



# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

ST. JAMES'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
1018 Farmington Avenue  
West Hartford, Connecticut 06107

*The Annual Meeting of Saint James's Parish  
will be held on Sunday, January 25, 2026  
at 11:00am*

Published January 2026

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# **Agenda**

The Annual Parish Meeting  
Saint James's Episcopal Church  
West Hartford, Connecticut  
January 25, 2026  
11:00 a.m.

<b>Welcome and Call to Order</b>	The Rev. Robert C. Hooper III, Rector
<b>Reading of the Warrant</b>	Greg Jacobs
<b>Reading of the Minutes of the Last Meeting</b>	
<b>The Report of the Nominating Committee and the Election of Wardens, Clerk, Treasurer, Vestry members, and Diocesan Delegates</b>	
<b>The Senior Warden's Report</b>	Greg Jacobs
<b>The Junior Warden's Report</b>	Tyler Smith
<b>Report from Finance Committee</b>	Mike Sherrill
<b>Other Reports, as Distributed</b>	
<b>Old Business</b>	
<b>New Business</b>	
<b>Conversation with the Rector</b>	
<b>Other Matters Arising</b>	
<b>Adjournment</b>	

**The Annual Parish Meeting  
Saint James's Episcopal Church  
West Hartford, Connecticut  
January 26, 2025  
11:00 a.m.**

**Welcome and Call to Order**

- 182<sup>nd</sup> meeting of St. James's Episcopal Church of West Hartford called to order.
- Rob led the attendees in prayer.

**Reading of the Warrant**

- Senior Warden read the warrant aloud.

**Reading of the Last Meeting**

- Motion made and approved to accept the minutes as presented, rather than reading minutes aloud.

**Nominations**

- Thank you to Vestry members ending their terms or stepping off including: Bob Bausmith, Ellen Dollar, Kim Hart-Kindelberger, Judith Stahl, Kerri Raissian (Clerk), and Ted Newton (Senior Warden).
- Nominations made for new vestry members and officers including: Susan Gutierrez, Susan Ritz, David Kramer, Jonathan Lewis, Barbara Rua (Clerk), Greg Jacobs (Senior Warden), Michael Sherrill continuing as Treasurer, and Tyler Smith continuing as Warden.
  - Motion moved and accepted to approve slate as presented.

**Senior Warden's Report**

- Encouraged attendees to read the annual report.
- Noted St. James's special and vibrant community.
- Commended Bob, Rob, Michelle, and Priscilla for their leadership and talents.
- Thanked parish for their stewardship, time, talents, and generosity.
- Thanked Vestry and executive leadership for their time and support of clergy, making note of outgoing Vestry and officers, and new members and officers.

**Junior Warden's Report**

- Noted how much is required to keep the facility going and that the absence of deferred maintenance.
- Highlighted projects this past year including the sound system, and the Good News garden with greenhouse to fight food insecurity.
- Thanked those that assisted during Bob's sabbatical and those that helped year-round.
- Noted the liveness and robust use of the facility including strong event attendance (i.e. chili cookoff, strawberry festival, fall festival) which help us gather, celebrate and come together.
- Trees sold out in record time.

- Encouraged the momentum and for members to continue stepping up making it a wonderful place to visit and worship.
- Commended Leon's work as a sexton day in and day out.
- Thanked Bob for all he does behind the scenes, including diagnosing and pointing out needs.
- Thanked the congregation for the privilege and opportunity to serve as Junior Warden and indicated he's looking forward to 2025.

Intermission – coffee break

Finance

- Bob noted that any live stream attendees should send questions to him via text.
- 2024 financial theme was change.
  - The Financial Secretary handles details including reviewing bills, cutting checks, reviewing reports, balancing, etc.
    - After nearly 17 years, Heidi Cotter relocated and stepped away from the role.
    - Stephanie Latif is the new Financial Secretary and is up to speed.
    - There was a one month overlap for transfer of knowledge.
  - Diocese requires annual financial review based on size of St. James's budget.
    - Contacted auditors in May 2024 to schedule the required audit to learn they were no longer auditing non-profits.
    - St. John's referred their auditing firm.
      - Rate is similar and they are familiar with the work.
  - Transitioned St. James's financial software package to Power Church.
    - This is a transition from a desktop software to cloud based software with backup, technical support, remote access, etc.
  - Checking account compromised in mid-October.
    - All resolved at this time, but it did take Treasurer eleven visits to the bank branch to do so.
- Year-end results
  - Nearly \$14,000 better than budgeted.
    - Given challenges faced in the past year by St. James's and all churches, that is a good year.
  - Biggest income item is pledges.
    - 2024 pledges totaled approximately \$630,000 and the amount collected was within \$1,000 of that.
      - Thanked members for their generosity and commitment.
  - Thanked the Auction Committee for fundraising above budget.
  - Property expenses can be a challenge.
    - Utilities came in higher than projected.
  - Staffing costs are a bit above projection due to staffing changes.
  - Final results were a surplus position.
- Bob thanked Mike for all he does and for bringing his expertise to our ministry.

## Other Reports

- Bob noted reports in the booklet.
  - Motion to receive all other reports as distributed was made and approved.

## Old Business

- None

## New Business

- None

## Outreach Reflection

- Assistant Rector's reflection on outreach.
  - No report to add
- Bob encouraged members to read Rob, Priscilla and Michelle's newsletter updates.
- Reflection
  - While we don't live in the past, we need to be informed by it.
    - In the past year Bob enjoyed sabbatical and noted his thanks for that time.
    - Alan and Joe's departure overlapping with Bob's return created a tricky balance, but what could've been problematic was not with the great job they did and Michelle and Rob stepping right into that space.
    - Bob noted twenty-three years of remarkable teams, including the current team.
      - St. James's is constantly changing and evolving.
      - Given the Church's age, the ability to be nimble and change is remarkable.
  - Great Year
    - Finances worked out and Stephanie is up and running.
    - Vestry staying on, departing, and coming on are all fantastic.
    - Excited to work with new Senior Warden in the coming year.
  - Moving forward
    - We must tend the garden and feed ourselves in order to feed other people so Bob is keeping a mindful eye on this.
    - Seeing resurgence of activity and emerging from COVID funk.
      - Eleven baptisms from September until now.
    - We are in a privileged position here at St. James's.
      - i.e. Audit is required due to our budget size.
  - Bob is asked "What is St. James's like?" with some frequency. He answers:
    - It's a parish that likes itself.
    - We get along.
    - Not a lot of conflict.
    - This all takes effort of spirit but it's worth the trouble.
    - We do things as a community that could not happen as individuals.

## Youth

- Mission trip to Ecuador working with Physicians for Andean Community Health (PACH).
  - Age appropriate for high school age children – rising, graduating, or in between.
  - Grandchildren, friends and family welcome as long as a trustworthy source vouches for them.
- Rob and Priscilla have started inviting fifth graders to youth group.
- Music department speaks for itself!
- Bob noted the ethos of our community, whether aware or not, is people who give a damn about other people.
  - This loving, caring, nature is needed and important.
  - This is not as common as you think it is.
- Thank you
  - Vestry coming on and off.
  - Incredible staff and clergy.
    - Cheryl continues to do a good job.
    - Leon continues to help with anything he's asked.
      - Working with students from Futures- fantastic mentoring and organizing happening around that.
  - Stephanie is doing a good job.
  - Cannot say enough about Michelle and Rob.
  - Clergy who continues to attend church here and participate.
    - Speaks volumes that clergy come back and are active even after they no longer work here.
  - Choir-speaks for itself
    - Choir's ability to be nimble in that environment is really something.
    - Choir continues to develop into something beautiful.
  - Folks who make Sunday morning happen besides clergy and choir
    - Altar Guild
    - Acolytes
    - Chalice Bearers
    - Lay readers
    - Intercessors
    - Flowers-Mary Ann astounds me Sunday in, Sunday out.
      - Getting it done. Beautiful!
      - Always tell brides and grooms – ask Mary Ann! She'll be more excited about your wedding than you are.
    - Live streamers
      - Extends the ministry, community, warmth and love that we are able to provide.

- New ministry: Embrace Group that provides pastoral care and other ways of supporting people.
- Coffee hour-sign up! They need your help.
- Youth group, KFC, 3Ms.
- Rob's Bible study.
- Men's group, Women of St. James's-thank you!
  - Ministry unto itself providing warmth.
- List goes on and on
- Priscilla
  - Been doing this team ministry together for 33 years.
  - So good at her job, and for so many kids she's the why they are here.
  - Priscilla brings patience, energy, enthusiasm, grace.
- New and unchartered territory ahead.
  - Pray for your patience and enthusiasm.
  - Take care of yourself and each other.
  - In a time of crisis, you need to be gentle with yourself (spiritually, physically and emotionally) in order to care for other people.
- Look forward to another number of years with St. James's and the new people we'll meet along the way.
- Bob shared that it is a privilege to work on these things and thanked everyone for making it possible.

#### Questions

- None

#### Other Matters Arising

- None

#### Adjournment

Go in peace!

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara Rua, Clerk

## **A Letter from the Rector** **The Rev. Robert C. Hooper, III**

January 25, 2026  
Annual Parish Meeting

Dear Siblings in Christ,

As we turn the page on another year in the life of St. James's, I find myself filled with gratitude. This past year has been one of faithful generosity, deepened relationships, and a renewed commitment to serving our neighbors and one another. In so many ways, you have shown what it means to be the Church—alive in love, grounded in hope, and active in compassion.

Your generosity has made a real and lasting difference. Through your giving of time, talent, and treasure, St. James's has continued to show up for our wider community. Whether through outreach ministries, youth and intergenerational programming, pastoral care, or simply the steady presence of people who show up week after week, you have helped ensure that this parish remains a place of welcome, care, and purpose. Because of you, our mission is not just sustained—it is shared.

This year has also been marked by the powerful gift of music in our common life. Music at St. James's has long been more than something we hear; it is something that shapes us, lifts our prayers, and draws us more deeply into worship. From familiar hymns to choral offerings and instrumental beauty, music has helped us express joy, grief, hope, and thanksgiving when words alone were not enough.

As part of this year's story, we also pause to acknowledge a significant transition. With deep gratitude, we give thanks for the Rev. Rob Lofberg and for the many ways he shared his gifts with this community. His leadership, preaching, and care have enriched our worship and our life together. We wish Rob and Nicole every blessing in the next chapter of their journey and hold them in our prayers with appreciation and affection.

At the same time, we look ahead with hope as we welcome the Rev. Chris Leung as our new Assistant Rector. Chris brings with her a deep love for the Church, a passion for justice and formation, and a spirit of curiosity and joy. We are excited for the gifts she will share and the ways her ministry will help shape our life together in the year ahead.

Transitions remind us that while people and seasons change, the heart of this parish remains strong. St. James's is carried forward by a shared commitment to generosity, creativity, and faithfulness. Looking ahead to the new year, I am hopeful—not because we know exactly what lies ahead, but because we know who we are, and whose we are.

Thank you for all you have given this year, in ways seen and unseen. Thank you for your trust, your kindness, and your willingness to walk this path together. As we move into the year ahead, may we continue to be guided by love, strengthened by community, and inspired to serve with joy.

With gratitude and hope,



The Rev'd Robert C. Hooper, III  
Rector

## Report from the Senior Warden

**T**HIS is my first report to you as Senior Warden, and it's hard to believe a year has already gone by! After being connected to this parish in some way for almost 40 years, I thought I had a good understanding of all the things we do. It turns out I didn't know half of it! I continue to be impressed and amazed by how much we are able to do as a parish for our community both inside and outside our walls.

2025 brought the departure of the Rev. Rob Lofberg, and we wish him and Nicole well on their new journey. That said, I am also very excited to welcome our new Assistant Rector, the Rev. Chris Leung! I'd also like to thank our outstanding priest associates for stepping in to help out, especially with Rob's departure and the mission trip this year.

While there were many great activities in 2025, there were three in particular I'd like to highlight:

- It was wonderful to see the mission trip return this year! It looked like an incredible experience for our youth group, and I know many shared that it was very impactful for them on many levels as well as benefitting the work of PACH and the communities they serve in Ecuador.
- This year also featured "Theoretta and the Dissonants" which, as far as I know, is the first musical we've ever produced. The amount of effort Michelle, Priscilla, the kids, and everyone who was involved put into this was astounding. I'd also like to thank the parish for supporting this event. My favorite St. James's saying will always be that "everyone is welcome at this table," but a close second is now, "How can any melody be wrong?"
- The final one occurred just this month in December when on top of our normal gift-giving program through Grace Church, we found out that Hartford Catholic Worker had an urgent need for toys. This parish stepped up in a big way and met the need and more. To me, that can-do spirit is inspiring as we consider what we can do as a community.

Lastly, a few thank yous. First, to our outgoing vestry members for their service to the parish: Ruth Mitman, Bill Thompson, and Chuck Kinney. We are lucky to have Chuck staying on in the Clerk capacity, and I'd also like to thank Tyler Smith and Mike Sherrill for their continued service as Junior Warden and Treasurer. To our rector Bob Hooper and the entire staff whose dedication to the parish is incredible. Also, to each of you who contribute your time, talents, and resources to make this extraordinary community such a wonderful thing to be a part of!

Greg Jacobs, *Senior Warden*

## Report from the Junior Warden

**2**025 has been another remarkable chapter in the life of St. James's. As we reflect on the past year, it's clear that our church continues to thrive as a center of faith, fellowship, and service. The momentum from 2024 carried us forward, and we are still seeing the rewards of the Good News Garden, the flourishing of A Journey Home, and the vibrant use of our facilities by both our congregation and the wider community.

Last year, we began 2024 with an upgrade to our sanctuary—a much-needed new sound system that has transformed the worship experience for everyone. The clarity and quality of music and spoken word now fill the space, making every service and event more meaningful. We also tackled essential maintenance projects: patching up the parking lot, completing tree and landscape work, and finishing repairs to the elevator.

Our facilities have continued to see tremendous use. The sanctuary, parish hall, and dining room are bustling with activity. AA groups meet regularly in the dining room, Music Together fills the parish hall with joyful sounds, and outside organizations—from concert groups to community meetings—have found a welcoming home at St. James's. It's inspiring to see our church bring so many people together, fostering connection and support in countless ways.

The Good News Garden remains a source of pride and purpose. Thanks to the dedication of so many volunteers—who shovel soil, push wheelbarrows, and get their hands dirty—we can grow and harvest vegetables and plants to help fight food insecurity in our community. The addition of our greenhouse has enhanced the growing season, allowing us to provide fresh produce for even longer. It stands as a testament to what we can accomplish together, and we look forward to many more years of using the garden to support those in need.

We are thrilled to see A Journey Home thriving in our church space, offering vital support and hope to those who need it most. The facilities at St. James's remain in high demand, with outside organizations regularly using our spaces for everything from concerts to meetings. This year, we've hosted a wide range of events and welcomed groups of all kinds, allowing us to connect with more of our neighbors.

We just wrapped up our annual Christmas Tree sale, selling over 130 trees and wreaths. These events are only possible because of the incredible volunteers who step up. Your dedication and generosity are the backbone of our church community, and we are deeply grateful for all you do.

As we look to 2026, we are filled with excitement and enthusiasm for the future of St. James's. One significant challenge on the horizon is the need for a new boiler in 2026. This will be a major and expensive project, but we are already working with various contractors to secure the best option for St. James's. We appreciate your support and understanding as we plan for this important investment in our church's future.

Finally, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time and energy this year. Whether you raked leaves, sold Christmas trees, set up chairs, or helped in any way, your efforts make St. James's the special place it is. And a special thank you to our Sexton, Leon Fraser, for his unwavering commitment to maintaining our church.

It remains my privilege to serve as your Junior Warden. Thank you for the opportunity and for all you do to make St. James's thrive!

Tyler Smith, *Junior Warden*

# Report from the Organist & Music Director

**2**025 was a full year for the music ministry of St. James's! It was my first full year in the position, and I continue to feel the deepest gratitude to support this amazing community. Here is an overview of the year:

## **Spring, 2025:**

In February we hosted the Yale Whiffenpoofs as a special event. It was a wonderful night of a cappella music in a space so well suited for it. We are excited to have even bigger artists slated for upcoming seasons and will continue our commitment to bringing in larger artists into this space. In March the adult choir held Compline, a service of sung prayer with ancient monastic origins. This special service of a cappella music was done in the chancel, around hundreds of candles, and featured music by John Sheppard, Paul Smith, Bobby McFerrin, Thomas Tallis, and Þorkell Sigurbjörnsson. The scheduling of Holy Week/Easter this year was a bit challenging, given that it coincided directly with spring break for the public schools. It was impossible to plan any involvement of the children/youth for this most important liturgical season, and many of our adult singers with children were understandably out as well. Nonetheless, the adult choir stepped up to sing special music not only for Maundy Thursday, but also Good Friday and Easter Sunday. On Easter, we welcomed John Charles Thomas, the principal trumpet player of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, who graced us with festive, virtuosic works. In May, we held our Annual Choir Dinner, with the theme "Americana Folk" which was a wonderful evening of home-cooked Southern food paired with old gospel tunes, spirituals, and Appalachian folk songs sung by choir members. The year ended with the choristers participating in a Collaborative Chorister Evensong at Trinity College, alongside chorister programs from all over the state of Connecticut. This service was held in a packed chapel and featured big repertoire, conducted by music directors who represented each of the ensembles, accompanied by Christopher Houlihan. To close out the adult choir season, we held our Pentecost Jazz Mass, which featured a 4-piece band and repertoire by legendary black composers Rollo Dilworth, Keith Hampton, and Oscar Peterson.

## **Summer, 2025:**

As is often the case, the summer months are a time of planning and rest, as well as featuring special music with individuals or small ensembles. We are so grateful for Cheryl Wadsworth and Christopher Houlihan for being our organists on two Sundays while Michelle was on vacation. We're also so thankful for the many other musicians who offered their gifts including Mindy Zhao, Benjamin Dollar, Louisa Smith, Evie Normand, Lindsay Fawber, Mara Suttmann-Lea, David Byrne, John Waterman, Bob & Claire Burnett, as well as those who participated in our pick-up treble choir for a Sunday.

## **Fall, 2025:**

In August, members of our adult choir were invited to be part of the Albert Schweitzer Organ Festival at Trinity College, alongside Chorus Angelicus, Gaudeamus, St. Joseph Cathedral Schola, and the Trinity College Chapel Singers in a large concert that culminated in the performance of Bernstein's magnificent Chichester Psalms. Then, in October we hosted renowned British a cappella octet VOCES8 and welcomed a sold-out audience of 500 to see their concert. The month closed out with the wacky, family-friendly Halloween musical spectacle that is PipeScreams, which brought many organists and organ enthusiasts from all over to our church. Then, in November we premiered an insane original musical called Theoretta & the Dissonants, presented by the children and youth of the church in collaboration with an adult choir "antsemble," 4-piece band, costumes, theater lighting, staging, choreography, guest coaching and special appearances. The entire show is now on YouTube (search: Theoretta & the Dissonants - I promise you, there's only one out there!). The event

transformed Parish Hall into a theatre, which was packed to standing-room only with extended family members, neighbors, and a considerable number of music educators from all over the state. I could not possibly be more proud of how well the kids did and how much we all learned in the process. Most recently, our adult choir presented O Radiant Dawn, a Lessons & Carols style Christmas music offering featuring a chamber orchestra (string quartet, two oboists, & organ/harpsichord) performing selections from Bach's Cantata No. 62 in addition to other Baroque works by Buxtehude and Handel along with pieces by McDowell, Tavener, MacMillan, Vaughan Williams, and a new work by local organist extraordinaire, Christopher Houlihan. And by the time this article is in your hands, we will have done our Christmas Eve service - the traditional afternoon pageant, led by the children/youth of the church, followed by a late-night candlelight service featuring the adult choir along with several vocal/instrumental guests, including Sam Moffett on various woodwind instruments (saxophone, clarinet, flute, piccolo, oboe) and John Kramer on violin.

In the past few months, the adult choir has welcomed 2 new members (Eden Cowles and Cynthia Smith). In addition to the 8 choristers and 9 children in "3M's," there are over 40 singers from ages 3+ who rehearse weekly and sing regularly in worship. Our adult choir offered 73 anthems in 2025, and our children's choir & choristers were featured on 12 different Sundays. In 2025 we also featured Lindsay Fawber, John Waterman, Dale Smith, Louisa Smith, Gideon Byrne, Laurel Raessian, Mara Suttmann-Lea, Bob Bausmith, Brian Joy, Evie Normand, Hattie Busse, Emily Jacovino, Rory Raessian, Anya Fisher, Camden Jacobs, and Ryder Morton as vocal soloists. As instrumentalists, we were lucky to also feature John Kramer, Clayton Schroth, Cheryl Wadsworth, Gideon Byrne, Lina Byrne, Anya Fisher, Mindy Zhao, Ben Dollar, and Thomas Tarutin from within our community as well as Sam Moffet, Christopher Houlihan, John Charles Thomas, Colette Hall, Michael Blancaflor, and Roy Wiseman in our worship services as guests. As always, St. James's also continues hosting community music events like those of Hall High School, Conard High School, I Giovani Solisti, Farmington Valley Chorale, West Hartford Women's Chorale, and CONCORA.

I express my deepest gratitude to the St. James's Adult Choir, for their collaborative spirit and deep dedication; to the St. James's Choristers, for their absolutely astonishing growth musically and relationally this year; the "3M" children's choir, which has stepped up in even bigger, joyful ways; and for the parents/guardians for their continued trust and support. It is a delight to work alongside Priscilla Hooper, with her imaginative and collegial spirit. Lou Strillacci was a wonderful help with the 3M rehearsals as well. I am particularly grateful to Rob Lofberg, for his collaboration in the spring/summer and I am greatly looking forward to the work ahead with Chris Leung. We are blessed to have the steadfast work of Cheryl Batter in the office and of Leon Fraser around the church grounds as well as Stephanie Latif in the church financial office. I am grateful for the vestry's continued, expansive visioning. And finally, for Rev. Bob Hooper's immeasurable leadership and support, without which none of this would be possible.

May this parish be greatly blessed in the coming year as we continue listening for God's voice and living into our mission to be a people of faith, hope, and love.

Soli Deo Gloria,  
Michelle Horsley, *Organist & Director of Music*

# Report from the Director of Youth and Family Ministries

**A** couple of years ago, Kerri Raissian told me that the year a child turns 4 is the best Christmas. I took what she said to heart, and Bob and I had Robby, Katy and the girls for Christmas this year. Millie turned 4 in December and Channing turned 2 in November. Except for the fact that Channing got sick and they had to reschedule their flight and we all got a little sick, it was a magical Christmas. One of the highlights of their visit was the beautiful snow!

Every year, I write this report after the pageant and this year's pageant was one to remember. A few years ago, when we decided to have no rehearsals except for the narrators, the speaking parts and the solos worked out very well. We made this decision so that everyone including visitors would be able to participate. I really like this idea and feel that it is very much in line with St. James's philosophy of welcoming everyone.

As I said, the pageant was a definite highlight of the year, but there were many others that stand out as well. Back in August, Michelle Horsley came to Bob and me with the idea to put on a musical about music theory for kids. Bob and I were in but to be honest, there is no way we could have anticipated the creative, beautiful play that we would put on. Theoretta and the Dissonants, created entirely in the mind of Michelle, was a masterpiece. Our choristers and younger members of Mondays, Music & More (3Ms) and members of the adult choir had the experience of a lifetime, for that, I am incredibly grateful.

Speaking of 3Ms, we have about 10 children who come on Mondays to sing and learn more about Bible stories and the church. This is our third year of 3Ms, and I am happy to report it is thriving. If you know anyone that might be interested in joining us on most Mondays from 4 to 5:15, please contact me at [prisannehooper@gmail.com](mailto:prisannehooper@gmail.com) We would love to see this program grow even more!

Another highlight of the year was the wonderful mission trip to Ecuador this summer. Bob, Rob, and I plus 7 wonderful young people from this parish, traveled to Ecuador where we participated in a medical mission trip. These young people embraced new experiences and opened themselves to learning about the Ecuadorian people. There were many times when I thought they might express hesitation, and they surprised me by rising to the occasion every time. I look forward to seeing how this experience shapes them both spiritually and intellectually.

Finally in 2026, I am looking forward to running our youth group with our new Assistant Rector, Chris Leung. I can't wait to see the new energy and experience she will share with our young people. As I say every year, thank you for sharing your wonderful children with me. It is truly an honor to be a part of their lives, helping them learn and grow spiritually.

Priscilla Hooper, *Director of Youth and Family Ministries*

## Report from the Acolytes

**T**HE youth of St. James's who serve as acolytes know they are a part of something special. As they light the candles, lead the processional and recessional, focus our attention on the Gospel reading, and help guide us to Communion, they lend dignity, grace, and an element of pageantry to our worship. It can also be more fun than sitting in the pews with their parents!

In 2025, St. James's was grateful for the increase in participation of our acolyte program with new children, including Wesley Otto, Trey Keating, and Wesley Bowman. We did not have anyone graduate and move away this year, and we are appreciative of the high schoolers who continue to serve, including Ryder Morton, George Keating, and Quinn Ciccone.

Each acolyte serves about once per month as a crucifer, torch bearer, or Gospel (holder). If you have a teen or pre-teen (3rd grade and above) who is willing to take on this important leadership role, please let me know of their interest in learning more about this unique opportunity. Thank you to all of the kids who participate in the acolyte program, and thanks to their parents as well for getting them to church and giving them the opportunity to be part of the worship.

Deb Morton, *Coordinator*

## Report from the Altar Flower Coordinator



**T**HE 2025 calendar year was again full of events to which our floral tradition continued. In addition to the Sundays of the year outside of Advent and Lent, when fresh floral arrangements are created for the main altar and chapel altar, effort went into planning and decorating the front and rear narthex with welcoming seasonal displays for Christmas and Easter.

This year, with the expert guidance of Father Bob and with enormous support from Claire Burnett and Priscilla Thomas, we embarked on starting a St. James's Flower Guild. The time has come for a sustainable plan to take St. James's into the future and to have many hands designing fresh floral arrangements each week for our altars, and also to plan and manage the two festive holidays when we decorate the sanctuaries.

In October of 2025, Bob created a Sign-up Genius that is posted on-line each week. Anyone in the parish can join the Flower Guild without experience. Currently, there is a sign-up for Leaders and Learners, so it does not have to be overwhelming for anyone new to designing flowers! I have created a flash drive with all relevant information on how and where to buy plus images to make it all EASY and FUN. Volunteers can choose to work in pairs. Supplies and instructions have been provided; now it's time to collaborate!

We can also use the gardeners who love to grow flowers and who have flowering trees/branches to donate during the summer. For the many years I have designed flowers for the altars here, you have seen my back yard displayed on the altar throughout any given summer through early fall. Now, I want to see your gardens on display!

For anyone interested in doing a small amount of administrative work for the Flower Guild, we need someone to select and place plant orders for Christmas and Easter. No floral design experience needed.

Just place the order, arrange delivery, and coordinate volunteers to decorate the church. Please see Bob.

Also, I'm not leaving my ministry here! I will continue to support the design efforts with the newly created Flower Guild, and plan to manage the design and administration process through the season of Easter 2026.

My personal thanks to Cheryl Batter for her many years of support. Cheryl maintains the listing of long-standing memorial flowers. Cheryl's constant communication with me and with parishioners allows us to fill the variety of requests for individuals who wish to donate money for flowers to celebrate the birth of a new family member, a birthday or commemorate an important event. The suggested contribution is \$125.

The 'Golden-Rod Award' for 2025 goes to Mari Merwin for her sharp eye with presenting plants of every size and shape at both Easter and Christmas for many years! She comes in early and stays late and happily picks up a broom and sweeps up for others. Priscilla Thomas has graciously relinquished the 'Golden Rod' for Mari as the final recipient! Thank you to all past recipients, you have all earned that special recognition!

I want to wholeheartedly thank our parish community for the monetary support for this important ministry. I am personally so grateful to Bob and Priscilla Hooper for their support of my work since they have been with us, and to John and Ruth Mitman prior. At my count, it's been 29 years of designing flowers for the altars here, and although I have no plan to leave my knife and clippers unsharpened forever, I am beyond blessed for the handful of volunteers who have stepped up to learn and attend my workshops. It is you who will continue the tradition of providing beautifully designed fresh flowers for our altars as we glorify God and move forward with the plan to collaborate with many creative minds, hearts, and hands with clippers!

Mary Ann Haar, *Floral Committee Chair*

## Report from the Altar Guild

OUR Altar Guild has had a wonderful and fulfilling year, serving with care and dedication as we prepared and maintained the sacred spaces and vessels for worship. The Altar Guild ensures the wine and bread are ready in both the chapel and the church for the regular weekly worship.

For special festivals, including Christmas and Easter, members of the Altar Guild take extra care that the silver is polished, the linens are fresh, and palms are stripped. A member of the Altar Guild is sometimes present at weddings and funerals to assist if needed.

We are grateful for our Altar Guild team: Linda Fournier, Elizabeth Gallegos, Susan Gutierrez, Diane Hunter, Chris Keesling, Kim Hart-Kindelberger, Christine Pearson, and Elizabeth Waterman. As we look ahead, we are actively searching for new members to join our team. All adults — male and female of any age — are warmly encouraged to consider this meaningful ministry. No prior experience is necessary; we'll gladly provide training and support. If you feel called to serve behind the scenes in this important role, we'd love to welcome you! Please reach out to Elizabeth Gallegos at [rgeg24@gmail.com](mailto:rgeg24@gmail.com).

Thank you to all the members of the Altar Guild. Your service is very much appreciated!

Elizabeth Gallegos, *Chair*

## Report from the Casseroles Helping Expanding Families (CHEF) Committee

**H**OW wonderful does it feel to receive via delivery a direct act of kindness from a fellow member of St. James's in the form of a handmade meal of support in a time when it's needed? Chef Ministries is dedicated to serving the physical and spiritual needs of our church community by providing nutritious and delicious meals to members in times of need. This annual report highlights our key activities, achievements, challenges, and future goals throughout the past year. Our mission is to demonstrate Christ's love through the preparation and delivery of wholesome meals to church members who are experiencing illness, loss, recovery, or other life transitions or hardship. We strive to offer support, comfort, and fellowship to all recipients.

Chef Ministries team of talented Chefs prepared approximately 50 meals and delivered them to about a dozen households across the congregation. Recipients included seniors, families welcoming new children, individuals recovering from surgery, and those coping with loss. The talents and time provided by the team of over a dozen Chefs is celebrated and appreciated by this committee leader throughout the year as well as here at the year-end annual report – thank you CHEF(s)! Their willingness to be ready to prepare and deliver a meal or two (on what is often short notice) is commendable and remarkable – and this team is very skilled in their culinary talents.

How can we improve you ask? Often, I find that opportunities were lost in providing assistance or a few meals because no one reached out on behalf of the person/family in need during their time of hardship, illness, or changing family. As committee chair, I discover well after the fact a time that would have been ideal for a CHEF or two to swing by and deliver delicious St. James's care in a meal. PLEASE don't hesitate to reach out to me via email or phone at [mach1goon@gmail.com](mailto:mach1goon@gmail.com) or 978-505-1333 to let me know when your fellow "St. Jamesers" can help by delivering a meal. It is CHEF Ministries' goal for next year to increase the meals served by 25% so to reach more members in need. If you are interested in joining this team of great CHEFS, please let me know and I will add you to the volunteer CHEF mailing list.

Through God's provision and the generosity of our church community, Chef Ministries continues to fulfill its mission of service and compassion. Thank you to all volunteers and supporters for making this impactful ministry possible. Together, we look forward to another year of nourishing bodies and uplifting spirits. Thank you, CHEF!

Martha Parish, *Coordinator*

## Report from Education for Ministry

**S**T. JAMES'S has hosted an EfM group for over 25 years. EfM is a four-year theological education and reflection program utilizing course materials from The University of the South School of Theology. Each group has a minimum of 6 and maximum of 12 students with one or two mentors.

Current members from St. James's are Susan Ritz and Heidi Sweeney, year three, Gil Lowerie, year one, and Doug Compton who is in the new EfM offering, "Wide Angle", a one-year course where individuals are also a part of the traditional EfM group. Three other members comprise the balance of this year's group. They are from Trinity Hartford, and Christ and the Epiphany Church, New Haven.

Over the years, St. James's graduates included: Tom Rouse, Susan Powers, Elizabeth Gallegos, Mike Shuey, Audrey Lamy, Jonathan Lewis, Tony and Kerri Raissian, Matt Schott, Hugh Whelan,

Cheri Evans, Bill Harris, Deborah and Eric Ross, Barbara Schiller, Trudy Thompson, John Wadsworth, Elizabeth Waterman, Loretta Waldman, Jerrod Bowman and Ron Ward. Graduates also include the late Marge Cunningham, Margaret Mair, David Thomas, and Syd Tansi, a former group Mentor. For more information contact: Ron Ward, EfM mentor, 860-463-8057, or [rtwtmr@comcast.net](mailto:rtwtmr@comcast.net).

Ron Ward, *Mentor and Administrator*

## Report from the Embrace Ministry

**T**HE Embrace Ministry began in the summer of 2024 to provide support to parishioners who were homebound or could benefit from assistance due to health concerns or other life challenges. We are currently eight parishioners who provide friendly phone calls, send cards, visit, provide rides to church, and help with errands or appointments for those who can't drive. In addition, Embrace sends birthday cards to the children of the parish. We are available for and have provided some respite for caregivers. We remain flexible to what we can do when needs arise in our church community, and desire to invite people into God's love through acts big and small.

*Susan Ritz, coordinator*

## Report from the Endowment Committee

**T**HE St. James's Endowment Fund is comprised of all bequests to the Church and any gifts that are specified for the Fund. These gifts are meaningful and fulfilling because they continue to work year after year, generating income and capital appreciation that can be applied to our annual budget and work of the Church. Significantly, this support will grow and continue in the years to come. Thus, gifts to the Fund are truly a form of "perpetual stewardship."

Each year, per church bylaws, a certain portion of the Fund's income is transferred to the church's Operating Fund to assist with on-going parish expenses. In 2025, the transfer from the endowment fund to the operating fund was \$152,600, in line with the by-laws formula for Fund transfers that is designed to protect and steadily grow its principal over the long term.

In 2025, the Endowment Committee decided to change the investment advisor for the Fund from Connecticut Wealth Management (CWM) to Donations and Bequests for Church Purposes, Inc (D&B). While our decision was initially motivated by the Fund's historic underperformance relative to our benchmarks, D&B's structure, purpose and size were also key factors. D&B serves as a fiduciary agent for Episcopal Church in Connecticut (ECCT) and has its own Board of Trustees and Director of Operations, which is a layer of fiduciary oversight in addition to that of the members of our committee. Actual investment decisions are made by Bank of America's trust division. As of 2024, D&B had 126 participants consisting of 115 parishes and 11 diocesan related organizations with a combined market value of over \$160 million. Most of the funds were transferred to D&B on July 1.

During the 2025 calendar year there was generally positive equity market performance and relatively flat bond market performance. The Fund experienced positive returns under both CWM (January to June) and D&B (July onward). Market performance was positive in 2024 and 2023, but significantly negative in 2022. This underscores the importance of the Fund's diversification across various equity and fixed income categories, which helps to mitigate the impact of market volatility on the Fund.

Members of the Committee are currently Mike Sherrill, Dick Wenner, Alex Smith, Bob Smith, and me. While each member brings their own insights and/or experience to the table to help direct the Committee's work, asset allocation and buy and sell decisions are made by D&B and Bank of America.

If you have any questions about the Fund or the Committee's work, or if you're considering a contribution to the Fund or serving on the Committee, please reach out to any member of the Committee.

Ted Newton, *Chairman*

## Report from the Good News Garden Committee

**T**HIS fifteenth year of our outreach program delivered a diverse assortment of fresh organic vegetables each week to the Hartford Catholic Worker House in Hartford. The harvests included squash from our new fourth bed, and collards, snap peas, cucumbers, carrots, scallions, lettuce, eggplant, peppers, tomatoes, okra, herbs, and beans from the other beds and greenhouse. In addition, other vegetables were donated by members as well as parishioners and friends. The harvest of apples from an orchard in Bloomfield was abundant and shared with Grace Episcopal for their food bank in October.

Our wonderful volunteers this year included Chuck Russo, Chuck Kinney, Diane Mack, Sue Nelson, Jill Peters-Gee, Vera Racine, Diane Hunter, John Wadsworth, and Gil Lowerre. Susan Ritz provided weekly photos and reports which appeared occasionally in the bulletin on Sundays and sent out weekly reminders for our Wednesday gardening duties. Chuck Kinney and Chuck Russo set up the soaker hoses to provide the appropriate amount of water and set the delivery schedule with timers. We thank Diane Mack for securing a grant from Thrivent Financial for the new bed, and Bob Hooper for building it. Thanks again this year to Bill and Nora Harris who faithfully delivered our offering to Hartford Catholic Worker each week.

The team prepared and planted annual flowers in the pollinator garden with the children's help during their KFC time in May. This bed has been attracting honeybees, mason bees, butterflies and other pollinators. It has become self-sustaining, needing little supplemental water once the flowers begin to grow and bloom. Perennials in the bed are also very hardy and reliable.

The greenhouse carried through the winter with hoops and covers over a good sized crop of collards, carrots and radishes which we harvested in March. We cleared the greenhouse for warm weather crops soon after and moved some of the collards to the Walden Street beds. This year we decided to try growing bush beans, okra, sweet potatoes, and eggplants inside the greenhouse. The decision was based on the hope that the high temperatures during summer's peak would benefit these plants and yields would be better than prior year's tomatoes. Unfortunately, we had mildew and mold issues that cut yields. The greenhouse was sanitized in October and allowed to rest before the addition of manure and seeding of winter carrots. Lettuces were planted in December and collards should be in soon and all covered to retain moisture and warmth while growth continues slowly until March.

New this year: cattle-panel hoops added to the beds support vining crops and are super sturdy. An additional rain barrel helps with irrigating the greenhouse crops. Three pear trees were donated and planted for an Eagle Scout project. It will be interesting to see how they do and, as in everything garden-related, we keep the hope that our efforts will be fruitful!

Susan Ritz and Cheryl Wadsworth, *Coordinators*

## Report from the Memorial Garden Committee

WITH just a small crew of six volunteers, we managed to keep the Memorial Garden looking beautiful this year! The Stewartia trees seem to be rebounding with annual fertilization and aeration by Bartlett Tree Experts. We also had Luna Tree Care in to do some much-needed pruning of the trees and larger shrubs in the Memorial Garden and throughout the church campus. After treatment for Volutella Blight, the pachysandra surrounding the Stewartia trees is looking better, and additional plants were added to fill in gaps left open where diseased plants were removed. The entire garden benefitted from an application of compost and mulch.

Our gardening season begins in April and ends in November with garden cleanup. In between there is biweekly weeding, pruning, dividing and planting of summer annuals. This year our team of faithful and talented gardeners consisted of Chuck Kinney, Peggy McManus, Judith Hock, Susan Ritz, Ann Wood, and yours truly. Please consider volunteering for this important ministry; we could use some additional volunteers. While we have a wonderfully dedicated team, we could use some additional help both for the opening and closing of the garden as well as maintaining it throughout the growing season. I am happy to speak with you about the garden and will provide training on pruning and identification of weeds and invasives. If you are interested in helping, kindly email me at [claireburnett@comcast.net](mailto:claireburnett@comcast.net).

Claire Burnett, *Coordinator*

## Report from the Outreach Committee

IN 2025, the ongoing Outreach projects listed below experienced relatively few changes. Emphasis was directed toward maintaining commitments to agencies that provide critical services such as food and housing, and that have long-standing connections to St. James's parish.

During this past year, we were able to continue our previous level of support for the feeding programs that depend upon St. James's for assistance. This was possible through outreach funds as well as generous donations from parishioners who stepped forward to help fill in the gaps. In order to maintain our pantry at the present level, we need individuals who are willing to commit themselves to either purchasing nonperishable food items or providing funds on a one-time or monthly basis. Each option affords another opportunity to offer time or provide funds to purchase food to feed our hungry neighbors.

**The Hartford Catholic Worker Food Pantry:** In partnership with the Hartford Catholic Worker, the parishioners of St. James's donate food to the HCW food pantry each week. Donated nonperishable food items include pasta, sauce, cans of tuna, mayo, peanut butter, jelly, and soup along with many other items as well as diapers. This food is then distributed to families living in the Clarke Street neighborhood in Hartford.

**The Hartford Catholic Worker Thanksgiving and Christmas:** We helped fill HCW Thanksgiving needs with 97 pies, 1,200 lbs. of produce, and 140 packages of gravy and stuffing. This year, on very short notice, The Hartford Catholic Worker found out that the organization that had provided Christmas presents and gift cards for the children and youth in their community for years would not be doing the same for Christmas 2025. When this information came to us, through the help of so many of the parishioners, St. James's stepped up and filled the gap. Thank you to everyone who made it possible for the moms and grandmoms of the HCW community to be able to provide gifts and gift cards to

their children and grandchildren on Christmas. This is just another example of the generosity and care that this community shows to those with less resources.

**The Stocking Stuffer Mission** continued the process for the last few years by filling small white bags with toiletries and socks. Thanks to the generosity of many parishioners in the form of toiletries and socks or monetary donations, together we gathered and stuffed approximately 205 bags with a pair of warm socks, shampoo, conditioner, razors, shaving cream, body lotion, chapsticks, combs, toothbrushes, and toothpaste. The Open Hearth received 125 bags, and 85 bags were delivered to The Steward B. McKinney Emergency Shelter to be given to recipients before Christmas.

The following is a list of the ongoing mission activities to which St. James's members contributed in 2025.

**The Two Hundred Identical Sandwiches (THIS) program:** In 2025, we continued our sandwich making ministry that provides take-home sandwiches for the clients of Loaves and Fishes after they have enjoyed a hot meal. 200+ sandwiches were made by parishioners as a community service following Sunday services and were delivered by parishioners on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Monday of each month along with casseroles to Loaves and Fishes in Hartford. This ministry has been a vital part of the mission work that we do at St. James's for more than 30 years. This means that in 2025 the good people of St. James's made well over 7,200 sandwiches to be shared with our friends who rely on the Loaves and Fishes soup kitchen for reliable and healthy nutrition. Thank you to everyone who helped and continue to help make this happen.

**Senior Food Program:** In cooperation with Connecticut Foodshare and the Town of West Hartford Department of Social Services, several members of the St. James's community distribute nearly 55 boxes of dry goods, produce, and cheese each month to senior citizens in need across West Hartford. Many thanks to everyone who has helped with this program, which takes place on the third Thursday of each month.

**Hot Meals:** On the second and third Monday of each month, St. James's provides tuna, veggie and egg noodle casserole to Loaves & Fishes, Woodland Street, Hartford. For the third Monday, a chicken Caesar salad is prepared for South Park Inn, Main Street, Hartford. Apple sauce and juice are also delivered there. Several volunteers handle the preparation while others make the deliveries. A total of 2,600 hot lunches were served: 1,200 to the clients at Loaves and Fishes, and 1,400 to those at The South Park Inn.

**The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual School Supplies collection:** In August of 2025 we filled 209 backpacks with tons of supplies and delivered them to the families served by Grace Church Food Pantry, The Bridge Family Center, Hartford Catholic Worker, and social workers at West Hartford's Morley School.

**Christmas Gifts for the Children of Parkville:** In November, St. James's partnered with Grace Episcopal Church, Hartford, to provide clothing and toys for the children of the clients of Grace's incredible Food Pantry. We were given the names of 180 children ranging in age from newborn to 17. Over 80 families/individuals at St. James's contributed approximately 750 Christmas gifts to the children of Parkville. Your generosity has provided a much brighter Christmas for so many children and families this year. Thank you for your support of St. James's Outreach Mission programs.

**Winter Coat Drive:** Beginning in October and running through Thanksgiving, we collected 35 winter coats which were then delivered to the Hartford Catholic Worker in the North End of Hartford. HCW was extremely appreciative and distributed the coats to people in the Clark Street community.

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## 2025 OUTREACH MISSION EXPENDITURES

<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Donation(\$)</u>
Youth Mission Trip	\$ 5,000
Camp Washington Campership Fund (scholarships)	\$ 2,000
Camp Washington General Fund	\$ 2,000
Feeding Programs	\$ 5,000
Hartford Area Food Pantries	\$ 3,000*
Outreach Projects (Christmas & Easter)	\$ 1,000
Urgent Needs and Opportunities	\$ <u>2,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 20,000</b>

\* The \$3,000 was distributed among four Hartford Area Agencies that provide food for the poor: The Place of Grace Food Pantry, South Park Inn, Loaves and Fishes Ministries, and The Open Hearth.

\* Plus, the thousands of dollars' worth of food, diapers, clothing & toys donated in cash or kind by parishioners and friends of St. James's Mission & Outreach efforts.

**\* *Most importantly the many, many volunteer hours of hard work and caring effort offered by members of this generous community that make all of this possible.***

*Outreach Committee*

## Report from the Sacred Ministers

THE role of the Sacred Ministers is to assist the clergy in the celebration of all worship services at St. James's on weekdays, Sundays (both 8:00 and 9:30 services), and religious holidays. The opportunities for service include Chalice Bearers (10), Lectors and Intercessors (21), Lay Readers (conduct non-Eucharist services), Acolytes (14), and Lay Eucharistic Ministers (2) (individuals who take the consecrated host to the homebound as an extension of the parish's sacramental life).

Sincere thanks to all who serve in these ministries for your faithfulness and dedication. Interested parishioners who would like to serve in one of these ministries may contact the clergy for more information.

*The Rev'd Bob Hooper, Rector*

## Report from the Stewardship Committee

ON behalf of the Stewardship Committee, I want to thank everyone for their participation in this year's campaign. The finances of all churches continue to face challenges after the pandemic. While St. James's is not immune from those challenges, the financial support provided by the parish during this time has allowed us to continue with our ministries and the operations of the church. Through early January 2026, we have received 131 pledge cards, or roughly twenty fewer than last year's total number of pledge cards at the end of the stewardship campaign. In a typical year, we receive additional pledge cards after the first of the year so that gap will hopefully close. Of those 131 pledge cards, 11 are from new pledgers. In prior years, we averaged 8-10 new pledges. The challenge comes as we look ahead to 2026. Inflation has tempered but the impact of multiple years of higher inflation continues to challenge our 2026 budget. Have

you been meaning to send your pledge card into the church? It's not too late – simply call the church or email Bob and he will record your pledge. Please do this today so that St. James's has the resources to continue the important work that we do within our community. Thank you for your commitment to God's mission and the St. James's community.

Michael Sherrill, *Chair*

## Report from the Usher Coordinator

**W**E currently have a group of twenty-two ushers, gaining two new ushers in 2025 and one retiring. In most cases, this number is satisfactory to cover our needs with most people ushering once every four to six weeks. However, we will need to build our usher pool in 2026 in order to keep the current time spacing and make sure that we have coverage during major holidays, particularly Christmas and Easter. We will start recruiting in the spring and early fall and then provide two to three training sessions. Please let me know if you feel a calling for this ministry.

The ushers serve an important role by welcoming worshippers that come to our services and provide bulletins, information, and direction for those who may be new to St. James's. During the service, the ushers enumerate the attendance for distribution of the Eucharist, bring up the elements before collecting the offerings, and collect newcomer information slips after the service. Additionally, the ushers assist, as needed, with sitting worshippers, especially newcomers and during large services such as Christmas and Easter.

Ushering is a great way to become familiar with the church and its members, and it provides an important and needed service for our worship activities. Typically, the commitment is once every four to six weeks and the detail is not strenuous.

I would like to thank all the ushers for their commitment to our services on Sundays and other Holy Days.

Mark Evans, *Coordinator*

## Report from the Women of St. James's

**T**HE Women of St. James's (WOSJ) program year runs from October to May with our Tuesday meetings every other week. During 2025, delicious potluck luncheons were served for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's and the final meeting. For all the other meetings we brought our own bag lunches with beverages and dessert provided. During several of our luncheons, speakers were offered which included our Rector, Bob Hooper, our Assistant Rector, Rob Lofberg, photographer Chris Fisher, our Organist and Choirmaster, Michelle Horsley, Dr. Ruth Mitman, Cindy and Mark Welch on their travels, Connecticut Attorney General, William Tong, and The Rev. John Mitman.

During the program year our attendance ranged from 13 to 26. The WOSJ is an enthusiastic fellowship of caring and supportive women who participate in two outreach projects each year: At Christmas we signed over 150 seasonal cards which were delivered to two local nursing homes, and during Lent we collect non-perishable food for the West Hartford Food Pantry.

All are welcome to join our fellowship and to journey with us as we grow into God's future.

# 2025 Annual Report from the Treasurer

THE 2025 results for the church operating budget reflect the gifts of our parish in what continue to be challenging times almost six years after the pandemic – income exceeded its budgeted amount by \$4,427 while expenses were less than the budgeted amount by \$30,147 due in large part to lower personnel and administrative expenses. Overall, the church's financial position at year-end was greater than budgeted by \$34,574, or 3.5%.

## **Income and Expense Summary**

The church's operating income is comprised of regular contributions (pledges, seasonal offerings, and Sunday plate offerings), transfers from the Endowment Fund, use of the church facilities by outside groups, contributions made to the Annual Appeal and for other designated purposes and from special fundraising events.

In 2025, current year pledge income was less than the budgeted amount by \$36,506 (5.6%). Seasonal offerings (primarily Christmas and Easter) were \$1,623 less than budgeted and Sunday plate offerings were \$5,822 more than budgeted. Use of the church by outside organizations continues to increase and income from those groups was \$2,914 more than budgeted. Facilities Income has increased from \$40,000 in 2021 to close to \$84,000 in 2025. Special contributions exceeded its budget by \$42,150.

The church operating expenses for the year were \$30,147 less than budgeted and were a function of lower personnel expenses (\$31,709 below budget) due to the open Assistant Rector role for part of the year, higher property expenses (\$21,544 above budget) due to water bills, general maintenance and supplies, property insurance, and lower administrative expenses (\$20,013 below budget). The large variance in the administrative category is due to this year's annual financial review which won't be completed until late January or early February of 2026. Expense categories were continually monitored throughout the year and reviewed with the Vestry at each meeting.

## **Resources**

Overseeing the church's operating budget and managing the finances of the church are roles that are carried out by many people - the Rector, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Endowment Committee members, and the Vestry all play a part in this effort. In addition to thanking those listed above, I would like to recognize and thank Stephanie Latif, the church's financial secretary. Stephanie stepped into the role in late 2024 and has done a great job keeping the books of the church and making sure that everything is running smoothly.

I would also like to thank our small group of parishioners that count and record the contributions made by parishioners every Sunday.

Michael Sherrill, *Treasurer*

# Financials from the Treasurer

## EXHIBIT A

### St. James's Episcopal Church

#### ACCOUNTING FUND BALANCES (Unaudited)

January 2025 – December 2025

Fund	Beginning Balance	Direct Transactions	Income	Expense	Transfer	Ending Balance
01 - GENERAL FUND	(35,060.49)	0.00	797,591.11	847,132.30	79,415.47	(5,186.21)
02 - MAJOR MAINTENANCE FUND	35,004.70	0.00	3,475.00	6,211.25	8,004.00	40,272.45
03 - 1022 FARMINGTON FUND	7,216.22	0.00	43,019.76	0.00	(29,136.00)	21,099.98
04 - MEMORIAL FUND	8,415.00	0.00	0.00	1,236.55	0.00	7,178.45
05 - VEGETABLE GARDEN FUND	(4,306.61)	0.00	0.00	117.33	0.00	(4,423.94)
06 - CAPITAL CAMPAIGN	(77,949.55)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(77,949.55)
11 - MEMORIAL GARDEN FUND	18,792.46	0.00	1,000.00	141.00	0.00	19,651.46
12 - CHOIR DEVELOPMENT FUND	16,116.35	0.00	1,732.53	5,823.85	0.00	12,025.03
13 - OUTREACH FUND	89,351.94	0.00	(1,392.21)	117,230.51	94,316.52	65,045.74
15 - CLERGY DISCRETIONARY FUND	41.15	0.00	9,762.16	9,055.81	0.00	747.50
16 - WOMEN OF ST. JAMES'S	6,635.12	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6,635.12
21 - MEMOR. MAINTEN. ENDOW. FD	279,934.35	0.00	32,408.99	0.00	(14,464.56)	297,878.78
22 - CHOIR ENDOWMENT FUND	8,201.77	0.00	949.63	0.00	(423.83)	8,727.57
23 - FLOWER ENDOWMENT FUND	9,071.55	0.00	1,050.18	0.00	(468.72)	9,653.01
24 - GENERAL ENDOWMENT FUND	2,764,238.19	0.00	307,503.64	0.00	(137,242.88)	2,934,498.95
Totals	3,125,702.15	0.00	1,197,100.79	986,948.60	0.00	3,335,854.34

**St. James's Episcopal Church**  
**2025 INCOME STATEMENT**  
**GENERAL FUND ONLY**

**SUMMARY**

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	2024	2025		
	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>VARIANCE</u>
Regular Contributions	\$647,814	\$676,300	\$644,044	(\$32,256)
Investment Income	148,393	153,100	153,777	677
Facilities Income	78,826	81,100	84,014	2,914
Special Contributions	78,296	51,900	94,050	42,150
Miscellaneous Income	39,911	12,500	3,443	(9,057)
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$993,240</b>	<b>\$974,900</b>	<b>\$979,327</b>	<b>\$4,427</b>
<b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>				
Administration	\$39,902	\$54,800	\$34,787	(\$20,013)
Christian Education	1,199	1,100	1,905	805
Evangelism	504	300	195	(105)
Flowers	6,074	6,000	8,076	2,076
Music	11,010	11,300	10,690	(610)
Outreach	108,883	94,900	94,317	(583)
Parish Life	1,598	2,300	1,910	(390)
Personnel	679,504	688,200	656,491	(31,709)
Property	128,524	118,300	139,844	21,544
Stewardship	369	300	302	2
Worship	1,935	1,900	722	(1,178)
Miscellaneous	20	200	214	14
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$979,521</b>	<b>\$979,600</b>	<b>\$949,453</b>	<b>(\$30,147)</b>

<b>EXCESS: INCOME-EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$13,719</b>	<b>(\$4,700)</b>	<b>\$29,874</b>	<b>\$34,574</b>
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**St. James's Episcopal Church**  
**2025 INCOME STATEMENT**  
**GENERAL FUND ONLY**

**DETAILS**

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	2024	2025		
	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>VARIANCE</u>
Current Year Pledges	\$628,584	\$655,000	\$618,494	(\$36,506)
Prior Year Pledges	2,395	\$4,300	4,350	50
Seasonal Offerings	3,519	\$4,000	2,377	(1,623)
Unspecified Offerings	13,317	\$13,000	18,822	5,822
 Total Regular Contributions	 647,814	 676,300	 644,044	 (32,256)
Other Endowment Transfer	147,000	152,600	152,600	0
Other Invest. Inc.	1,393	500	1,177	677
 Total Investment Income	 148,393	 153,100	 153,777	 677
Transfer from 1022 Farmington Fd.	27,996	29,100	29,136	36
Parish House (On-going)	14,610	15,000	23,353	8,353
Other Facilities Usage	36,220	37,000	31,525	(5,475)
 Total Facilities Income	 78,826	 81,100	 84,014	 2,914
Spec. Contrib. - Gen. Purposes	44,892	48,900	89,604	40,704
Spec. Contrib. - Administration	0	0	0	0
Spec. Contrib. - Christian Ed.	0	0	200	200
Spec. Contrib. - Evangelism	0	0	0	0
Spec. Contrib. - Flowers	3,325	3,000	4,059	1,059
Spec. Contrib. - Music	0	0	0	0
Spec. Contrib. - Parish Life	0	0	0	0
Spec. Contrib. - Personnel	0	0	0	0
Spec. Contrib. - Property	0	0	0	0
Spec. Contrib. - Stewardship	0	0	0	0
Spec. Contrib. - Worship/Altar	0	0	75	75
Spec. Contrib. - Other	30,078	0	112	112
 Special Contributions	 78,296	 51,900	 94,050	 42,150
Misc. Income - Spec. Fundraising	39,123	12,500	3,443	(9,057)
Misc. Income - Other	788	0	0	0
 Total Miscellaneous Income	 39,911	 12,500	 3,443	 (9,057)
 <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	 <b>\$993,240</b>	 <b>\$974,900</b>	 <b>\$979,327</b>	 <b>4,427</b>

**St. James's Episcopal Church**  
**2025 INCOME STATEMENT**  
**GENERAL FUND ONLY**

**EXPENSES**

	2024	2025		
	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>VARIANCE</u>
Telephone	\$9,127	\$9,200	\$8,277	(\$923)
Office Supplies	7,979	6,000	7,989	1,989
Equipment Rental & Replacement	11,343	7,000	6,500	(500)
Printing & Paper	4,664	4,700	7,076	2,376
Postage	1,829	2,000	1,329	(671)
Audit & Accounting	1,000	22,000	0	(22,000)
Membership & Subscriptions	956	1,000	554	(446)
Advertising	608	500	137	(363)
Rector's Expense Account	141	100	172	72
Other Administrative Expense	2,255	2,300	2,752	452
 Total Administration	 39,902	 54,800	 34,787	 (20,013)
 Church School	 70	 100	 299	 199
Confirmation Class	262	100	0	(100)
Youth Programs	72	300	356	56
Lay Training	653	400	1,250	850
Speakers - ADG & Others	0	0	0	0
Other Christian Education Expense	142	200	0	(200)
 Total Christian Education	 1,199	 1,100	 1,905	 805
 Other Evangelism Expense	 504	 300	 195	 (105)
 Total Evangelism	 504	 300	 195	 (105)
 Flowers	 6,074	 6,000	 8,076	 2,076
 Music Supplies & Musicians	 420	 500	 1,700	 1,200
Instrument Maintenance	780	1,000	300	(700)
Choir Pay	9,515	9,500	8,690	(810)
Other Music Expense	295	300	0	(300)
 Total Music	 11,010	 11,300	 10,690	 (610)
 Diocesan Pledge Funding	 88,879	 94,900	 94,317	 (583)
General Outreach Funding	20,004	0	0	0

Total Outreach Funding	108,883	94,900	94,317	(583)
Hospitality	1,028	1,500	2,097	597
Parish Social Events	396	500	(480)	(980)
Rector Ministry	69	0	0	0
Other Parish Life Expense	104	300	294	(6)
Total Parish Life	1,598	2,300	1,910	(390)

**St. James's Episcopal Church**  
**2025 INCOME STATEMENT**  
**GENERAL FUND ONLY**

**EXPENSES**  
*(continued)*

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>		
	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>VARIANCE</u>
Clergy Salaries &Housing Allowance	\$238,280	\$225,800	\$208,347	(\$17,453)
Social Security Allowance	27,574	22,800	21,063	(1,737)
Clergy Continuing Education	3,496	3,700	2,064	(1,636)
Clergy Pensions & Annuities	49,207	44,700	36,653	(8,047)
Clergy Life & Health Insurance	62,440	72,400	64,009	(8,392)
Supply Clergy	200	0	200	200
Lay Staff Salaries	209,431	222,900	225,031	2,131
Lay Staff FICA - Employer Portion	15,515	17,500	20,350	2,850
Lay Staff Pension Fund	10,692	15,000	15,123	123
Lay Staff Health & Life Insurance	53,358	55,400	56,947	1,547
Temporary/Substitute Lay Staff	1,750	1,000	750	(250)
Other Personnel Expense	7,561	7,000	5,954	(1,046)
 Total Personnel	 679,504	 688,200	 656,491	 (31,709)
 Electric	 16,516	 14,000	 13,170	 (830)
Gas	24,308	25,000	24,586	(414)
Water	5,158	5,200	8,593	3,393
General Maintenance & Repairs	15,667	20,500	29,000	8,500
Maintenance Supplies	5,135	5,000	7,979	2,979
Insurance - Property & Liability	48,714	36,000	39,212	3,212
Lawn Care & Grounds	3,912	3,000	4,529	1,529
Snow Removal	975	1,300	1,010	(290)
Transfer to Major Maintenance Fd.	8,004	8,000	8,004	4
Transfer to Capital Campaign	0	0	0	0
Other Property Expense	135	300	3,761	3,461
 Total Property	 128,524	 118,300	 139,844	 21,544
 Other Stewardship	 369	 300	 302	 2
 Total Stewardship	 369	 300	 302	 2
 Church Worship & Altar Supplies	 1,196	 1,000	 606	 (394)
Other Worship Expenses	739	900	115	(785)

Total Worship	1,935	1,900	722	(1,178)
Total Miscellaneous Expense	20	200	214	14
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$979,521</b>	<b>\$979,600</b>	<b>\$949,453</b>	<b>(\$30,147)</b>
<b>EXCESS: INCOME - EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$13,719</b>	<b>(\$4,700)</b>	<b>\$29,874</b>	<b>\$34,574</b>

**NOTES**



St. James's  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH ♦ WEST HARTFORD  
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