stories about how they were made to be special and loved!



2nd - 5th Grade Youth Group

This year, we began hosting Youth Group meetings just for the Elementary class! Elementary students have always been included in church-wide fellowship events, but they haven’t attended events specifically for their age group. Two events were scheduled - one in December 2025 and one in February 2026. Our first meeting was a Christmas Party! We made

ornament crafts, played silly games, and decorated cookies (with a LOT of icing!) We talked about how Jesus was a baby and then a child, just like them. The concept that Jesus had to learn to talk, share, be a friend, and listen to their parents was mind blowing. It was wonderful to celebrate the season! Thank you to Tanya Millet for helping with this event!



6th - 12th Grade Youth Group

Youth Group is an opportunity for youth to gather for fun, fellowship, deep conversation and prayer. We meet an average of 1x per month. With a combination of serious discussion topics and fun events, Youth Group provides an opportunity for community building and learning. A massive thank you to Ryan Collins for assisting with Youth Group this year!

In early 2025, we wrote our own Prayers of the People and laughed our way through a Bible themed game of Family Feud!



Unfortunately, our remaining Spring and Summer events were cancelled due to the accident. We came back after the summer break, got caught up on each other's lives, and made plans for our Car Wash fundraiser.

In October, we took a trip to Northern Star Farm! We talked about the importance of caring for creation and had a lot of fun taking a hayride, playing games, and petting baby animals. We ended our time by praying for each other and for the week ahead.

In November, we hosted 16 youth and 14 adults for an intergenerational Friendsgiving Dinner. It was a wonderful time of fellowship and strengthened our community in many ways. Then, we attempted to have a Christmas Party, but it was cancelled 2 times in a row due to snow!

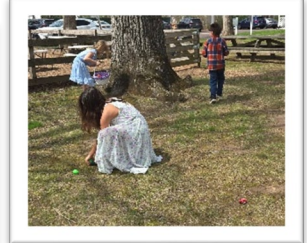
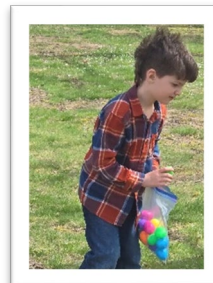
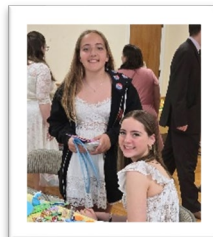
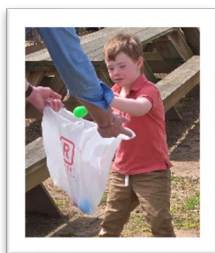
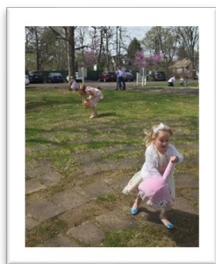
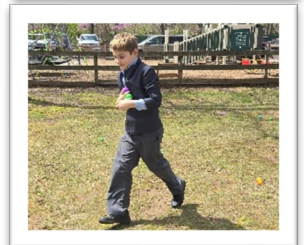
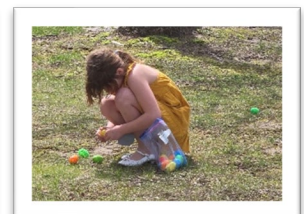
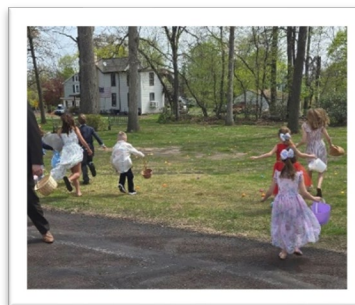
Maundy Thursday Youth Event

Our annual Holy Week event for 2nd - 12th grade took place on Thursday, April 17. The youth participated in an interactive Stations of the Cross, written by Lauren Exley and led by Fr. Mike Sowards and Tanya Millet. This adapted Stations of the Cross used youth-friendly language and allowed students of all ages to participate in a meaningful experience. Students used physical actions and tactile materials to process the events of each station. The youth enjoyed dinner together before attending the Maundy Thursday service.



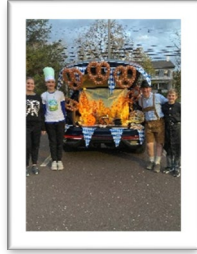
Easter Egg Hunt

The Egg Hunt is open to all youth following the 10am Easter Sunday service. Students in PreK - 5th grade enjoyed the outdoor egg hunt while 6th - 12th grade had a “glow-in-the-dark” egg hunt in the downstairs classrooms.



Youth also collected the prizes they earned from their Holy Week passports and enjoyed a variety of Easter crafts.

Trunk or Treat

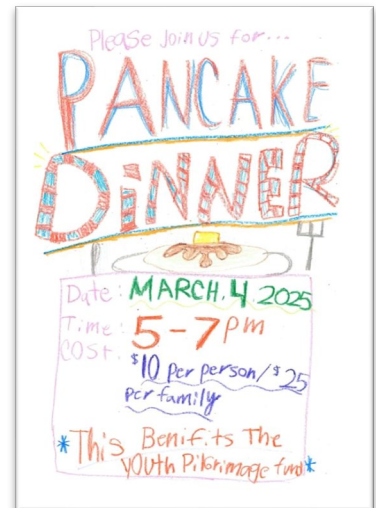
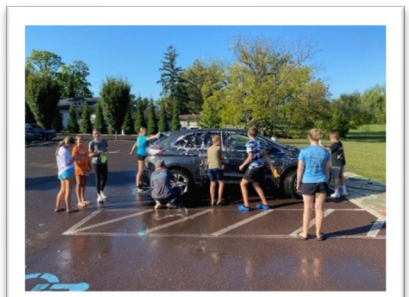


Our annual “Trunk or Treat” event was held on Sunday, October 26 from 6:30 - 7:30pm, with the All Hallows Eve service being held at 7:30pm. Children from St. James and the surrounding neighborhood enjoyed trick-or-treating around the parking lot followed by a spooky hayride! As always, it was a fierce competition for the honor of the “best trunk”. Many thanks to our creative trunk hosts and to Steve and Nadine Folk for providing hayrides! It was our most well-attended event yet, with nearly 20 trunks!

Youth Fundraisers

Throughout the year, the youth run a variety of fundraisers to support the upcoming Pilgrimage cycle. In 2025, students worked at the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, ran a Car Wash, and baked goodies for a Dessert Auction.

Thank you to the adult volunteers who agreed to oversee the Car Wash, the adults who worked the kitchen for Shrove Tuesday, and everyone who came for pancakes and bid on baked goods. Your support makes our Pilgrimage possible!



Music Program Report

Adult Choir

The Adult Choir enhances weekly worship through the singing of hymns and anthems. Music supports a rich worship experience and provides opportunities for both the singers and listeners to connect to their faith with a broader range of emotions. In addition to supporting congregational worship, the choir provides members with an opportunity for regular fellowship and helps singers of all abilities to improve their musical skills. The Adult Choir rehearses regularly (Thursday nights, 7:30pm), preparing for Sunday anthems and other special events. Throughout Fall 2025, the choir's major project was preparing a Christmas Cantata as part of St. James' Christmas Pageant presentation.



Current Choir Members

Soprano: Val Coughlin, Betsy Springuel, and Janice Tabbut

Alto: Carole Exley, Nadine Folk, Tanya Millet, and Janet Newman

Tenor: Chuck Rogers

Bass: Ron Davis, Bob Gannon, and Andrew Timinski

The Adult Choir at St. James' forms the core group of musicians that work tirelessly to support worship in our church. During busy times, such as Holy Week and the week of Christmas Eve, choir members gladly stay for late rehearsals and attend multiple services to better support worship. I am grateful to serve such dedicated and talented musicians here at St. James'!

Junior Choir

The Junior Choir is open to singers from Age 3 - 5th grade who would like an experience of singing for church. Currently, we present anthems on Easter Sunday and Christmas Eve and rehearse the weeks leading up to each performance. Music is always accessible to both readers and non-readers, giving all a chance to participate.



For Easter 2025, the Junior Choir sang "The Whole World Sings Alleluia". Thank you to Tanya Millet and Ron Davis who ensured that the choir still had a chance to sing! For Christmas 2025, the Junior Choir sang an energetic Gospel song titled "Glory, Hallelujah!" What a fun piece to rehearse and perform!



Music Concert

Our annual Music Concert was held on Saturday, February 1st, 2025. This event requires a great deal of behind-the-scenes work selecting and rehearsing music. Soloists come in for several rehearsals in the weeks prior to the concert. Not only does the concert provide everyone with the opportunity to do solo work, it also allows for private vocal coaching as I work one-on-one with the singers. On the night of the concert, musicians of all ages sang and played their way through a fantastic program! Donations were collected to help support the purchase of a new sound system for the sanctuary. Thank you to all the performers: Ron Davis, Chuck Rogers, Mary Sisca, Delilah Cruz-Timinski, Jackson Skonier, Val and Dan Coughlin, Andrew Timinski, Mary Martin, Janice Tabbut, Lorelei Cruz-Timinski, Andrew Timinski, Todd Sisca, Rachael Chapman, and David Deacle.

Christmas Pageant

The 2025 Christmas Pageant was titled “Sing A Song of Christmas”. This was truly an intergenerational presentation, with the Adult Choir providing the music, youth of all ages providing the action, and teen narrators Elizabeth Deacle and Charlotte Keenan guiding the story. Thank you to all who support our annual Christmas pageant! The pageant was followed by a church party where students enjoyed a variety of Christmas crafts and ornament making as they awaited their visit with St. Nicholas.



Sound System Upgrade

After years of trouble shooting faulty speakers and dealing with increasingly outdated equipment, it was time to make an upgrade to the sound system in our sanctuary. When the system was finally replaced in early 2025, it had been over 2 years since our speakers had worked properly. There was little to no amplification at all, which made it increasingly difficult for those parishioners who were hard of hearing to engage in worship. Additionally, the audio quality for those viewing our live stream was incredibly low. The clarity, particularly for music, was poor and the amplification was insufficient. It was evident that while our video capabilities were excellent, our current audio system was not suitable for those participating with our services from home.

Throughout 2024, we began having serious discussions about how and when to replace our audio system. It was going to be a large project, including replacing all the wiring

and equipment, as well as installing a new board that had the ability to work with our existing video system. The total cost of the system, including installation and equipment, was \$25,000. Of that amount, \$20,000 was provided by an anonymous donation and the remaining balance was covered by church funds.

Since the installation of the new audio equipment, the increase in quality both in house and on live stream has been incredible. The quality of recording for the service, and the choir in particular, has made it a more enjoyable experience for those participating at home. In-house, parishioners who are hard of hearing report less frustration when trying to follow the service. The piano can be fed through the speakers across the room, making it easier for the choir to hear the accompaniment. The choir microphones also make it easier for those both on live stream and in-house to hear the hymns. The new sound system has been a blessing and will support our worship for years to come!

Music Selection

In addition to preparing preludes, postludes, and choral music, it is also my joy to select the congregational hymns for each service. Hymns are carefully selected to reflect the daily readings and the theology of the Episcopal Church with attention to the overall familiarity and sing ability of the music.

The Episcopal Church has a series of authorized hymnals from which to select hymns. Our primary hymnal is *The Hymnal 1982* (the blue hymnal). Supplemental hymnals include *Wonder, Love, and Praise*, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, *Voices Found*, and *My Heart Sings Out*. While many of our favorite hymns are contained within *The Hymnal 1982*, I never want to overlook the beautiful music found in the supplemental hymnals. Each one contains a wide variety of music from all traditions and time periods. As I have access to these hymnals through our planning software, Rite Planning, I have increasingly utilized hymns from all these texts.

Why do I make a point of including music from all these sources? I feel strongly that it is important to include the wisdom from composers and lyricists from across musical history in our worship, from the writers of the early church to contemporary times. For example, *Lift Every Voice and Sing* contains music drawn from Negro spirituals, traditional and contemporary Gospel songs, missionary and evangelistic hymns, and more. *Voices Found* contains hymns that are specifically about or composed by women. *My Heart Sings Out* includes music that is inclusive of all abilities, focusing on music that is typically easier to sing and accessible to children as well as adults.

Throughout 2025, the following hymns were introduced in worship: “Bless the Lord my soul” (WLP 825), “Guide my feet Lord” (WLP 819), “What a friend we have in Jesus” (LEVAS 109), “Leave it there” (LEVAS 197), “Have thine own way, Lord!” (LEVAS 145), “I Surrender All” (LEVAS 133), “Shall We Gather at the River” (LEVAS 141), “Jesus describes a forceful woman” (VF 25), “A long lost lamb” (VF 95), “Everywhere I go” (MHOS 143), and “Crashing waters at creation” (MHOS 95).

This list does not contain all of the hymns we have used from these hymnals, that would be a much longer list, but these are hymns that were specifically new in 2025. My goal is to increase familiarity with hymns from all these sources and continue to expand the musical offerings in worship.



St. James' Episcopal Church
knowing and serving God by serving others

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