
Igniting Passion for Jesus Christ to Change Lives

ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH 209TH ANNUAL MEETING



FEBRUARY 2, 2025
11:15am

St. James' Episcopal Church Annual Report 2025

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AGENDA

Call to Order The Rev. Pilar Parnell

Prayer for the Parish

*Almighty and everliving God,
source of all wisdom and understanding,
be present with us here
as we take counsel at St. James'
for the renewal and mission of your Church.
Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory.
Guide us to perceive what is right,
and grant us both the courage to pursue it
and the grace to accomplish it;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Opening Remarks

*Welcome
Vestry Slate Election Open for 1 Hour*

Secretary Election

Marie Hughes

Appointment of Head Teller

Bill Spalding

Naming of Tellers

Vestry Members

Bill Spalding, Margie Amberge & Diane Steckel

Approval of the 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes

Stewardship of Finances Report

Jamie Bova

State of the Parish

The Rev. Pilar Parnell

Outgoing Vestry Recognition

The Rev. Pilar Padrón Parnell

The Report of the Elections

Bill Spalding

Incoming Vestry Commission

Looking to the Future - Video Presentation

AV Team

Closing Prayer/Adjournment

The Rev. Pilar Padrón Parnell

Rector's Report

The Rev. Pilar Padrón Parnell

Dear St. James' Family,

It is hard to believe that I have only been with all of you for five months. In many ways it feels like years and in other ways it has flown by. As I reflect on the year that has passed and the year ahead, I am filled with gratitude and hope. I still cannot believe that I get to wake up every day and serve among you. I have the greatest job in the world. I get to proclaim the glory of God in the world around us and I get to do it in a place that has shaped my own call to ministry. It is so rare that a priest gets to serve in places that impacted their formation and be close to family. This call has been a blessing to the Parnell's in more way than we can count. Thank you for walking with us on this journey!



As this parish navigates the year ahead, I am looking forward to our first Lent and Easter together, continued growth, and moving into our next phase here at St. James'. Our focus this year will be centered on living into our baptismal covenants more fully, year-round stewardship of our time, talent and treasure, welcoming our newcomers, and continuing to develop a strong family ministry. This fall we have had so many new faces join us. I have met with more people than I can count who are looking for church homes, renewed faith, and more ways to be involved in serving in the community. Helping them find places to serve in worship and outreach is a top priority. In addition to this the vestry and finance committee are continuing to work together to make sure we have the resources to support the ministries of St. James' that make us a spiritual home for so many. One of the most important thing we will do this year is hire a new Director of Youth and Family Ministry. With our current director, Mo Allyn, stepping down, we are beginning a period of discernment that is going to impact everyone. The formation of our children, support of young families and parents, and helping develop lifelong faith for those in our midst is the work of our entire community. Who we hire to fill this role is extremely important and we are looking at both ordained and lay candidates. The church of the present is raising a generation that is so vastly different than so many of our own memories of being children in church. I am committed to finding the right person who has lifelong faith and participation in worship as their priority in this work.

St. James' is a church like no other. Our community is filled with people who are deeply committed to the Kingdom of God and see their call to Christian community as a true vocation. I leave here on Sundays feeling spiritually fed and not just that I have fed those present. This is a unique gift. Our ministries and this community are a shining example of what it means to live out our faith in a place that supports multiple perspectives, families, lifelong learning, and most importantly loving our neighbors.

Thank you all for your continued support!

Yours in Christ,

Mother Pilar

DEACON

The Rev. Dr. Charles N. Stewart



I am in my ninth year of serving at St. James', Skaneateles, as an ordained deacon. When I was ordained in 2016 Bishop Adams assigned me here, and Bishop DeDe Duncan-Probe has allowed me to continue here. Deacons work for their Diocesan Bishop in every diocese. Although they work for the bishop they also work in conjunction with the rector and staff of the parish where they are assigned.

2024 was a busy, and a very different kind of year as we were served by an Interim Rector, the Rev. Joe Mitchell, and then were excited to welcome a new Rector, Mother Pilar Padrón Parnell, and her family. I enjoy the process of sermon preparation and preaching. I preached four times in 2024, which is down a bit. I'll be continuing in 2025. I hope the congregation appreciates the variety of preaching styles among the several preachers who we have heard.

In the sacramental rite of ordination of deacons, one finds the following words addressed to the ordinand by the bishop: "You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world." I try to do fulfill that requirement in several ways. I'm now in the fifth year of leading a Tuesday morning discussion on Zoom on the scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday. It is open to all on a regular or irregular basis. The group has grown – including several from other parishes. More than twenty folks from St. James' have participated.

Beyond the parish, I've continued to serve on the Diocesan Commission on Ministry. I have added a deacon's voice to this work. The Commission works to strengthen ministry, both lay and ordained, with emphasis on supporting individuals in an ordination process and on continuing education for clergy and laity (quote from the Diocesan website).

Since about 2004 I've been a key contact with our Companion Diocese of El Salvador, which does continue, but at a lower level. At the end of 2022 I began to step back from this ministry; we are hopeful others will be called to lead this important work. St. James' has been a faithful supporter, especially of scholarships. Because of the global pandemic no one travelled either way for almost three years. We and they were able to connect via Zoom, Facebook Live, email and other means. There was no Mission of Miracles for several years because of Covid. It was wonderful to be part of the Mission in January and especially to serve as deacon with my recently ordained friend Revda. Esmeralda Ayala at our sister parish Santisima Trinidad. I've continued to serve occasionally with the group from St. Paul's Downtown that ministers to the people who live in the small apartments at the downtown YMCA. I'm proud to have started that outreach ministry almost ten years ago. I've continued to chair the diocesan investment committee that manages about forty million dollars in diocesan and parish funds. We are now developing ways to respond to the desire for ESG and SRI options. (ESG stands for Environmental, Social, Governance. SRI stands for Socially Responsible Investing.) On Mondays and Fridays I am at the downtown campus of SUNY Upstate Hospital working as a volunteer assistant chaplain: I am in my eleventh year. I spend most of my time in the Medical ICU on the sixth floor; I also respond to traumas and codes on Friday mornings. It is holy and fulfilling work, most especially in accompanying patients and families at the end of life. In our area of New York State about forty percent of people are Catholic. I meet a lot of Catholics, many other Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Longhouse (Haudenosaunee) and many Nones (no faith tradition). It's interesting to me that many or most Nones have a rich prayer life.



I appreciate all aspects of my life as a Deacon and look forward to what lies ahead.

Rev. Dr. Chuck Stewart.

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

Bill Spalding

In February of 2020, I was elected to the St James' Vestry. When asked to serve, I thought to myself, "We just finished the big construction project, Becky has the services and evening programs running smoothly, this will be easy street." I don't even remember my first Vestry meeting in February. I guess it was "normal".

Come March 2020 with the COVID pandemic, nothing has been "normal" since. What all this turmoil has shown me is the power of the St James' community and the support from the divine we all share. Each new challenge has been met by able followers of Christ doing the best they can. With God's help, their best has exceeded what was needed and what I thought was possible. In this past year, we were guided by the gifted preacher Father Joe through a transition that prepared us for a new leader. As a member of the search committee, I felt blessed to have been led by the Holy Spirit to our new Rector. The experience was less of a



search and more of a revelation. Mother Pilar was brought to us rather than us finding her. I guess you could say she was "heaven sent".



Her execution of the role of Rector has been remarkable given the complexity of managing this church. We have people going in every direction on distinct missions. St James' is like a busy intersection at rush hour but with a dozen roads all crossing and all the light are green. And somehow everyone gets through with no delay.

As I exit the leadership role of Senior Warden, I want to thank everyone who has helped me find my way. Each person doing their part has made this an enjoyable if busy experience. Each has their strengths and calling. Two weeks ago Paul laid

this out to the Corinthians...

1 Corinthians 12: 7-11

Something from the Spirit can be seen in each person, to help everyone. The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak with wisdom. And the same Spirit gives another the ability to speak with knowledge. The same Spirit gives faith to one person. And that one Spirit gives another gifts of healing. The Spirit gives to another person the power to do miracles, to another the ability to prophesy. And he gives to another the ability to know the difference between good and evil spirits. The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak in different kinds of languages and to another the ability to interpret those languages. One Spirit, the same Spirit, does all these things. The Spirit decides what to give each person.



Thank you for the opportunity to share the gifts the Spirit has given through me.

VESTRY: NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Doug Smith, Chair

The 2025 Nominating Committee is comprised of Doug Smith (Jr Warden), outgoing vestry members John Devin, Diane Steckel and Margie Amberge. The open positions to be filled at the 2025 annual meeting are one warden, three 3-year positions, and one 1-year position.

The committee considered the positions that the outgoing vestry members filled in the various subcommittees when deciding who to select to join the vestry. Creating a well-balanced vestry, filled with spiritual, energetic, thoughtful and wise people was the goal of the nominating committee. After much thought and prayer, the committee presented the following slate to vestry for approval: The 2025 Vestry Slate being presented is:

Junior Warden

John Devins	2yr term 2025-2027
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Vestry

John Buterbaugh	1yr term 2025-2026
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David O'Neill	3yr term 2025-2028
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Kris Perkins	3yr term 2025-2028
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Kathy Ploufe	3yr term 2025-2028
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The slate was unanimously approved by the vestry and the names were published via email and in the weekly.

2025 Vestry Slate Biographies

For Junior Warden

John Devins (2 Year Term)



I am excited to be considered for junior warden on St. James' Vestry. My wife Stephanie and I joined St James in 2017. I continue to be thankful to be a part of such a wonderful, loving faith community. At St. James', I have served one year on Vestry, was a member of the Stewardship committee, as well as served as an usher, assisted with lawn mowing, and helped the "unofficial" table wranglers team which prepares the parish hall for events. Stephanie and I moved to Skaneateles in 1988, and had 3 children attend Skaneateles schools. We are blessed with 7 grandkids. Upon graduation from St. John's University, College of Pharmacy, I worked in a variety of sales and marketing positions for Eli Lilly and Company. It would be an honor to continue to serve on St. James' Vestry as we continue on our exciting path forward!

For Vestry Members

John Buterbaugh (1 Year Term)



It was around 20 years ago when I started attending St. James'. In high school, I attended the diocesan youth programs called New Beginnings and Happening. These were excellent ways not only for me to deepen my faith but to build connections with other Episcopalians of the same age. Since then, I have witnessed a congregation that has remained steeped in values of inclusion and community even amidst great change. A few years ago, I joined the Young Adult Service Corps, a program that gives Episcopalians ages 21-35 the opportunities to explore their next steps personally and professionally in an international placement. I felt God working as so many of you at St. James helped fully fund my mission even when I didn't think it was possible. I was able to work as an intern at a not-for-profit organization in Colombo, Sri Lanka, that specialized in child protection. I was grateful that I could express my passion for graphic design, build empathy for those in developing countries, and develop an English-language curriculum relevant to Sri Lankan culture. Currently, I am a data and social media manager for the Episcopal Parish Network, the Global Mission Advocate for the Diocese of Central New York, the bass guitarist for the contemporary service, and a Spanish interpreter for Guatemalan families at our local food pantry. Ultimately, I believe God's purpose for me is to look out for those on the margins (especially in global outreach) and, in a simple way, show those people that they matter.

David O'Neill (3 Year Term)



Hello, my name is David O'Neill and I want to thank St James for the opportunity to serve on the Vestry. My wife, Helen, and I are looking forward to celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary this coming July. We have been blessed with two amazing daughters and four equally amazing granddaughters (With 7 ladies in my life, it is not a surprise I believe in strong and independent women). At a difficult time in my life the people of St James' were there for me and my family and they continue to be there whenever I need support. Through my association with the Mission of Miracle, my wife and I started attending services at St James and quickly felt at home. I travelled to El Salvador for the Mission as a team member and eventually became part of the planning committee for a total of 11 Missions with two extra trips to bring down supplies. When St James' setup a Spanish service for the local migrant workers I got to know more of the people at St James. More recently, I have helped with the setup of the Outdoor Lakeside Service and was part of the team that maintained the lawn for the church and rectory. I am truly thankful for the community that is St James' and for the friendships that have come from it. Since joining St James my faith is continually growing stronger. I am inspired by what I hear and see at St James' and by the people of St James'. A quote from one of my favorite musicals comes to mind when I am at St James. "To love another person is to see the face of God."



Kris Perkins (3 Year Term)



My name is Martha Kristie Perkins, but to many, I am known as Kris. I was born in Auburn Memorial Hospital, lived in Sennett, and went to Weedsport to school, where my parents were both teachers. We attended St. John's Episcopal Church in Auburn, NY, the church in which I was baptized, confirmed and married. Service to the church was important to our family; my dad was on the Vestry and served as Warden, my mom taught Sunday school, and my older brother was an acolyte. I attended youth group with the youth from St. Peters, Church, down farther on Genesee Street, When I attended Keuka College, I sang 2nd Alto in the Chapel Choir, and also attended the folk mass service at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Penn Yan. In 1972, when Dick and I were married, I began attending St. James in Skaneateles.

Throughout the years, I taught Sunday school, sang alto in the choir for many years, played in the bell choir, was a member of the Altar Guild, as well as being co-chair of the Altar Guild for five years. I am presently a lector, chalice bearer, acolyte and usher, and used to schedule servers in those areas. In addition, I serve meals at Sts. Peter and John once a month if possible. While teaching in Skaneateles for 31 years, I was a member of a variety of committees, helping to make decisions to continue our district's progression in a positive and innovative direction. At the end of Robert's ministry at St. James' and while John Keydel was the interim priest, I served on the Vestry at St. James'. After Becky was called to St. James', I was clerk of the Vestry for a few years. I always felt honored to represent the parishioners, giving input into decisions that were made on behalf of them. As a Vestry member, my goal will be to help St. James' move in a positive and innovative direction, and continue as a spiritual leader in the community.

Kathy Ploufe (3 Year Term)



I am a happily retired elementary school teacher with 40 years of experience teaching in the Adirondack Mountains in a town called Moriah. I now enjoy life back in my beloved hometown of Skaneateles. I am a proud mother and grandmother and am passionate about nature, history, and travel. The joy of returning to the church I was baptized and confirmed in has been such a gift. I value the traditions and life long memories that I experienced at St. James'. My spiritual journey has escalated since my return to St. James! I served previously as a vestry member of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Elizabethtown, NY which I found very enlightening and rewarding. In summary, I would like to highlight that St. James feels like family to me and I am enthusiastic about continuing on my soulful quest



VESTRY: STEWARDSHIP

In a year of transition, the Stewardship campaign took on added significance. Our campaign theme, "Live with Gratitude-Give with Joy," spoke to how special St. James' is to so many and the amazing way that people respond with their time, treasure and talents.

We challenged our parishioners to think about what St. James' means to them... what brought them here? Why do they attend? What/Who has made this place special to them? Over three weeks, we were fortunate to have four parishioners share why St. James' is special to them. Our sincere thanks to Alberto Fry, Helen and David O'Neill and Suzanne Beatty for sharing what makes St. James' their faith home! We concluded the fall campaign with a special joint service on Sunday, November 24 followed by brunch. At this service, we shared the results of our stewardship season, with a special blessing over our combined pledges with gratitude for our church community's generosity of heart.



The results of our campaign are as follows:

- * We received a total of 112 pledges which is an 8% increase from 2024
- * 45% of active families pledged vs. 41% of active families in 2024
- * 2025 pledges totaled \$348,137 which is +2.1% vs. 2024

The Stewardship, Vestry and Finance Committees thank all of you for your generosity and faithfulness.

2024 Stewardship Committee

Tara Covert-Lanning, Sister Marie Patricia Hughes, John Devins, Jamie Bova, Mother Pilar

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

Laura Posecznick, Operations

The over 200 year old St. James' building brings a new challenge and solution everyday. This is just a brief snapshot of the highlights of B&G 2024.

- Immense work was done to prepare for Father Joe and then Mother Pilar. Rectory repairs, cleaning crew, painting volunteers, rug removal, packers, garbage takers, lawn and ground landscaping.
- A very special Thank You to the St. James' Mowing/Leaf Team: Led by the organized and dedicated John Spear who led Barb Carmody, Brian Davis, John Devins, John Helgren, Jim Iles, Jim Lanning, David O'Neill, Steve Osborn, and Dave Palen.
- The Cindi and Mike Fowler are the architects of the gorgeous landscaping along the parking area and around both the Rectory and front of the church. We always look amazing. Thank you Fowlers!
- Lakeside Service season went off without a hiccup. A big Thank you to the crack Lakeside Crew: Quattrociocchis, O'Neills, and Davis families.

- We never knew how much sprucing up we really needed until we were getting a new Rector. Thank you to all who cleaned and painted the church before Mother Pilar arrived. A special Thank you to the organizing dynamic duo of Bev Smith and Nancy Graham.
- This past year an effort was made to share our space with community organizations. St. James' is blessed to share our building with SLA (Skaneateles Lake Association), Play2Learn, BlueBird Music, AA, and ALANON. More people in the building means more cleaning, more upkeep, more supplies, etc. Patti Cottril cleans and maintains St. James' top to bottom. This is a huge and never ending job. Thank Patti for all you do!
- Big Thank you to the Wardens of Bill Spalding and Doug Smith for helping staff keep on top of all the crazy things that can happen in a church of our size.
- Jim Iles has been a great calm resource for meeting with vendors or inspectors. His knowledge has been so valuable.

Ongoing Projects

- Fire Safety System: Has passed inspected, extinguishers have been checked, and county safety inspected. Fire Alarms tend to be prevalent in the summer due to excessive heat in the Nave & Parish hall primarily. Staff are trying to find ways to keep rooms cooler.
- Electrical: We upgraded the lighting in the choir hallway so it is far brighter and safer to allow for the lights to be turned off previously they had to remain on due to connecting with exit sign lighting. All light bulbs throughout have been changed to the same color and should all be working. No more dark areas!
- Heating: We now have Titan Heating helping us regulate our heat. They have been very responsive. We have made it through several gas leaks, heat not working, heat over working and all in between. Titan will do a full drain and maintenance this summer and install individual shut off valves in some rooms as they get very hot.
- Water: We have 2 new toilets in the upstairs due to sewage back up and broken seals. The downstairs urinal was removed and sealed to prevent any more back up.
- Bugs: We have ongoing bugs that Orkin has been battling. They are contracted and keep the majority of ants, spiders, and rodents out of the church. They will assist with wasps this summer. They do not do bats.
- Bats: This is an ongoing problem from May-September. This year was so bad we found 5 dead bats overhead the doorway when we set up the Christmas tree. The staff appreciate your help with minimizing these creatures. Outside bats are a wonderful part of the ecosystem. Inside they have germs, leave droppings, scare people, and if you make contact many shots are required.
- Audio Visual: Michael has repaired both the WIFI in the lower level as well as in the Parish Hall. It is common for routers to go out and this summer we had a lot of power surges that upset electronics.
- Tree: A company has been contracted to remove the large tree between rectory and neighbor.
- Fence: Ongoing coordination with the town/village on what fence can be installed at the rectory for the safety of the children and privacy. Please remember that St. James' and the Rectory are Private Property and not for public use.
- Elevator: The beginning of the year had this elevator out more than working but it is all good now! Many families with children use that elevator to get to Play2Learn.
- Snowplow team: We have an excellent team who removes snow and keeps sidewalks salted. We need to remember to not block the entrance as we have a family and staff who need to come in and out along with snow plow and garbage removal.
- Moving into the new year there will be a focus on updating security features for the building. With the additional people in the building daily, it is important to keep staff, congregation and visitors safe. Looking into new locks, cameras, and additional motion lighting outside etc. There has been increased crime in the Village so it is prudent to add some more basic protections.

As you can see there are so many facets to B&G. We really need a lot of hands to help tackle all the areas and tasks that pop up. If you are handy or can help out, please contact the Parish

STAFF: OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

Laura Posecznick, Director



The year 2024 was jammed packed! St. James' successfully completed its interim period and the Holy Spirit led Mother Pilar to our doors. It is hard to put into words the amount of work that transpired by the staff, search committee, vestry and congregation in 2024. So much so, it took its toll on my health. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for giving me time to figure out my health issues, rest, and be fresher for my daughter's wedding. That gift was immense and I appreciate and love you all.

My role at St. James' has been a bit disjointed for the last two years. I have tried to keep St. James' on a forward trajectory filling in gaps as they happen. Operations and Communications can be defined as "jack of all trades master of none". Each day for myself and the St. James' staff from June 2023-September 1, 2024, has been focused on worship service quality and do what we could to keep the "machine" called St. James' chugging forward. I think I can speak for the staff in saying we are absolutely thrilled to be back to more

familiar job roles, inspired by Mother Pilar's fresh and loving direction. I believe it was Christmas Day when I finally took a big exhale and felt we can now change from a reactionary position to a hopeful, creative time with limitless goals guided by the Holy Spirit.

Going through the transition time, it became clear our strengths and areas where we need to discern and put more energy. St. James' provides rich and diverse liturgies full of the love of God. Three services on Sunday and one on Wednesday is a tall order and it goes off most of the time without many hiccups. We are beyond blessed to have amazing musical talent under one roof. There is rarely a Sunday that passes that I don't hear compliments about the music heard that morning. Music at St. James' enhances each worship and programming evoking emotions from peace to jubilation. And when there is a need of any kind-donations required, food for a reception, help in a

worship service, clean the rectory or even hold a ladder to fix a light bulb-people step up. St. James' is a special family full of the love of God while leaning on the teachings of Jesus that has kept this church going while others have fallen away. I am confident that this strong faith and love will enable St. James' to bring the kingdom of God to our corner of the world.



A huge highlight in 2024 was the continued growth of our Children, Youth and Family Ministry under the leadership of Mo Allyn. Her youth, vitality, musical talent and love of the Lord energized children and parents alike. Taking on the large responsibility of teaching and focusing on the family needs allowed me to attend to the many facility, leadership support and communications tasks required during the busy interim time.

Mo's presence was truly a gift from God. She is moving on to continue her education but her ground work has created a foundation we will build on. I will be temporarily reviving my teaching skills to allow Mother Pilar and the Vestry time to find the right candidate for this vital position.

Along with clarifying our strengths, areas that require some extra work came into view. These include facility management and supporting all the ministries financially with a balanced budget. St. James' is a huge building. It is an old building. There is not enough



space to explain all the items that happen in a day from bats flying to fire alarms blaring to toilets backing up to gas leaks; all while creating worship inside and lakeside, supporting outreach efforts to feed, clothe and comfort those in need, and find ways to bring the love of the Holy Spirit to all who enter our doors. Moving forward, St. James' leadership is poised to gather ideas and people with proper skill sets to better handle facilities maintenance. And a new plan and approach to stewardship will be led by Mother Pilar as we came off the most successful campaign we have had in years that was all within one month of Mother Pilar joining St. James'. Additionally, Nicole Bova,

Parish Administer seeing the need to bring in more income, led the charge with seeking and booking two new tenants that not only add to the financial bottom line but allow us to support the community. St. James' now consistently provides space for Skaneateles Lake Association (SLA), Play2Learn Tot, BlueBird Music Together, AA, and ALANON. Monday through Friday at St. James' is not quiet, there is hustle, bustle and "life" abounding in its walls. As it should be.

Since September, St. James' communication efforts are getting noticed. The news of a young clergy couple with children coming to Central New York appears to resonate hope with many local people. Each week since September 1, there are blue cards submitted from interested families wanting to connect and find their spiritual home at St. James'. It is an exciting time! While there is much work to do, we are now at a time with a strong, confident, and knowledgeable leader who will guide us to where the Holy Spirit leads. St. James' will be honoring liturgy, music and programming we have found nourishing through the years as well as embarking on new and innovative paths to grow and meet the changing needs of parishioners and those seeking something bigger in a chaotic world. It is because of you St. James' is as strong as it is and it will be because of you that this parish family will be force for good in the coming years. Thank you for your continued support of my ministry and I feel blessed everyday I get to work at St. James' Church in Skaneateles.



STAFF: ORGANIST/CHOIRMASTER

Justin Oei



It may be hard to believe, but one of the spiritual practices that I regularly engage with is selecting and preparing the music we use in worship each week. I work a few months in advance, reading the lectionary readings and prayerfully considering the words and music that God is setting before us as God's people in this place and at this time. Since St. Benedict instructs us to "ora et labora" - to pray and to work - this activity that appears mundane on the surface (and is invisible to most) has become one of the most spiritually fulfilling parts of my ministry.

My ministry continues to encompass several different areas. **Administration** involves overseeing copyright compliance for our live-streamed services, budgeting and ordering music for the choir, coordinating the use and tuning of our organ and pianos, hiring guest musicians, selecting music, and making sure that all the necessary information for the bulletin gets to Nicole on time. The most visible aspect, **worship**, involves directing the choir, playing the organ for Sunday worship (and hiring subs as needed), and rehearsing with guest instrumentalists/vocalists before they perform with me on Sunday mornings. I also engage in a good deal of **outreach** to work with other community groups and church musicians, and to find ways to engage people with St. James' through the ministry of music. Below, I've outlined some of the key outcomes for each of these three areas below.

Administration

- Kerner & Merchant continues to provide maintenance services for our organ, and I continue to liaise with them frequently to coordinate tunings and emergency repairs.
- Thanks to Michael's connections, we have been able to obtain a spinet piano for the choir room, which has greatly improved our rehearsal environment. This instrument is now being added to the seasonal tuning rotation.
- Over the summer, we began adding our weekly service music to the bulletin at Joe's+ suggestion. This has worked well for the congregation and choir, and I have continued to do this each week.
- We have been blessed with the presence of a number of guest musicians this year, thanks to your generous support of our music program and some gracious volunteers. We hired a full quartet of singers for the Great Vigil and for Christmas Eve, as well as instrumentalists for Easter Day and Christmas Eve. Volunteers Dave Peebles and Alison Ferretti offered special music for Pentecost and Advent on trumpet and violin, respectively.

Worship

I have recently begun serving on the national church's Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, which according to Canon I.1.2.n.2 of our *Constitution and Canons* is tasked with reviewing and responding to proposed liturgical and calendar revisions acted upon at General Convention. I am honored to have been appointed to serve the broader church in this way, and to me it is an affirmation of the ministry we share here at St. James'.

The choir continues to offer music each Sunday from Labor Day Weekend to Trinity Sunday. I am grateful for those who volunteer their time and talent each week to worship God through song. If you enjoy singing, and are willing to volunteer time on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings, please consider joining us - there's always room for more! We also sing for all special services during Holy Week and at Christmas; if you don't want to commit to the whole year, we'd love to welcome you for a season near our principal feasts and fasts. It's a lot of work, but we have fun doing it.



Over the summer, as with last year, we continued to have soloists support hymn-singing each Sunday. Thank you (in no particular order) to Michael Larkin, Nick Kilkenny, Carrie Chantler, Mo Allyn, Susanne Rynkiewicz, and Meg Lawton for being a part of this ministry.

Finally, my gratitude to Robbie Padilla, Michael Larkin, Glenn Armstrong, and Jim Corl+ for ably covering my duties at different points during the year.

Outreach

- In February, Mo and I sponsored a Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza event to introduce our youth to the wonderful world of music. We took a tour of the organ, listened to the various sonorities that this “orchestra in a box” can create, and even had an instrument petting zoo.
- During Advent, we welcomed community members to join us for free organ recitals on Saturdays during Dickens Christmas. The Syracuse AGO chapter sponsored these events, and various community organists offered two brief concerts each week with about 20-30 attendees at each. Perhaps the most fulfilling moment in all of this was getting to meet an aspiring young musician who asked to begin organ lessons with me. Her excitement and enthusiasm - as just one interested child - made this endeavor (and all of the work that went into it) well worth it.
- When possible, I continue to prioritize local students (primarily from SU and Nazareth) when I need to call upon hired singers and instrumentalists. As an early-career musician, I am grateful that this congregation joins me in welcoming, supporting, and affirming young professionals who seek to gain experience launching their careers.

On a personal level, I am grateful for all of you - particularly your support of me as I have worked through my master’s degree, which I will finish in May. In a hectic academic environment, this work has proven to be life-giving and Spirit-filled, and I look forward to the ministry together that God has in store for us in 2025!

Respectfully submitted,
Justin M. Oei



STAFF: CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AND TECHNOLOGY

Michael Larkin, Director

Despite big changes for Contemporary Music and Technology in years past, 2024, like the year before it, was a season of steady maintenance. Since canceling our contract with the predatory and unreliable IT company that originally installed our wifi technology, we have successfully maintained our network without external assistance for eighteen months. Our failing electronic drum set, which had long-exceeded its warranty, was finally replaced, bringing dependability back to the worship band. 2023's new media engineer John Bonsignore graduated college and moved away, leaving an opening for Auburn Public Theatre A/V tech Carmen Liberatore to step in until the end of the year. We are as fortunate to work with such manageable and versatile equipment as we are blessed to be part of a team composed of individuals who are this talented and dedicated.

If you feel called to contribute your time or talent to St. James' ministries of Contemporary Music or Technology, email Michael Larkin at StJamesSkanMusic@gmail.com.

STAFF: CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY

Mo Allyn



This past year as the Director of Youth, Children, and Family Ministries has been a transformative journey for our parish, highlighting our community's remarkable growth and resilience. I have enjoyed collaborating with Father Joe and Mother Pilar to cultivate a vibrant environment where families can engage in faith together. Our focus on activities that bring young children, their parents, and their siblings closer to Christ has led to deeper family connections. The initiatives we implemented were interactive and designed to promote family participation and church involvement, significantly strengthening our community ties. This transition period showcased the resilience of our children, youth, and young families, who adapted and thrived despite the changes. Their strength and enthusiasm for continuing their faith journey together were genuinely inspiring.

Reflecting on the past year, I realize that the importance of authentic community cannot be overstated. It serves as the heart of our ministries, fostering genuine relationships among families and individuals. Creating

spaces where everyone feels welcomed and valued enables deeper connections that enrich our shared faith experience.

As I look towards the future of our ministries, I am filled with optimism. The solid foundation we have built together will continue to flourish. I eagerly anticipate witnessing our families' ongoing growth and unity as they walk in faith.

Key Highlights of 2024



Mini-Saints Program: This initiative has proven to be a valuable resource for teaching worship concepts to young children. The program emphasizes essential prayers and theological ideas in an engaging, Montessori-based format, preparing children for meaningful participation in Episcopal worship. Thanks are due to the excellent work of Miss Cindi and her volunteers, especially the Baleno, Quinn, and Bova families, whose time and energy on Sunday mornings allow us to provide the children of St. James' with this high-quality programming.



Ecumenical Youth Group: The youth collaborated with peers from several local churches, including First Presbyterian, Holy Trinity Lutheran, and Westminster Presbyterian. They enjoyed a Halloween party, shopping for Trunk-or-Treats, and movie outings. The communal activities and shared celebrations strengthened their fellowship despite differing beliefs. I hope that ecumenical youth gatherings will continue in 2025.



Easter 2024: The positive moments we experienced this past year have genuinely illuminated the strengths of our ministry. We see this demonstrated through community-building events like the 2024 Easter Egg Hunt. With nearly 100 children participating, this event transcended mere festivities; it became a powerful demonstration of our parish's vibrant community spirit. Families came together, fostering connections within our congregation and with visitors and neighbors. It was heartening to see children laughing and playing, searching for eggs, and sharing in joyous moments that expanded beyond the bounds of the church. This

sense of togetherness created an atmosphere of love and camaraderie, reinforcing that our church is a welcoming home for all.

Outdoor Worship: Collective worship experiences, especially outdoor worship on Sundays, have played a crucial role in strengthening our ministry's outreach and engagement. These gatherings provided a space for prayer and an opportunity for families to connect with nature and for our congregation's children and youth to spend time with each other. The "kid's blanket" sessions, combining play with prayer and praise, have fostered a unique sense of belonging and spiritual



enrichment. Parents could enjoy creation and worship while children forge relationships, creating a nurturing environment vital for our community's growth.



Christmas 2024: The enthusiasm surrounding the Christmas Pageant, with nearly 40 cast members, highlighted the collaborative spirit within our parish. Strong attendance at rehearsals and support from families like the Ellerton's during coffee hour demonstrated the power of community engagement. Seeing the children's joy while participating in the pageant and the deeper connections formed among families was exciting. The unity displayed during this production was a testament to the shared commitment of our congregation to nurture a supportive environment for all ages.

Overall, the collective joy and participation seen in these events exemplify the strengths of our ministry. We have fostered a culture of engagement, inclusivity, and spiritual growth that is palpable within our parish. Building upon these positive moments will be essential as we move forward, as will partnering with families to create even more opportunities for connection and shared experiences. Family-driven ministries will strengthen our community ties and ensure every church member feels valued and engaged in their faith journey.



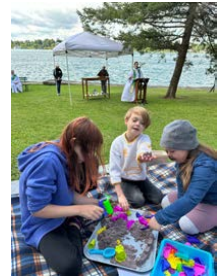
The heart of our ministry lies in authentic community. The connections we nurture and the relationships we build enrich our congregation and create a sanctuary where everyone can grow in their faith together.

Looking ahead

As I embark on this new chapter in Rochester, I will carry the valuable lessons learned and the memories made at St. James' with me. Looking ahead, I envision a vibrant community where the spirit of inclusivity and growth flourishes. I encourage you to embrace the challenges of building authentic connections and support one another in this journey.

Regarding future programming at St. James', I hope you all develop more intergenerational activities that encourage bonding between different age groups and bring families together. Additionally, creating more opportunities for spiritual growth among families will strengthen your faith journeys individually and collectively.

You all will continue to create an environment where respect and understanding prevail and each individual's unique gifts are celebrated. I am excited to see how the families at St. James will continue to evolve, fostering a legacy of love and support that nurtures not just friendships but profound and meaningful relationships within the church and beyond. May you all cultivate an enduring sense of community that reflects the heart of Christ and inspires future generations.



PASTORAL CARE

Nancy Graham, Coordinator

We are all providing Pastoral Care at St. James' when we make a phone call to check on someone, send a card, prepare a meal, lend a listening ear, provide a ride, and when we pray for those in need. Some of our Pastoral Care Ministries are – our **Prayer** teams that are available for confidential and private prayer during communion, **Eucharistic Visitors** who take communion to anyone not able to get to church, **Parish Nurses** offering individual guidance with your health concerns, and **Stephen Ministers/pastoral caregivers** that provide one-on-one care giving. **Other examples of Pastoral Care** at St. James' are altar flower deliveries, prayer shawls, and our prayer chain.

Pastoral Caregivers/Stephen Ministers - Pastoral caregivers are members of our congregation who receive special training to provide one-to-one care to people in our congregation and community experiencing challenges in life. Nancy Graham is the coordinator and will gladly connect you with someone willing to lend a listening ear.

Prayer Ministry – The Healing service with **Holy Eucharistic and individual prayer is each Wednesday at noon**. We also offer private and confidential prayer on **Sundays** at the Peace Altar during communion. You may bring a prayer concern for yourself or for another. You may also come in silence seeking the prayerful presence of a pray-er for God already knows your concerns.

Prayer Chain- When a need is known and permission given, the prayer request goes to the email prayer chain. Corinne Buterbaugh leads our prayer chain ministry, sending out requests, including a prayer, to a team of pray-ers.

Prayer Shawls are frequently being made by knitters at St. James. The shawls are placed on the altar and blessed, to then be taken to a friend in need. All are welcome to take a prayer shawl to someone who would feel this comfort.

Martha's prepare a variety of recipes with great attention to special needs and dietary restrictions. This blessed group meets regularly to prepare meals. Others cook at home and kindly bring meals to others.

Christmas gift giving is a part of our pastoral care as well.

Over 50 gifts were delivered to the Angel Tree Prison Ministry families, 34 pajamas were given to children at Merriman Circle, 42 gas cards for \$35.00 to Skaneateles Outreach families, \$5 below cards to children at Auburn Elementary Schools, 6 food baskets to our former refugee families and gifts to the children, 24 Stars (toys) to Meachem Elementary School children. All are welcome to join one or more of our Pastoral Ministries, ask Pilar or Nancy Graham if you have questions.

ALTAR GUILD

Corinne & Bill Buterbaugh

Thank you to all of the Altar and Flower Guild members who work so diligently to make worship at St. James so special. Working primarily behind the scenes, Altar Guild makes it possible for St. James to offer four distinct services every week plus additional services for Christmas and throughout Holy Week. Altar Guild sets the altar, polishes the brass, washes and irons linens, fills candles, puts up and takes down the aisle torches, arranges flowers, and cleans up after every service. We also track and order all supplies, including flowers and plants.

Team members generally serve on Saturday mornings once a month and the following Sunday before or after the service they normally attend. Time commitment is about 90 minutes monthly. Training is provided.

Despite our wonderful group of devoted members, Altar Guild needs more men and younger women. We'd love to have young families involved, too.

Unsure if Altar Guild is for you? Consider shadowing a team to see what it's all about. Contact Corinne Buterbaugh (corinnebuterbaugh@gmail.com).



JAIL MINISTRY/ANGEL TREE MINISTRY

Cindy Bright and Ellen Kulik

2024 was another fulfilling year in our ministry efforts at the Cayuga County Jail in Auburn, where we continued to serve both men and women incarcerated there.. Our team distributed Recovery Bibles, Jesus Calling books, and Daily Bread booklets to hundreds of inmates eager to learn more about the Gospel.

This year, we invested \$1,524.46 in 146 Jesus Calling books, a resource that continues to deeply impact those seeking spiritual growth. Our dedicated team of 10 jail ministers, representing five local churches, remains committed to witnessing the transformative power of faith in the lives of many inmates. It is a true blessing and privilege to walk alongside these individuals on their spiritual journeys.

Additionally, St. James Church continued its support of children of incarcerated parents by participating in the Angel Tree Program for the third consecutive year. In December 2024, we were able to surprise 25 children from 12 families with clothing and delightful gifts, all given on behalf of their parents who are behind bars. To further support the families, each caregiver received a \$50 Wegman's gift card. This heartfelt initiative is entirely funded through donations and the tireless efforts of many St. James volunteers.

The response to the gifts was overwhelmingly positive. One caregiver shared her gratitude in a text message: "I just wanted to let you know we gave our little girl her presents (from St. James) early... she loved them!! She slept with her baby doll, painted with the paint set this morning, and wore her Gabby outfit to school. We are so appreciative! Merry Christmas!"

Both of these programs continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and families, and we look forward to the continued opportunities to serve in the coming year.

RACIAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (RJRC)

Meg Osborne, Debra Rose Brillati and Judy Holmes

The Racial Justice & Reconciliation Commission meets on the first and third Mondays each month via Zoom and, in most cases, is regularly attended by 10 – 15 enthusiastic, committed members.

ONGOING PROGRAMS



Diversity Book Club discussions have welcomed 10 – 17 participants in person and via Zoom, both members of St. James as well as other churches.

Books for 2024 were:

The Lemon Tree, Sandy Tolan – February 2024

Once I Was You: Love & Hate in a Torn America, Maria Hinojosa – March 2024

There, There, Tommy Orange – April 2024

If Beale Street Could Talk, James Baldwin – June 2024

Our Missing Hearts, Celeste Ng – October 2024

Holy Envy – Finding God in the Faith of Others, by Barbara Brown Taylor – November 2024

Three Sisters Community Garden is a collaboration of the RJRC, St. James' Creation Care Ministry and the Rescue Mission at Merriman Circle. Children at Merriman Circle learn about the Haudenosaunee legacy of caring for this land and how plants interact with each other. Corn, beans and squash are planted and the harvest is used in cooking classes with the kids.



Safe & Warm RJRC joined The United Ministry of Aurora, The Quaker Meeting of Poplar Ridge, Skaneateles Presbyterian Church and the Harriet Tubman AME Zion Church of Auburn to provide respite for people living without shelter in Cayuga County. The program began in January 2024 and ten+ people from the RJRC have become trained volunteers to assist with this effort. Every Friday from 3:00 – 5:00 pm, the Harriet Tubman church is open to those who want to come in for coffee, tea, snacks or just a warm place to stay for a time. In February 2024, the group began preparing bag lunches in the St. James’ kitchen

with sandwiches, fruit, snacks, pizza, and sweets to deliver to people without homes (adults and children) who are being housed in motels and shelters in Auburn and Weedsport. About 150 lunches are distributed weekly.

Hillbrook Garden Project The garden project at Hillbrook Juvenile Detention Center, Syracuse, is a ministry of the St. James’ Racial Justice and Reconciliation Commission, supported by a 2023 Ministry Grant from the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York and by St. James’ parishioners. During the summer of 2024, Hillbrook youth, staff and St. James volunteers planted and harvested in four raised-bed gardens cherry and large tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet green and jalapeño peppers, onions, Swiss chard, mustard plants, and watermelon. There were also a few ears of corn and enough green beans for snacking. Staff helped youth make salsa, pickles, cucumber and tomato salad and the facility cook prepared Swiss chard for dinner. Many veggies were eaten raw by youth participants.

Sacred Ground, the study program on race and faith created by the national Episcopal Church, concluded one circle in March 2024 and launched a new study circle in September 2024.

PRESENTATIONS AT ST. JAMES’

Border Companions Dale Avers, retired faculty from Upstate Medical University, came to St. James’ and presented on Border Companions, an outreach ministry of All Saints Church in Syracuse. Border Companions grew out of a mission trip Dale took to the border in 2019 and has raised more than \$25,000 for direct relief services at the US northern and southern borders. Attended by 12 participants. (January)

Witness To Injustice Presented by members of the Onondaga and Mohawk nations, the program incorporated an experiential, participatory model to educate participants about how native peoples were negatively impacted by the arrival of white Europeans and how expansionist policies of the U.S. government decimated native tribes. This program drew a large audience (over 25 participants) from St. James’ and the larger Skaneateles community. (April)



From Jail to Redemption: Transforming Lives Behind Bars Cayuga County Sheriff Brian Schenk and Randy Smith, peer recovery advocate for Nick’s Ridge 4 Friends, came to St. James’ and discussed new restorative programs at the Cayuga County Jail designed to enable a smoother transition into the community for people who have been incarcerated. (May)

Indian Boarding School Presentation Virgil Brave Rock shared the story of his 6-years in an Indian Boarding School and the extent of the trauma caused by these schools. (October)

EVENTS ATTENDED BY RJRC MEMBERS

White Christian Nationalism Several RJRC members attended this enlightening program presented by the Interfaith Racial Equity Network (May)

Shoulder to Shoulder: Faith Over Fear RJRC members participant in this training aimed to reduce and counter anti-Muslim bias, discrimination, and violence in the U.S. by working with faith and community leader. (June)

Ska-Nonh Center Guided Visit Ten (10) RJRC members attended this special guided tour of the center. Participants were moved by the extent and ongoing impact of Indian boarding schools and learned about current laws which impact the rights of indigenous people. They were also inspired by the faith and traditions of the Haudenosaunee people. (September)

God & Country The RJRC co-sponsored the showing of this film about White Christian Nationalism in conjunction with the Interfaith Racial Equity Network in Syracuse. (October)



Stories of The People of the Longhouse Several RJRC members attended master storyteller Perry Ground's interactive presentation of traditional Haudenosaunee stories at the Morgan Opera House in Aurora (November)

Worth Uniting Cayuga Several RJRC members participated in the kick-off meeting for this new organization which brings together civic and social justice organizations interested in working together to respond to expected initiatives of the new administration, many of which will have a severe impact on the least of these. (November)

PARTNERSHIPS

Harriet Tubman AME Zion Church The RJRC once again participated in the Trunk or Treat event at the church. (October)

Auburn/Cayuga NAACP Commission members participated in the 5th Annual Freedom Fund Gala (October) and the Election Day Command Center (November). An RJRC commission member has been attending NAACP Meetings and was recently named membership chair.

WORSHIP

- **Janet McKenzie Stations of the Cross** were used during Lent (February/March)
- **Father Joe invited to speak at Harriet Tubman AME Zion Church** on Good Friday (March)

UPCOMING

- **Muslim Outreach** The Commission has reached out to a mosque in Syracuse interested in partnering with us and building a relationship. Initial meeting will be scheduled in early 2025.
- **Becoming Beloved Community Banner** for St. James' was completed and will hang in the parish hall stairwell after a blessing on January 19, 2025.
- **Undivide Us** The Commission has reviewed a film addressing the fractured political discourse in the country. A planning committee is working with Auburn Public Theater on a showing of the film followed by facilitated discussion on April 10, 2025.

Submitted by Meg Osborne, Debra Rose Brillati, and Judy Holmes.

ST. JAMES' PRAYER CHAIN

Corinne Buterbaugh

In 2024, St. James prayer chain members prayed for more than 225 individuals. In addition, we prayed for five St. James families by name each week for most of the year. Our 25 members pray for parishioners and their loved ones and members of the wider community experiencing illness, loss, or other challenges and in thanksgiving for births, new jobs, and other happy occasions.

Prayer requests and updates are emailed to members, who pray on their own, at their convenience, after receiving the email. We welcome new members! All it takes is an email address and the willingness to pray. Contact corinnebuterbaugh@gmail.com to join.



How it works: To request prayer for an individual, get his or her permission, and then ask me (corinnebuterbaugh@gmail.com) to add that person to the email prayer chain. If the situation is a sensitive one, ask for prayers without mentioning names (ask for prayers “for a friend,” for example) or using only the individual’s first name or initials. God knows the details!

To add someone to the prayer list printed in the Weekly (and available online), contact the church office or Nancy Graham (nancygraham4@gmail.com).

ST. JAMES’ THRIFT SHOP

Linda Lavery

Almost seventy-five years ago the women of this parish had the foresight to begin the St. James’ Thrift Shop. As I understand it the Women of St. James’ did not even have the support of the rector at the time. And, although the Shop has contributed to the church every year since, it was so “under-the radar” that our previous rector did not even know about its existence until her spouse happened to see the sign hanging over the shop door downtown.

The purposes of the Shop as set forth in the constitution are twofold: 1. To provide clean usable merchandise at affordable prices for the people of the community and 2. To donate the balance of the net proceeds to St. James and other charitable organizations. At the present time the Shop donates 40% of its net proceeds to St. James’ One quarter of that amount is designated to be paid out for outreach by the church. The remaining 60% of net proceeds is paid out to local , national and international charitable organizations. (See listing for 2024). Because of generous donations and volunteer hours St. James’ Thrift Shop paid out \$83,428 in contributions in 2024. We operate exclusively with volunteer labor. Board members, cashiers, baggers, sorters, etc are all part of our volunteer family and we are always looking for new family members. Working for as few as three hours per month makes you a valuable part of the team. Please consider joining us! Just contact me, Laura Bigness or Barbara Burton to sign up.It’s fun as well as work.



The Shop is open on Mondays and Tuesdays from 10:00 AM until 1:00 PM for donations only. Then it is open for shopping from 1:00 PM until 4:00 PM on Tuesdays and Wednesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM until 4:00PM.

St. James’ Thrift Shop Donations for 2024

St. James’ Episcopal Church
 Harriet Tubman Fund
 Ukraine Trust Chain
 AFEDJ-GAZA Relief Fund
 World Central Kitchen
 Easter Farm Workers
 Mathew Farm
 St. Peter and John Soup Kitchen
 Habitat for Humanity-Cayuga
 Erin’s Angels
 Aurora of CNY
 Skan. Storks
 Habitat Emergency Repair Fund
 Episcopal R&D Tornados
 Community Cares of Syracuse
 El Salvador Scholarships
 Emmaus Ministry
 Onpoint College
 In My Father’s Kitchen
 SAVES
 Planned Parenthood

Laker Limo
 A Tiny Home for Good
 Skan Lake Assoc.
 National Association for Mental Illness
 Samaritan Center
 InterFaith Works
 Vera House
 Hospice of Cayuga
 One Simple Wish
 Team Brownsville
 Bike 4 Life
 Hanger Credence Intern
 Sleep in Heavenly Peace
 Mary Nelson’s Youth Center
 Episcopal R&D Hurricanes
 Skaneateles Food Pantry
 Spafford Food Pantry
 Rescue Mission
 Town of Skaneateles Outreach
 Skan Fire Dept.
 Dr. Week’s Elementary School

ST. JAMES' THRIFT SHOP 2024 BUDGET

Laura Bigness

ST. JAMES THRIFT SHOP BUDGET 2025		
OPERATING INCOME		
INCOME FROM SALES		130,000.00
INCOME FROM CREDIT CARD FEES		3,000.00
TOTAL OPERATING INCOME		133,000.00
OPERATING EXPENSES		
FIXED COSTS		
	RENT	18,000.00
	PARKING	150.00
	PHONE/INTERNET	2,500.00
	RUG CLEANING	2,500.00
	TRASH PICK UP	2,000.00
	JANITORIAL	3,500.00
	BOOKKEEPER	1,500.00
TOTAL FIXED COSTS		30,150.00
OPERATING EXPENSES		
VARIABLE COSTS		
	CLOVER/MERCHANT FEES	4,500.00
	MEMBERSHIP FEES	500.00
	OFFICE EXPENSES	2,500.00
	MAINTAINANCE & REPAIRS	3,500.00
	SUPPLIES	2,000.00
	ADVERTISING/PROMOTION	1,000.00
	ENTERTAINMENT/FELLOWSHIP	4,000.00
	EQUIPMENT	2,500.00
TOTAL VARIABLE COSTS		20,500.00
TOTAL EXPENSES		50,650.00
NET INCOME		82,350.00
	40% NET INCOME	32,940.00

St. James' Foundation

The St. James' Episcopal Church Foundation holds endowed and restricted funds gifted to St. James' Church. There are seven separate accounts managed within the portfolio from charitable gifts given to the Church.

- The Vera Howard Fund, established in 1992, supports Christian education.
- The Hazel Smith Fund, established in 1992, supports capital expenditures.
- The St. James' Fund, established in 1993, is used for general support of the church.
- The Outreach Fund, established in 1998, supports outreach activities.
- The Bishop Kellogg Fund, established in 2000, supports general operations.
- The Leadership Support Fund, established in 2020, supports leadership – specifically clergy and staff – such as, but not limited to salary, sabbatical funding, postulant support and funding a search process.
- In January 2021, a seventh sleeve – The Mission Reserve Fund - was established with the remainder of the funds that had been donated for mission as part of the “*Standing Tall Campaign*” with an initial deposit of \$116,133.45.

The current members of the St. James' Foundation are:

Jeff Davis, President
Steve Osborne, Vice President
Bill Spalding, Treasurer
Amy Allyn
Colleen Gannon
Terry Posecznick
Anne Sveen
Mother Pilar Pardon Parnell
Doug Smith (as a Warden of the Vestry)



2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

Nicole Bova

Recap

Income from overall 'Giving' was under our projected budget by about 12%, as we entered 2024 with projected pledges down from the prior year. Wage expenses were over budget due to staffing changes which included welcoming our new rector. With staffing transitions came additional supply and service costs, as well as normal price increases from suppliers, leading to administrative expenses being over budget. There were; however, several expense categories that were under budget this year primarily caused by the ripple effect from the previously mentioned staffing changes. A transition year comes with many changes to a projected budget. Several programs and/or purchases that had money designated to that were not spent. Overall, the net loss for the year was less than planned for the budget year, but this is primarily due to generous anonymous gifts that were received. See below in the "2024 Giving Highlights" for further explanation.

Finance Committee - 2024 Operating Financial Report

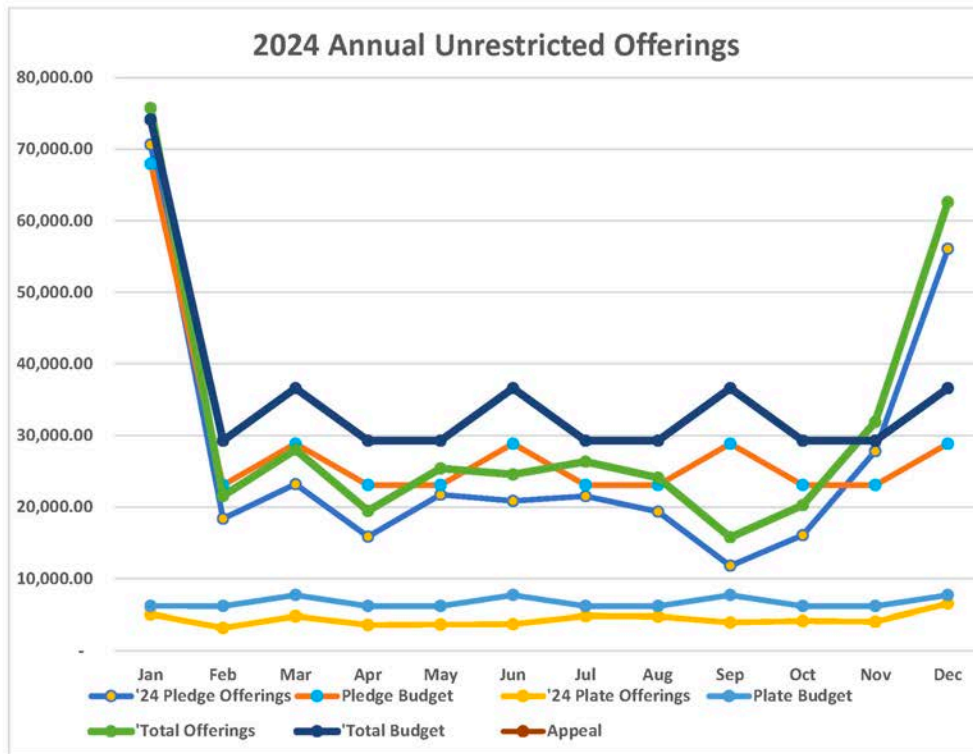
Category	2024 Actual	2024 Budget	Budget Variance	2023 Actual	Change From Prior Year
Revenue					
Income From Giving	\$448,085.47	\$433,100.00	\$14,985.47	\$409,747.01	\$38,338.46
All Other Income	<u>125,359.00</u>	<u>99,664.00</u>	25,895.00	<u>130,442.54</u>	(5,083.54)
Total Revenue	<u>\$573,444.47</u>	<u>\$532,764.00</u>	<u>\$40,880.47</u>	<u>\$540,189.55</u>	<u>\$33,254.92</u>
Expenses					
Wages	\$385,695.28	\$349,764.48	35,930.80	\$325,963.26	\$59,732.02
Administration	42,506.00	37,212.00	5,294.00	45,299.67	(2,793.67)
Church Property	62,634.18	63,168.07	(533.89)	62,786.78	(152.60)
Education	3,524.03	7,185.00	(3,660.97)	3,609.55	(85.52)
Ministry	12,268.46	21,850.93	(9,582.47)	17,274.61	(5,006.15)
Outreach	68,245.74	71,307.83	(3,062.09)	80,726.29	(12,480.55)
Pastoral Care	3,215.86	2,800.00	415.86	2,598.33	617.53
Visibility	2,542.34	4,700.00	(2,157.66)	3,048.74	(506.40)
Worship	<u>17,418.72</u>	<u>14,675.00</u>	2,743.72	<u>11,538.00</u>	5,880.72
Total Expenses	<u>\$598,050.61</u>	<u>\$572,663.31</u>	<u>\$25,387.30</u>	<u>\$552,845.13</u>	<u>\$45,205.38</u>
Net Income (Loss)	<u>(\$24,606.14)</u>	<u>(\$39,899.31)</u>		<u>(\$12,655.58)</u>	<u>(\$11,950.46)</u>

2024 Giving Highlights

With a number of changes occurring throughout this transition year, our overall 'Pledge Giving' was down significantly. Pledges in the current year were 12% less than the 2024 Projected Budget.

A few bright moments occurred during the year, where we received two unexpected large donations which totaled \$65,000. These two donations, which were recorded in the 'Other Income' account line of the financial statement, drastically helped to shape our total income for the year. Without these two donations, our net loss for the year would be approaching \$90,000.

With pledge totals continuing to trend downward over the last several years, it is important to recognize the connection of giving to the overall financial health of the parish. Without the income provided from pledges and plate, we would be unable to fund various programs and aspects of the daily operations here at St. James'.



YTD Through December 2024				
	Budget	Actual	Variance	%
Pledge Offerings	345,193.00	323,427.00	21,766.00	-6%
Plate Offerings	80,407.00	52,496.47	27,910.53	-34.7%
Total Offerings	425,600.00	375,923.47	49,676.53	-11.7%

2025 BUDGET NARRATIVE

Nicole Bova

For the annual operating budget preparation, each committee chair and key staff member was asked to submit budget requests early in the fall so that the finance committee could assemble these requests and evaluate expenses against income. The preparation of an operating budget for St. James' parish for 2025 has had significant challenges that are primarily income-driven. The stewardship campaign for 2025 has shown a continued trend in reduced pledging by a \$20,000 shortfall compared to the 2024 actual pledges received. As a result, the Vestry has approved some significant measures to control expenses by proposing a budget that will close to balance the budget as we head into the new year. These changes are detailed in this summary. If during 2025 there is an upside to income through increased pledging or new income, these austere measures to compensate for projected loss of income.

2025 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

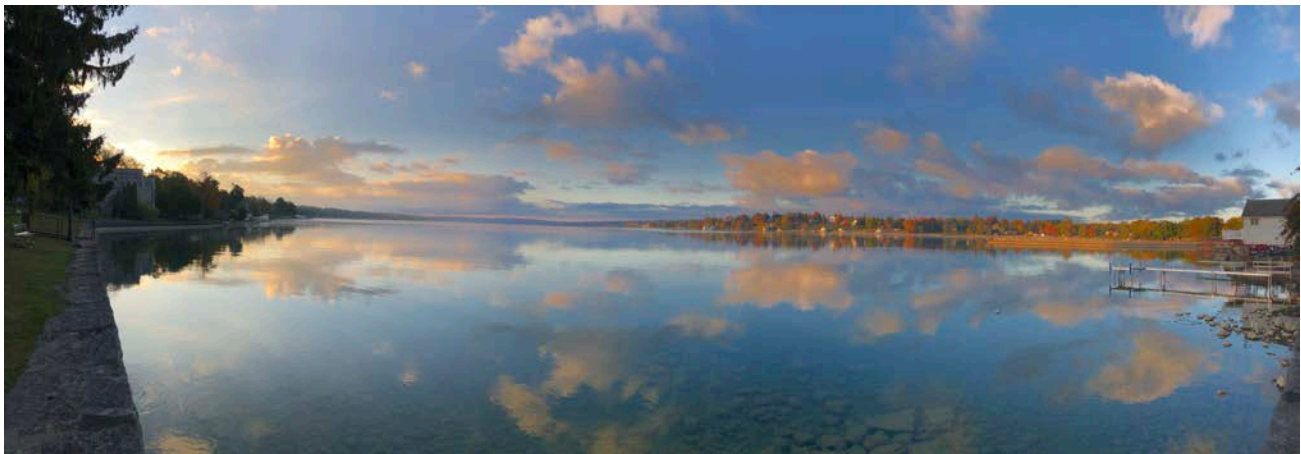
- The St. James' Foundation income commitment is budgeted to increase in the percentage draws from the previous year of 5% to 10.5%. This results in a draw total close to \$133,000. In order to balance the budget, with decreased pledging and rising costs.
- The plan for pledged income of \$349,177.00 which is over the 2024 budget with 113 pledges, and included 22 "new" pledges
- Based on Thrift Shop board approval, the 2025 income commitment to St. James' operating budget is expected to increase by \$5,620.
- Wedding income is expected to remain steady with current weddings scheduled for 2025.
- Building income is expected to significantly increased for 2025, due to the church welcoming Play 2 Learn, Bluebird Music, AA and Al-anon, as well as our long-standing tenant Skaneateles Lake Association.
- Altar Guild income remains flat for 2025.
- Wages and wage-related expenses are projected to be increased for 2025 by 5% or just over \$18,000. A 4% COLA was awarded to all staff members, as there was none given in the prior year. This percentage is in line with the recommendation from the Diocese.
- The position of interim director of children's ministry is only budgeted through the end of her current contract (June 30, 2024). The position did continue and pick up at the start of September 2024, and the remaining portion of the salary expense was funded from the Foundation Leadership sleeve. This budget also includes a \$9,200 increase in health insurance expense as new rates and plans take affect. It should be noted that we have also changed payroll processing providers, which results in a slight increase in expense.
- Administrative expense budget is increased by 6.6% (roughly \$2,500) for 2025. A new printer agreement and contract has been entered in to which will ultimately save the church money. Slight increased projected for supplies due to costs and yearly subscriptions.

- Building and grounds expenses will increase overall by 4.0% or about \$2,500. The largest increase is the 10% increase in cost of the parish's liability/fire insurance premium.
- Education expenses are projected to decrease by \$885 largely due to the elimination of the Mini-Saints Teaching Assistant, which has turned into a volunteer position.
- Ministry expenses are currently budgeted to decrease for 2025 primarily due to the reduction in the Rector's Travel Allowance per request of Mother Pilar.
- Outreach expenses are budgeted to increase by \$6,715.35 for 2024. This reflects the increase on the expense portion supported by the Outreach sleeve of the Foundation. The 10.5% draw of the Outreach sleeve also increases the expense portion, as Outreach is treated as an even wash between income and expense.
- The Diocesan Assessment increased very slightly by \$286. There will be no payment toward the Diocesan Pledge requested of \$33,000, as there are no excess funds available in the budget.
- Visibility expense budget will decrease by 25.5% (\$1,200) as rector search which involved increased advertisement has been ended.
- Worship expenses are expected to increase 24.4% (\$3,575) as substitute organist have been increased for in case of potential transition needed upon our organist's graduation.

Overall, the total budgeted income for 2024 is \$604,786 or \$72,022 more than the 2024 budget and overall expenses are projected to increase by 5.5% (\$31,514) compared to 2024. In order to off set the massive large that was originally projected, without major cuts to programs and expenses, a draw of \$133,000 was requested from the Foundation to help bring the budget as close to balanced as possible.

The 2025 budget projects a \$609 net income. The approved 2024 budget accounted for a \$39,000 net loss to cover new clergy and transition expenses. This drastic change comes with the perviously mentioned draw, that without, we would be projecting a loss of \$133,000. It is important to note that this is not drastic financial move is not sustainable year over year. We need to find ways to increase stewardship giving or else look to make major cuts to expenses in the future.

Thanks to everyone on the finance committee who worked hard all year to provide timely and accurate financial reporting. Thanks also to the finance committee, staff and Vestry for help and guidance during the budget creation process.



St. James' 2025 Budget		2024	change 2024 to 2025	2025	% Change	
INCOME						
Building Use	\$	8,700.00	\$	6,800.00	\$ 15,500.00	
Foundation Income - Kellogg	\$	13,061.00	\$	17,631.75	\$ 30,692.75	
Foundation Income - Outreach	\$	4,985.00	\$	6,801.41	\$ 11,786.41	
Foundation Income - Howard	\$	8,427.00	\$	11,421.23	\$ 19,848.23	
Foundation Income - St. James'	\$	4,071.00	\$	5,546.37	\$ 9,617.37	
Foundation Income - Mission Reserve	\$	10,000.00	\$	-	\$ 10,000.00	
Foundation Income - Leadership	\$	10,640.00	\$	39,459.42	\$ 50,099.42	
Total Foundation Income	\$	51,184.00	\$	80,860.18	\$ 132,044.18	
Fundraising Income	\$	5,000.00	\$	(5,000.00)	\$ -	
Plate Offerings	\$	80,407.00	\$	(20,407.00)	\$ 60,000.00	
Pledge Offerings	\$	345,193.00	\$	3,984.00	\$ 349,177.00	
Pledges & service income (plate)	\$	425,600.00	\$	(16,423.00)	\$ 409,177.00	
Christmas/Easter/Ash Wed	\$	7,500.00	\$	-	\$ 7,500.00	
Funeral Income	\$	2,000.00	\$	-	\$ 2,000.00	
Thrift Shop	\$	27,320.00	\$	5,620.00	\$ 32,940.00	
Wedding Income	\$	3,660.00	\$	(35.00)	\$ 3,625.00	
RJRC Program Income	\$	1,300.00	\$	200.00	\$ 1,500.00	
Altar Guild Income	\$	500.00	\$	-	\$ 500.00	
TOTAL INCOME	\$	532,764.00	\$	72,022.18	\$ 604,786.18	13.5%
EXPENSE WAGES						
Subtotal - Wage Expense	\$	349,764.48	\$	18,641.85	\$ 368,406.32	5.3%
EXPENSE ADMINISTRATIVE						
Subtotal - Administrative	\$	37,212.00	\$	2,457.88	\$ 39,669.88	6.6%
EXPENSE CHURCH PROPERTY EXPENSE						
Subtotal Church Property	\$	63,168.07	\$	2,547.40	\$ 65,715.47	4.0%
EXPENSE EDUCATION EXPENSE						
Subtotal - Education	\$	7,185.00	\$	(885.00)	\$ 6,300.00	-12.3%
BUDGET Ministry						
Subtotal - Ministry	\$	21,850.93	\$	(938.59)	\$ 20,912.34	-4.3%
BUDGET Diocesan Assessment/Pledge						
Subtotal - Outreach	\$	55,022.83	\$	(286.06)	\$ 54,736.77	-0.5%
BUDGET Outreach						
Subtotal - Outreach	\$	16,285.00	\$	7,001.41	\$ 23,286.41	43.0%
BUDGET PASTORAL CARE						
Subtotal - Pastoral Care	\$	2,800.00	\$	600.00	\$ 3,400.00	21.4%
BUDGET VISIBILITY						
Subtotal - visibility	\$	4,700.00	\$	(1,200.00)	\$ 3,500.00	-25.5%
BUDGET Worship Expense						
Subtotal - worship	\$	14,675.00	\$	3,575.00	\$ 18,250.00	24.4%
Total Expenses (including one-time purchases)	\$	572,663.31	\$	31,513.90	\$ 604,177.20	5.5%
Net Income	\$	(39,899.31)	\$	40,508.28	\$ 608.98	-101.5%
Net operating income/(expense) (including one-time purchases)	\$	(39,899.31)	\$	40,508.28	\$ 608.98	
Total Expenses (excluding one-time purchases)	\$	572,663.31	\$	31,513.90	\$ 604,177.20	
Net operating income/(defecit)	\$	(39,899.31)	\$	40,508.28	\$ 608.98	

MINUTES FROM ST. JAMES' 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

Marie Hughes

St. James' Episcopal Church Annual Meeting February 4, 2024

The Rev. Joe T. Mitchell called the meeting to order at 12:30 and the meeting began with a prayer.

Polls were opened for an hour to vote for new Vestry members.

Opening Remarks: Father Joe explained to the parishioners how the meeting was subject to St. James' By-Laws, the NYS laws for non-profits, the Episcopal Church Canons, Roberts' Rules of Order.

Secretary Election: Father Joe made a motion to elect Marie Hughes as Secretary for the meeting; seconded by Warden Bill Spalding; and approved by the Parishioners with a voice vote.

Outgoing Warden Susan Rynkiewicz was chosen as Head Teller to count and verify the Vestry election.

Nominating Committee Report: Warden Bill Spalding announced the committee consisting of outgoing Vestry members plus Carolyn Legg. Outgoing members are: Amy Allyn, Nancy Corl, Barbara Burton, Warden Susan Rynkiewicz. The new slate will consist of: Carol Murphy, Beckie Hidy, John Devine, and Tara Covert Lanning.

Minutes of the 2023 Annual meeting: John Watt made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Meg Osborne; approved by the parishioners.

State of the Parish: Interim Rector The Rev. Joe T. Mitchell presented the parishioners with what he has seen since coming to St. James', In his remarks Father Joe reminded the parishioners that the state of the parish is whatever they wanted it to be, The church is a place where people are called together to pray and to serve, sort of a "hospital for sinners," He reminded the parishioners of the difficulties of transition after a beloved Rector leaves, and the parishioners experience all sorts of emotions including, grief, fear and anxiety. That is why transitions are so important because it is a process, a moment in time. Father Joe also reminded the parishioners that the mission and vision of the church is not about the clergy but about each of us, and more important about Jesus. He concluded by saying, "Be who you are, don't try to impress the new Rector; your work is not done; your parish is still being written by you."

Staff Presentations: Michael Larkin presented by video and spoke of the role Technology has played at St. James'. He discussed the live streaming opportunities and the fact that transition has brought new ideas to the team responsible for technology.

Justin Oei discussed his time with the choir, and thanked its members for their collegiality and his hope to attract new members. He also noted the needed repairs to the organ. He was grateful for all the support he has received since being at St. James'.

Mo Allyn discussed the children's program. She talked about the various opportunities the children have been given and mentioned that much of her program is based on the Montessori method. She invited any parishioner to come and observe a class, if they so choose. She and John Helgren are going to reinstitute the music program for the children at Merriman Circle.

Laura Posecznick reported on her role at St. James' telling the parish that she is in charge of communications which include the weekly newsletter, and the monthly Spirit. She told the parishioners to visit the Web site which is up to date and important and under the expertise of Danielle Larkin. She reminded everyone to read the email blasts and also noted how the staff all work together easily and support one another.

Nicole Bova who is the Parish Administrator as well as Bookkeeper at the Thrift Shop discussed her role in scheduling all the services as well as continuing to help as the financial person for the church. She recapped the budget as can be found on page 33 in the Annual report while noting in particular the deficit in pledges. She thanked John Gilly, chairperson for the Finance Committee, for his diligence during the past several years, and wished him well as he retires from the committee. The total loss in revenue for this year is expected to be \$40,000 based on pledges received.

Warden's Report: Warden Bill Spalding presented the report stating that all financials are down from the previous year. He said the staff opted out of being given raises this year because of the deficit. He assured the parish that there will still be an opportunity for the new Rector to hire an assistant because of an endowment that has been set aside for that purpose.

Outgoing Vestry Members: Father Joe thanked each of the outgoing members and presented them with a gift. He noted that outgoing Warden Susanne Rynkiewicz has done a remarkable job as leader especially the past three months when there was no priest. He told her she has made his transition so much easier. In response, Susanne said, "It has been an incredible honor to serve. You have been my family."

Election Results: The new Vestry Slate was accepted as presented and all members were elected.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:31 with a prayer by Father Joe. Judy Holmes made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by John Watt; approved by all.

Respectfully submitted.

Marie P. Hughes, Secretary





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