



St James Cathedral

CHICAGO



Annual Meeting
Sunday, January 25, 2026

2026 ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

- 11:00 a.m.** Holy Eucharist in the Cathedral
- 12:00 p.m.** Box Lunch pick up in the Welcome Center (take to cathedral)
Sign In (Volunteers will pass clipboards)
- 12:30 p.m.** Call to Order – The Very Rev. Lisa Hackney-James
Appointment of Clerk/ Recognition of Outgoing Chapter members /Election of Chapter members and officers
Opening Remarks
65 East Huron Purchase – Bishop Paula Clark & Dean Lisa Hackney-James
2026 Annual Pledge Report – Mr. Phil Debush, Member of Chapter
Ministry Report – The Rev. Steven Balke, Canon Vicar
Financial Report – Mr. Paul Thompson, Treasurer & Canon Steven Balke
Questions
Dean's Summary Remarks
Passing of the Warden's Cross- Ms. Susan Fickling, Senior Warden
- 1:30 p.m.** Capital Campaign Prayer / Blessing / Closing Hymn / Dismissal

ELECTIONS

A note about eligibility to vote, from Diocesan Canon 22, Section 3:

The Parishioners qualified to vote for Wardens, Cathedral Chapter, Delegates to Diocesan Convention, and Finance Commission Members, and upon all questions coming before any Annual or Special Parish Meeting, shall be only the following: All baptized persons of the age of sixteen years and upwards, who regularly attend the public services of the Cathedral, and are recognized as members of the Cathedral by the Dean and at least one of the Wardens...and whose names appear on the books of the Cathedral Treasurer as having contributed by pledge or otherwise to the funds to meet the expenses or other obligations of the cathedral during the six months immediately previous to the Meeting, it being understood that the pledge or obligation for such contributions, shall have been incurred prior to the said six months; and in addition declare their willingness to conform to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Church.

Thank you to our 2026 Nominating Committee Members:

Susan Fickling, John Fischer, Laura Jackson, Richard Kelley, Beth Mitchell

The Nominating Committee moves that the following slate of candidates for Wardens, Chapter Members, Finance Commission and Delegates to Diocesan Convention be elected by acclamation.



ALLEN MOYE

Senior Warden & Diocesan Convention Delegate

This year will mark 21 years since I relocated to Chicago from the east coast. After my arrival in Chicago, I visited different churches but felt most at home at St. James Cathedral. I have served as Junior Warden of the Cathedral Chapter for the past two years. I have always been impressed with the energy and outreach programs of St. James. I have helped with the feeding ministry, Summer in the City, and supported the Revive Christmas Basket program; three highly successful and important ways that the church connects with the community beyond the walls of its building. I served on Chapter and helped on the Capital Campaign. I have served as an Usher since 2016 and was Head Usher from 2020-23. I enjoy welcoming regular worshippers and visitors alike, to a place filled with the Holy Spirit and the wonders of God's works. St. James is a sacred space with a significant connection to the Diocese and the city of Chicago. We are at the beginning of what will be a momentous future. I am grateful for the opportunity to have served as Junior Warden over the past year. I would be honored to continue in this role at such an important time in the life of the Diocese and cathedral.



OLIVIA ELLIOTT
Junior Warden & Diocesan Convention Delegate

I am a cradle Episcopalian who grew up attending St. Anne in DeSoto, TX. During my time at the University of Chicago, I was an active member of Brent House, and as an adult, I found my spiritual home at St. James. My husband, Mike (who will tell you he is *not* a cradle Episcopalian), and I have been attending St. James for almost 10 years. The Very Rev. Lisa Hackney-James married us in 2019, and both of our children, Julian and Mona, were baptized here, surrounded by our St. James family. You will find us all at the 9:00 a.m. service, often adding a "joyful" sound.

At St. James, I have served as an acolyte, participated in the young adult group, and recently supported the growth of the family service, particularly by helping coordinate the youth who serve during worship. I also serve as a board member of Episcopal Charities.

Professionally, I work at McKinsey & Company, where I lead virtual leadership development programs focused on improving the talent pipeline for our clients.

I deeply value St. James' commitment to creating spaces of belonging for all and would be honored to serve this community in a new capacity as Junior Warden.



KEVIN HAMPTON
Cathedral Chapter

I was confirmed in the Episcopal Church at Christ Episcopal Church, Cape Girardeau, in the Diocese of Missouri, September 2018. While a member there, I served on the Vestry and was later elected to serve as co-senior warden, January 2020 through January 2022. During that time, I provided leadership during the pandemic and the parish's transition from a full-time parish to part-time with a priest-in-charge. One of the most meaningful opportunities for service I experienced at Christ Episcopal Church was taking communion to home-bound members. Another profound experience for me was providing leadership to broaden the welcome and inclusion of LGBTQ+ members into the life and ministries of the parish.

I moved to Chicago in June 2023 to take a position at Roosevelt University. I serve as Dean of the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt, where I am a tenured Professor of Music. I began attending St. James in the Fall of 2024 and moved my membership from Grace Episcopal Oak Park to St. James in the Spring of 2025. I was drawn to this community of faith because of its ministries, the warm welcome of its members, and the dynamic spiritual beauty of the Holy Eucharist Mass. I have been serving as a member of the usher team and as a reader since June 2025.

This is an exciting and meaningful time to be at St. James as we look to the future. I would be honored to serve as a new Chapter member.



CHRISTOPHER MELVIN

Cathedral Chapter

I was raised in the Episcopal Church and it has been central to my family's life. My father was a lay reader and substitute organist, my mother was a member of the altar guild, my sister led a handbell choir, and I was an acolyte all at St. Philip's in Richmond, VA.

Prior to that my father was the Director of Gaudet Episcopal Children's Home in New Orleans for eight years. My parents retired to Westminster Canterbury (Richmond), a community founded by the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches.

In Chicago, my children attended St. Chrysostom's Day school and were baptized there.

We believe that service is important, thus I have been on the boards of the CSO, RTA, the Operation PUSH Audit Advisory Committee, the Illinois Sport Authority, a part of the Chicago Summer Finance Institute and an advisor to the Illinois Mentoring Partnership.

We have been looking for a church home primarily for my children and we are happy to have become a part of the warm, interesting, and diverse St. James Cathedral Parish.



KIMBERLY MORELAND

Cathedral Chapter

I joined the St James community in 2021, along with my husband Seldon, having been inspired by sermons given by Dean Lisa and Bishop Paula. The heart for service that this community embodies brings me so much encouragement – it is a great joy to see the call of Christ tangibly embraced in this place. I formally serve on the Hospitality Committee and provide behind-the-scenes support for St James Meals. I also have the honor of participating in the inaugural cohort of the Kanuga Fellows program.

After earning bachelor's and master's degrees in international relations from Stanford University, I took a serendipitous turn and ended up in tax. My current role is head of tax for Merieux NutriSciences, a multinational group that provides laboratory food testing and related services. What I enjoy most about my job is that I get to work with people from many countries, learning about their experiences and collaborating to solve problems. I have served on a few non-profit boards, mostly in a finance capacity. I love reading and travel and all things related to wine and vineyard life, and even more, having long conversations about all of it with good friends.



JACOB PERKINS

Diocesan Convention Delegate

I have been a member of St. James Cathedral since the weekend I moved to Chicago from North Carolina in the summer of 2022. On that first visit, and ever since, St. James has truly felt like the place God has brought me to be.

Primarily attending the 11:00 service, I quickly found a sense of belonging among the Altar Guild and Acolyte teams, ministries which continue to feed my soul weekly. As an intern, my current focus is on supporting the team of lay ministers who lead our expanding children, youth, and young adult ministries, as well as the nursery, Summer in the City, and our semi-annual joint retreats with St. Martin's.

I believe one of the greatest gifts this community offers is the ability to clearly and consistently say to so many, "You belong here, and you are loved here." Encountering this proclamation of the Gospel in its varied forms – the liturgy, our outreach ministries, our small groups, our celebrations, and the very space itself – is what continues to inspire me as a member of this congregation.

Beyond my role at St. James, I serve on the administrative staff at KAM Isaiah Israel Congregation (a Reform synagogue in Hyde Park) and the House Manager at Brent House (The Episcopal Campus Ministry at the University of Chicago). Having completed my Master of Divinity at the University of Chicago Divinity School, I am a Postulant for Holy Orders in the Diocese of Chicago.

Happy are they who dwell in your house! They will always be praising you. (Psalm 84)



GEORGE CULVER

Finance Commission Member

Dear St James Community,

Thank you for considering my candidacy for the Finance Commission. I have served on this commission since its inception, and I am continually humbled by the wonderful journey this parish has travelled. I bring years of experience in governance and finance. I have helped members with bequests and donations and currently serve as Vice President of the Common Fund of the Diocese.

I am a life-long Episcopalian. I graduated from an Episcopal grade school (Trinity, New York City.) I am married to my college sweetheart, Marianne Culver who sings in the cathedral choir. Our son, Leland (24) grew up in the St James community and is active in it.

If appointed I will work to ensure the further growth and success of this wonderful organization.



MICHAEL PAIK
Finance Commission Member

Mike has been attending St. James since 2015. Growing up in a Korean-Presbyterian community, not a “cradle” Episcopal like his wife Olivia, it was a huge adjustment. Eventually, there were only so many newcomers lunches Mike could attend before he was firmly no longer new. Since then, Mike and Olivia have welcomed their children, Julian and Mona, and are excited for them to grow up at St. James. He was first elected to the Finance Commission in 2024. Mike has 13+ years of consulting experience. He is a Chicago native, with an MBA from the Booth School of Business and an undergraduate economics degree from the University of Chicago.

2026 ANNUAL MEETING CONCLUSION

THE ST. JAMES CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PRAYER

Let us pray.

Faithful God,
you call us to be living stones in a spiritual temple.
Bless the mission and outreach of this cathedral church.

By the power of your Holy Spirit,
enable us confidently to restore its fabric,
trustfully to reimagine our vocation,
and boldly to renew our ministries in your name.

Make this place a house in which your love dwells
and in which all your people find welcome.

Grant this, we pray, through the One who leads us ever onwards in your service,
Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THE PONTIFICAL BLESSING

Bishop Our help is in the Name of the Lord;
People **The maker of heaven and earth.**

Blessed be the Name of the Lord;
From this time forth for evermore.

The blessing, mercy, and grace of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you, and remain with you for ever.
Amen.

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on thy peo - ple pour thy power;
 2 Lo! the hosts of e - vil round us scorn thy Christ, as - sail his ways!
 3 Cure thy chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness, bend our pride to thy con - trol;
 4 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils we de - plore;

crown thine an - cient Church's sto - ry; bring her bud to glo - rious flower.
 From the fears that long have bound us free our hearts to faith and praise:
 shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness, rich in things and poor in soul.
 let the gift of thy sal - va - tion be our glo - ry ev - er - more.

Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age, for the fac - ing of this
 grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age, for the liv - ing of these
 Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age, lest we miss thy king - dom's
 Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age, serv - ing thee whom we a -

hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
 days, for the liv - ing of these days.
 goal, lest we miss thy king - dom's goal.
 dore, serv - ing thee whom we a - dore.

Words: Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969), alt. By permission of the author. Music: *Cwm Rhondda*, John Hughes (1873-1932).

DISMISSAL

Deacon Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
 All Thanks be to God.

2026 MINISTRY REPORTS



St. James Cathedral

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WORSHIP

Vitality and Growth

As part of our annual reporting to the broader Episcopal Church, we maintain records of attendance at each liturgy/service that is held at St. James. As livestreaming became more prevalent during the pandemic years, we began to record as accurately as possible the number of people who worship with us online within the first twenty-four hours of a Sunday livestream.

While Sunday worship attendance is only one measure of the vitality and impact of a congregation, we want to celebrate the remarkable increase in attendance, both in-person and online, that St. James has experienced over the past three years. Each person who worships with us contributes to the strength of the body of Christ that gathers at the corner of Huron and Wabash both in-person and via livestream, and this growth is a testament to the health and vitality of that body.

	2023	2024	2025
In-Person	268	272	314
Online	72	86	97
Total Average Sunday Attendance	340	358	411

Liturgical Tech Guild *Beau Surratt, Associate for Administration*

In 2025, recognizing the integral function of the Cathedral's audio-visual technologies to our worship, we began piloting a Liturgical Tech Guild. The intent — as with our other, more traditional liturgical guilds — is to build up a dedicated body of lay ministers operating on a Rota to collectively steward the Cathedral's audio, video, and livestream systems and support Clergy & Staff in effectively carrying out the Cathedral's core mission & ministry of cultivating inspiring and expansive worship and liturgy. After a successful pilot year, the Tech Guild is now ready to build up its ranks — if you or someone you know might be interested in serving in this capacity (no experience required!), please reach out to the Cathedral Office at info@saintjamescathedral.org. We are grateful to Lance Patrick Sy for an incredible amount of faithful work in piloting this ministry.

Livestream

In 2025 we live-streamed seventy-nine worship services and events, achieving 18,684 total views. With a total of 6,077 unique views within the first 24 hours, our

average live-stream attendance was ninety-seven. We are grateful to Paul Bieschke and Associate for Communications Tamarra Newbern who video direct our livestream events.

YouTube Channel/Sermons of the Day

Non-livestream videos on our YouTube channel achieved 36,800 views in 2025, 17% more than in 2024. Included in these are primarily Sermons of the Day and recordings of Sunday Forums. Our YouTube channel added 245 subscribers in 2025, 8% more than in 2024. We thank Paul Bieschke who edits the Sermons of the Day and Associate for Communications Tamarra Newbern who coordinates the content from the preachers and prepares email notifications.

Social Media

Posts on our social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) received 165,050 views in 2025. Our number of 3-second views increased by 4,084, which was a 4,388% increase over 2024, and our 1-minute views increased by 293, a 2,830% increase.

Website

We learned that the content management system for our website will be phased out soon and solicited bids from companies to rebuild the site in 2026.

Vergers, Acolytes, Chalice Bearers *Randy Pierson, Head Verger*

The Acolytes and Chalice Bearers of St. James Cathedral give of their time and talents to facilitate and enhance the beauty of our corporate worship. Our team of about fifteen adults serve as chalice ministers, torchbearers, crucifers,thurifers, head acolytes, and vergers. The team served approximately 130 services in 2025, including Sunday Eucharists and special services (e.g., Ash Wednesday, Easter Vigil, etc.) along with occasional weddings and funerals. Under the guidance of Olivia Elliott, we have broadened the involvement of the youth in acolyte roles at the Sunday 9:00am family service as well as the 4pm Christmas Eve service.

Anyone who is interested in learning more about our acolyte and chalice minister teams are welcome and encouraged to participate. The Ministry Scheduler Pro (MSP) app makes it easy for our team members to request substitutes or block out dates when they are not available to serve. Please see me or email me if you would like to know more. R.Pierson@gmail.com

Children & Youth Acolytes & Servers *Olivia Elliot, Ministry Leader*

At the 9:00 a.m. family service, one of our key focuses is fostering youth-led worship. From readers to bell ringers and torchbearers to head acolytes, we have seen more youth and families actively participate in shaping the service. This year, we formalized the role of Youth Head Acolyte, a position now seated in the chancel to help ensure the service flows smoothly. We are deeply grateful to the five youth who volunteered (or were gently encouraged by their parents) to step into this new role and contribute to making our worship even more special. There is a role for everyone, so if your child—or your inner child—would like to get involved, please let us know! Please contact Olivia Elliott at oe Elliott4@gmail.com to learn more.

Altar Guild *Charles Peterson, Ministry Leader*

Our work begins at 7 a.m. on Sundays when we bring St. Andrew's Chapel and the St. James Sanctuary to life. We are responsible for all the elements of our eucharistic services: wine, bread, linens, candles, oil, silver, brass, vestments, and flowers. It is a wonderfully spiritual and collegial atmosphere that we experience every time we enter the sacristies, the chapel, and the sanctuary. We are often the first to enter and have a time of personal mediation in the stillness of such beautiful spaces. We are also blessed to oversee the various elements of the eucharist, especially the patens and vessels that will hold the body and blood of Jesus Christ. We are reminded of generations of faithful St. James members who have donated the linens, silver, brass, vestments, the font, and altars we use every Sunday and at special services.

We now have a slightly larger group of volunteers serving on Sundays, holidays, special services, services offered by the Diocese, funerals, and weddings. Jacob, Molly, Melanie, Xinyang, and Charley anchor the Altar Guild. We were fortunate to have Mary Jo and Charlene serving the 8 a.m. St. Andrew's service. Mary Jo has officially retired, and Charlene is on leave. We miss their service. Thom regularly serves the weekday noon hour eucharist. Edla assists by refilling the altar candles on Sundays and during the week.

Closely allied are the Linen Team, led by David, who maintain our valuable and beautiful fair linen collection. Nathan shares his excellent talents for design and decoration by managing our use of flowers, greens, and other liturgical elements, especially during holiday seasons. We appreciate the collegial support of the acolytes before and after services.

We are blessed to have the opportunity to serve our parish as well as the Diocese, especially our bishop. Volunteers on the Altar Guild are deeply dedicated to the preparation of the sanctuary for the celebration of the eucharist. It is also significant that hundreds of visitors enter St. James Cathedral each week during the hours the cathedral is open. Many of these visitors express their devotion through prayer, the

lighting of votives, and in remembrance of their baptisms. We often welcome these visitors who often comment how much they value the beauty and serenity of our sanctuary.

This is the work of a Cathedral Altar Guild. We encourage those who would like to join in our work to contact one of us. We are usually found in the sacristy before and after services. As members of the Altar Guild, we are blessed to be serving through the care and use of some of the cathedral's most beautiful sacred objects.

Linen Care Ministry *David Briere, Ministry Leader*

The Linen Ministry, a part of the Altar Guild, cares for the cathedral's fine linens, keeping them impeccably clean and in excellent condition. Every week we gather up soiled linens from the eight weekly services and carefully treat, wash, iron, and fold them for the next week. The task of ensuring a clean and well-maintained supply of linens is the responsibility of our loyal team of veteran volunteers: Edith O'Keefe, Jane Marienau, JoAnn Faulhaber, and me. We four have served together for many years and welcome new volunteers to join us in this important behind-the-scenes ministry. If you or someone you know is interested, I would be happy to speak with you. You can reach me at briere.dupre@gmail.com.

Usher Ministry *Alan Gunn, Head Usher*

The usher ministry provides a warm welcome for all who worship in person at St. James Cathedral. In 2025, we added four new ushers to our roster: Kevin Hampton, Alex Kincaid, Drew Moore, and Todd Rhoades.

Each week a team of two to four ushers regularly serve at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. services. In 2025, we also served during many special events, including the funerals for Ans^{ss} Krueck and Tom Patterson, Ordination of Priests, Choral Evensong & Compline Services, Lessons and Carols, Holy Week services, and Christmas Holiday services.

The ushers remain faithful and committed to supporting the services and events at St. James. As always, we ask St. James members to consider participating in this important ministry. If you are interested in learning more, please speak with an usher, or contact me at alanmgunn@gmail.com. We will be more than happy to tell you about our ministry.

Readers and Intercessors *John Fischer, Ministry Leader*

Readers and intercessors bring the Word of God to the congregation and lift the prayers of the people to Him. Readers present to the congregation those sections of Scripture that have been selected for each Sunday service. These core selections ordinarily involve selections from the Old Testament as well as the Epistles and Letters of the New Testament.

Readers strive to convey the Scripture with both humility and confidence in the message that it conveys. Intercessors lead the congregation in common prayer, ordinarily following the Nicene Creed. At St. James, intercessors are asked to write their own prayers for each service instead of using pre-written forms. Intercessors strive to address the concerns of the people as they find themselves in our changing world. Intercessors differ in their individual emphases, but all try to address common concerns as their primary focus.

Lay Eucharistic Visitors *Laura Jenkins, Ministry Leader*

Eucharistic Visitors offer the consistent sign of God's presence and care by bringing the sacrament to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, are unable to be present at the celebration of the Eucharist.

During 2025, procedures were revised to align with [*The Book of Occasional Services*](#), conforming to General Convention 2022, and current Episcopal Diocese of Chicago [*Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults*](#).

A training session for five potential Eucharistic Visitors was held in August. Of those, two completed "Safe Church, Safe Communities" training and confirmed their desire to be licensed by the Bishop to serve as Eucharistic Visitors and joined in active ministry.

The practice of sending forth Eucharistic Visitors with the Commissioning Prayer at the conclusion of the 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. celebrations of the Eucharist on the fourth Sunday of each month continued this year.

Current Eucharistic Visitors are Mary Jo Barton, Laura Jenkins, Tom Stabnicki and Cynthia Urbytes. The team made thirty-one visits during 2025.

Zoom Morning Prayer *Katie Balke, Ministry Leader*

In addition to the many in-person worship services throughout the week, St. James continues to offer Morning Prayer on Zoom most weekdays. There is a small but faithful group of regular attendees, and many more who join when they can. This short (about 20 minutes), entirely spoken service is a wonderful way to start the day rooted in scripture, prayer, and fellowship. Whether from your desk, on your commute, or from the comfort of a favorite spot in your home, I invite you to join us weekdays at 9 a.m. The link to join is always available on the home page of the St. James website. To learn more about how you can participate or for any questions, please contact katiembalke@gmail.com

Installation of the 9th Dean of St. James Cathedral

At the 2025 Annual Meeting, the wardens announced that following a process of mutual discernment with the Provost, and with the enthusiastic affirmation of Bishop Paula Clark, St. James Cathedral Chapter elected the Very Rev. Lisa Hackney-James

to serve as the 9th Dean of St. James Cathedral. Dean Hackney-James first took on the executive leadership of the cathedral in November of 2022 when she was named Provost: a position conveying all of the authority and responsibilities of Dean, but for a time certain (three years.) This leadership model was instrumental in moving multiple 2022 cathedral strategic initiatives forward without interruption. In recognition of her demonstrated leadership, the decision was reached to call her as Dean, continuing the trajectory of robust congregational and missional growth.

Hackney-James was installed as 9th Dean of St. James Cathedral by Bishop Paula Clark at a Festal Evensong on Sunday, March 2, 2025 at 4:00p.m. The cathedral nave was filled with St. James parishioners; guests from across the diocese; and representatives from interfaith and ecumenical bodies. Presenters of the ceremonial gifts represented key institutional and programmatic emphases embraced by the new dean: the Rev. James Clark III, Director, Mission Real Estate Development, Trinity Church, Wall Street; Mr. Joe Swimmer, Executive Director, The Episcopal Parish Network; Mr. David DuPre, St. James historian and tour guide; Mr. Kurt Wiesner, Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Chicago Chapter; Mr. Newland Smith, Historiographer, Episcopal Diocese of Chicago Archives; Ms. Lisa Key, Executive Director, Richard H. Driehaus Museum; Ms. Zara Ahmad, Cathedral Head Chorister; Dr. Hak Wong, Cathedral Choir Member; Mr. Michael Stauffer, Chair, St. James Arts Council; Mr. Michael Leppen, Miriam U. and H. Earl Hoover Foundation; Dame Jane Glover, DBE, Conductor; Mr. Seldon Moreland, St. James Meal Ministry; Mr. Tim Zeller, St. James Meals Among Us; Ms. Nicole Spencer, St. James Summer in the City; Mr. Laurenti Wright, member St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Chicago; and Rabbi Yehiel Poupko provided the Aaronic blessing. The cathedral's hospitality team hosted a festive reception for which parishioners Kim and Seldon Moreland created craft mocktail (alcohol-free cocktail) "Dean's Delight"

Read more here: <https://episcopalnewsservice.org/pressreleases/chicagos-st-james-cathedral-welcomes-lisa-hackney-james-as-9th-dean/>

Diocesan & Special Liturgies *The Rev. Steven Balke, Canon Vicar*

As the seat of the Bishop of Chicago (*kathedra* meaning "seat"), St. James Cathedral plays an essential role in planning and executing diocesan liturgies in collaboration with The Rt. Rev. Paula E. Clark's staff. We hosted the ordination of five new deacons (including our own Timothy Beltran del Rio, who is currently completing his studies at the Seminary of the Southwest), then later two new priests. We hosted confirmations of almost one hundred individuals from sixteen parishes. We also host the annual Chrism Mass in Holy Week, where all clergy and lay people are invited to attend for the renewal of vows and consecration of oil for anointing.

This year Bexley Seabury Seminary, the Episcopal seminary in Chicago, officially moved onto the campus. We were happy to assist in their Matriculation and Graduation services here in the cathedral.

We can facilitate these important diocese-wide and church-wide liturgies because of the assistance of so many St. James staff and volunteers, often behind the scenes. Many of our altar guild, acolytes, ushers, choir, and more assist in these services above and beyond their regular Sunday efforts. It is a testament to St. James members that we can lift up the quality liturgies of the Diocese of Chicago.

If you are interested in knowing more about how you can participate and assist in these special services, even if you are not a regular Sunday volunteer, please contact sbalke@saintjamescathedral.org

MUSIC & ARTS

Music Ministry *Stephen Buzard, Canon Director of Music*

2025 was a year of growth and renewal for the music ministry at St. James Cathedral. The Cathedral Choir and the Chorister program are the largest they have been in living memory. As of January 2026, the Cathedral Choir has thirty-six members comprising twelve staff singers and twenty-four auditioned volunteers. We have nineteen choristers including five children who joined this season. Additionally, the Junior Chorister program has been restarted this fall with six children led by volunteers Liz Wakefield-Connell and Claire Shepro. This growth has necessitated increased spending on vestments, scores, and other choir supplies in the 2026 budget.

Our most impressive growth has been in the attendance of special musical services in 2025. 1,251 people attended Sunday Evensongs, the Requiem, and Lessons & Carol services between September and January, up from 850 during this period in 2024. Most attendees seem to be new, so we are not primarily relying upon parishioners. While it is not easy to discern the exact cause of this growth, many factors may be at play:

- A more strategic and proactive communications strategy led by Associate for Administrations Beau Surratt and Communications Associate Tamarra Newbern
- Better and more consistent outdoor signage for musical events
- Hospitality offered at each event, coordinated by Katie Valchar

- Consistent timing of most events on Sundays at 4 p.m. rather than at scattered times
- The framing of a "Sesquicentennial Season" and addition of an October concert, putting St. James on audience members' calendars as they begin to plan their fall

This fall we welcomed Nico Tjoelker as Assistant Director of Music, restoring a second full-time position to the music department. Having a second organist on staff has enabled us to feature more accompanied music and allowed us to pursue an ambitious Sesquicentennial musical season. Nico also provides additional administrative support, coordinates weddings, assists with weekly rehearsals, and teaches many of the choristers' weekly voice lessons.

This fall we bid farewell to Jessica McCarthy who served St. James Cathedral in various musical capacities over four years in Chicago. Most recently Jess was the part-time Assistant for Music and Manager of the Choir School, overseeing the scheduling of voice lessons and chorister activities, assisting with administration, and conducting our ensembles from time to time. Jess has moved to Montreal where she is pursuing a master's degree in Choral Conducting from McGill University.

From May through July I was on sabbatical, and our choirs got the opportunity to work with renowned church musician Walden Moore, who recently retired from Trinity on the Green in New Haven, CT. During this period, Walden and Jess were assisted by Owen Tellinghuisen, an Organ Intern from the University of Indiana. The choirs enjoyed working with these wonderful musicians and their fresh perspectives.

As wonderful as this past year has been, this coming year will be truly historic with the installation of the Hoover Memorial Organ. This instrument is a 1958 J.W. Walker & Sons organ given to us by the London City Temple. One of the largest organs built in Britain in the postwar era, it is the first heritage English Cathedral-style organ to be imported to the United States and will solidify St. James Cathedral as a landmark for Anglican music in this country. The organ is currently undergoing complete restoration in the factory of the Buzard Organ Company in Champaign, IL. In preparation for installation this fall, the old Cathedral organ will be dismantled in May. The E.M. Skinner pipework in the south transept has been purchased by the Quimby Organ Company for incorporation into other organs. The Austin Organ Company plans to rehome the Austin pipework stored in the Guild Hall. Our goal is for the Hoover Organ to be playable by Christmas and dedicated in 2027.

In tandem with the organ project, a Liturgical Space Committee was convened last year to discern how the layout of our space can better support worship. For the first century of its existence, St. James had choir stalls in the chancel in traditional Anglican fashion.

When the building was modernized in the 1960s, the choir was moved to a musicians' gallery in the north transept. This relocation created a vast open space around the marble altar, but it had several negative repercussions for music-making:

- The space for the choir is limited, and our full choir and choristers cannot sing together in this location when everyone is in attendance.
- The choir is singing perpendicular to the building's central axis, preventing the congregation from hearing the fullness of the choir's sound.
- The choir is situated on the opposite side of the room from the primary location of the organ, hampering the ensemble of accompanied music at eucharist.

The Liturgical Space Committee worked with liturgical design consultant Terry Eason to create a plan that keeps the high altar of the 1960s while reincorporating choir stalls reflecting the 1870s layout. This plan would provide an ideal situation for the choir with adequate seating for the combined choirs and room to grow while retaining the openness and flexibility of our liturgical space as used at the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. service. I sincerely hope this plan may be actualized as soon as possible for the continued growth and vitality of our music ministry.

Concerts *Robert Black, Canon for Administration*

St. James Cathedral hosted twenty-five concerts by an array of performing arts organizations in 2025. Twelve concerts were Summer Rush Hour Concerts, a series founded by St. James Cathedral in 2000 and now produced by Classical Music Chicago in partnership with WFMT Radio.

Other concerts were performed by the Willam Ferris Chorale, Chicago Bar Association Orchestra & Chorus (3 concerts), Chicago Chamber Choir, Apollo's Fire, Chicago Composers Orchestra (2 concerts), Chicago Chamber Choir, Music Institute of Chicago, Musicians Club of Women, and a concert for the Lithuanian Consulate.

In addition to our concert series, The Music Institute of Chicago uses the lower level of the cathedral to teach about sixty students every week.

Arts Council *Michael Stauffer, Ministry Leader*

It has been a very active year for the Arts Council. Interest in the work of the council continues to increase and our membership is now at 24. We continue to explore art as an interrogation of who we are today, and a graphic illustration of where we have been. We have worked together to use art to envision our dreams for tomorrow in our lives at St. James Cathedral.

During the Lenten season in March, the council mounted an exhibit of Russian icons which were given to the cathedral by Michael Leppen as a gift from the estate of Earl and Miriam Hoover. In support of this exhibit, Dr. Matthew Milliner, art historian from Wheaton College, was invited to a Sunday Adult Forum to discuss the Icons and the history of Iconography. Through this exhibition we were able to explore Icons as “widows into heaven” – tangible connections to the divine in both public worship and personal devotion. During this Lenten series, Michael Stauffer presented on the *Art of Contemplation*. In his talk, he emphasized the role of Art in creating essential contemplation in worship and our daily lives.

In support of the St James Sesquicentennial celebration, from April through September, the Arts Council worked together in developing a graphic Timeline – *A Sweep of History*. The exhibit explored a pictorial history of St. James from its inception on the banks of the Chicago River in 1834 to present. In this work we were reminded of the resilience and vision that has sustained St James through the ages and moving forward. The exhibition ran in Kyle’s Place from October 5 through Jan 2.

During this time, members of the council have been researching the art that is part of our daily lives at St. James. This research will culminate in the publication of a book, *The Art of St. James*, which will document these pieces that may serve us in worship but are seldom really known. It is hoped that this book will be completed as a final contribution to our 150th year of celebration in September 2026. The book will be an embodiment of who we are as a community of believers and what we value. It will serve as a testament of our faith at St. James through the ages and an encouragement to reach higher and to go deeper in our faith.

FAITH FORMATION

Children’s Ministry *Maureen Zeller, Ministry Leader*

The St. James Cathedral Sunday School program provides Christian/Episcopal faith formation for approximately thirty-five students aged infant through sixth grade each Sunday following the 9am Family Service. The Songs and Stories class follows a fun and interactive parent-child format that allows children from infant to three years old to become acquainted with Bible stories through music and play. The pre-k through Kindergarten students utilize a Montessori based program called Godly Play to introduce them to Bible stories and parables. The first through third graders discuss the day’s scripture readings using a lectionary system from Sparkhouse Digital and supplemented by “The Bible Made Easy” book. They also use creative ways to demonstrate what they found most meaningful from the Scripture or the Service. The fourth through sixth graders have more in-depth discussions of the day’s scripture and learn about the *Book of Common Prayer*.

All Sunday School students, pre-K through sixth grade, participate in a day of service each month, assisting in making lunches for the unhoused of our community. Additionally, this year we have seen the initiation of the monthly newsletter by Intern for Administration Jacob Perkins. We also had a wonderful Opening Day for the Sunday School/Youth Ministry with a fun and delicious "Sundae Sunday." Additionally, the Sunday School and Youth Ministry students sent a rock on pilgrimage with one of their teachers so it could be placed at the foot of the Iron Cross. A video memento was made of this event for the children and for the congregation. On the Feast of Christ the King the families all came together to make Advent Wreaths. Soon after, the students began rehearsals for the always popular Christmas Pageant, spearheaded this year by Jacob Perkins and written and directed by Leland Culver. We are looking forward to more fun and adventures in the second half of the school year.

Four volunteer teachers currently lead the Sunday School program. There are five volunteers who come on a regular basis to help as classroom assistants in various classrooms. This limited cadre of teachers and classroom assistants puts a strain on the program when one of the teachers needs to be away for any reason, as very few parents or other adults have volunteered to step in as substitute teachers. Our goal for the near future and going forward is to recruit parents/grandparents and young adults to come in as substitute teachers and classroom volunteers so that we have at least two adults in each classroom each week. Due to the ages of some of our students, the size of some of our classes, or activity being planned, there is sometimes a need for more than two adults in a classroom. If you are at all interested in sharing your faith with the Cathedral's children, please speak to one of the teachers, Jacob Perkins, or the Reverend Canon Steven Balke.

Youth Group *Maria Price, Leader*

St. James Cathedral's Youth Group, organized into junior and senior high cohorts, provides faith formation for young people ages 11–18. The group meets weekly following the 9:00 a.m. service and uses the Sparkhouse Re:Form curriculum to guide discussions that deepen participants' understanding of the Episcopal faith and tradition. Youth Group leaders are committed to cultivating a safe, supportive environment that encourages curiosity, reflection, and thoughtful dialogue.

Over the course of the year, the group has grown in confidence and focus, engaging in increasingly rich conversations that explore meaningful and timely questions. This program year, the curriculum has centered on foundational elements of the Christian creed and the development of a meaningful prayer life. Through this work, the group continues to encourage a sense of ownership for one's own spiritual and religious lives during a critical transition from childhood into adolescence and young adulthood.

In addition to weekly formation, Youth Group members participate in the Cathedral's monthly meals ministry, serving food to guests while learning the value of service in action. Looking ahead, the group is excited to continue strengthening its faith by exploring practical ways to live out Episcopal values in daily life. A highlight of the coming months will be a Youth Group lock-in at the Cathedral on April 11–12, offering an opportunity for deeper community-building and spiritual growth.

Sunday Forum *The Rev. Steven Balke, Canon Vicar*

Our weekly Sunday Forums at 10:00 a.m., are an opportunity to explore our faith more deeply. No advance preparation is required and the topics are varied. The speakers are clergy, staff, parishioners, and guest speakers for lectures and group discussions. Last year's topics included a deep dive into how the "laws" of our church influence how we engage in our faith, drawing closer to God through the arts in Lent, learning about St. James history through the 150 years since rebuilding from the Great Chicago Fire, discussing together how we can be a Christlike community amid conflict and complexity in the world.

We are excited about the opportunities to learn together and grow as a community in the year to come with more Forum series, discussion topics, and guest leaders. If you would like to help by being a part of the formation planning team, please contact sbalke@saintjamescathedral.org for more information.

Wednesday Nights *The Rev. Steven Balke, Canon Vicar*

Wednesday nights during the program year (roughly whenever school is in session), St. James hosts a full evening of community activities. Our choristers (children and youth choir) lead us in a service of Evensong (sung evening prayer) at 5:45 p.m., then everyone is invited for dinner at 6:00 p.m. in the Great Hall. From 6:30 to 7:30 PM all adults are invited to participate in Christian formation programming. It is open to all and requires no advanced homework or registration.

Topics this past year included a comparison of the differences in the four gospels, reflecting on Bible passages from the book *The Disciple's Way*, learning about classic theologians such as Julian of Norwich and William Temple, the art of the nativity story, and more!

We are excited about our educational series and group discussions in the year to come. If you would like to know more about how to participate or contribute to Wednesday Nights at St. James, please contact sbalke@saintjamescathedral.org

Young Adults Ministry *Maria Price, Ministry Leader*

The 2025 program year saw continued growth and engagement within the St. James Young Adults ministry. The group has remained a welcoming and inclusive community for early-career and university-aged Cathedral parishioners.

Throughout the year, the ministry offered regular opportunities for formation and fellowship through the implementation of the Being With curriculum and the monthly Second Supper gatherings. The Being With curriculum invites participants to deepen their spiritual development and practice by offering accessible, thoughtful, and reflective material. Its use has fostered meaningful conversation, strengthened relationships, and supported a growing sense of connection among participants.

The goal of the Young Adults ministry continues to be upholding the Cathedral's spirit of welcome by providing consistent and engaging opportunities for formation and fellowship that resonate with those in the young adult stage of life. Looking ahead, the ministry anticipates welcoming new parishioners and remains committed to creating spaces for spiritual enrichment, meaningful conversation, and community-building among St. James' Young Adults.

Centering Prayer *Greg Gerber, Ministry Leader*

The St. James Centering Prayer Practice meets every Wednesday evening from 6:45-7:30 p.m. We gather "electronically" through a weekly telephone dial-in. While we originally met in person, this format supports silent practice very well. Because we have been meeting virtually, we now have participants/practitioners joining from all over the country. We have an interesting, diverse, dedicated group who join us weekly. Please consider investigating this deep, contemplative practice. All are welcome!

Centering Prayer is a contemplative prayer practice. Our weekly leader provides simple instruction to the Centering Prayer "method." The primary purpose of Centering Prayer is to commune and to become centered in God. This age-old Christian practice looks and feels like meditation. Centering Prayer allows connection with God, through the leader's guidance, through the community of practitioners and through silence. John of the Cross suggests "Silence is God's first language." Our practitioners would agree, having experienced the unique spiritual communion possible through Centering Prayer.

Our practice group uses two "primary teachers" – Episcopal priest Cynthia Bourgeault and her books "Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening" and "The Heart of Centering Prayer" and Fr. Martin Laird and his book "Into the Silent Land."

Centering Prayer is available to all St. James Cathedral congregants who would like to check out Centering Prayer are encouraged to do so! Contact Greg Gerber at glg222@gmail.com for more details.

Parish Retreats *Jacob Perkins, Intern for Administration*

Our now well-established pattern of joint Lenten and Advent retreats with our sister parish St. Martin's continued in 2025. The Rev. Juan Reed, retired vicar of St. Martin's and active spiritual director in the Diocese of Chicago, again led both one-day retreats. Attendance at each retreat was approximately twenty-five people, many of whom are regular participants.

The theme of the March 25 Lent retreat, hosted by St. Martin's, was *"In Times Like These: The Spirituality of Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King as Resources for Living Through Difficult Times."*

The December 6 Advent Retreat, hosted by St. James, was themed *"A Long Way from Home: An Advent Day of Prayer & Reflection."*

Participants experienced a deepening sense of real community, marked by genuine and vulnerable engagement across both congregations as we continue to seek out and live more fully into our shared spiritual life.

Scripture Reading Group *Jacob Perkins, Intern for Administration*

In Advent of 2025, we formed a new lay formation group that gathers weekly to reflect on the previous Sunday's lectionary readings. The group meets every Monday evening from 6:00–7:30 p.m. in the Library (Room 212).

Our practice is simple: the convener leads an opening prayer; participants take turns reading the scriptures; we spend several minutes in quiet reflection; and we then engage in group discussion, attending to connections and intersections among the texts, our liturgy, our world, and our own spiritual lives. A participant concludes each gathering with a closing prayer that gathers and reflects the themes of the conversation.

The group has thus far ranged in size from 4 to 12 participants and is intentionally structured to be accessible and edifying for both regular and occasional attendees, regardless of prior education or theological training. The Scripture Reading Group looks forward to exploring the scriptures together through the year, being formed by our communal reflection process. For more information contact Jacob Perkins at admin@saintjamescathedral.org.

2025 Sesquicentennial Pilgrimage - Camino de Santiago October 13-24, 2025

The Very Rev. Lisa Hackney-James, Dean

As part of the cathedral's Sesquicentennial events, a group of St. James parishioners undertook a pilgrimage to walk the Camino de Santiago – the network of paths that lead to the great Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela – led by Dean, Lisa Hackney-James, and planned in consultation with St. James members Randy Pierson and Alvaro de Salas Giménez de Azcárate, who serves as Consul General of Spain to the United States. Alvaro made us aware of the second major pilgrimage site in Spain related to St. James: The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Pillar in Zaragoza- where tradition holds that a discouraged James who at the River Ebro received an encouraging vision of Jesus's mother Mary.

The Dean was joined by 12 St. James pilgrims: Randy Pierson, Mike Hess & Hak Wong, Bernice Hand, Funmi & Sola Olopade, Michele Mitchell, Adele Osmond, Maureen Zeller, Erin & Gary Maus; & Gregory Hooker

The Dean shared video and written reflections throughout the 10 days which can be found at **SaintJamesCathedral.org/camino**.

PASTORAL CARE & PARISH LIFE

Pastoral Care

The Rev. Steven Balke, Canon Vicar

One of St. James Cathedral's core values is Pastoral Care, or the practice of a ministry of presence to those in times of need. We have a robust and growing pastoral care team, which includes our clergy and trained laypeople. Among the pastoral care ministries are maintaining a prayer list of people who are prayed for daily (submit names to this prayer list at **SaintJamesCathedral.org/prayer**, volunteers who will bring communion to those who are homebound or unable to attend worship (every 4th Sunday of the month), hospital visits, marriage counseling, baptism and confirmation preparation, retirement, grief counseling, and many other life transitions.

If you wish to receive pastoral care or are interested in learning more about how you can be a part of the pastoral care team, please contact **sbalke@saintjamescathedral.org**

Invite-Welcome-Connect Ministry *Laura Jenkins, Ministry Leader*

Welcome Cards

We received 128 Welcome Cards in 2025; twenty-three were from out-of-town visitors and 105 were from people interested in finding a new church home. The Welcome Team sent personal emails to all and connected those in the right demographic with Maria Price so that they could be welcomed into the Young Adult Group. Newcomers were invited to other events of interest, and all were (or will be) invited to Newcomer Lunches.

Newcomer Lunches

The flood in the Great Hall required cancellation of the planned February Newcomer Lunch. However, at lunches in June and September we learned a bit about thirty-seven newcomers (and some established parishioners). Table hosts who facilitated conversation using the "Quaker Questions" were the Rev. Steven Balke, Scott Dankert, the Rev. Frank Donaghue, the Very Rev. Lisa Hackney-James, Kevin Hampton, Laura Jenkins, Nicole Spencer, and Tom Stabnicki.

The Budde Moment

Following the noted sermon of Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde at the National Cathedral on January 21 calling on the President to "show mercy," the national [Invite-Welcome-Connect](#) team said that "The Budde Moment" had turned public attention to The Episcopal Church. They encouraged churches be prepared to "welcome people coming to the Episcopal Church out of curiosity, seeking a place of Christian refuge, perhaps people who have never felt welcome in church before" on the following Sunday. We created special Welcome bags with information about The Episcopal Church and St. James and had ushers and greeters available to distribute them in the narthex on Sunday, January 24. Because of the Annual Meeting there was a single combined 10:00 service so we particularly wanted to greet visitors who mistakenly arrived at the regular service times. We had more than ten visitors that day; at least three explicitly said they had come because of Bishop Budde's sermon. Special thanks to Cynthia Cycon, and Patrick Kelly who slipped out of the service early to welcome anyone thinking they were coming for the 11:00 service, and to Bill Cospers for alerting us about the national team's suggestion.

Installation of the Dean

We assisted in inviting Diocesan clergy and friends of the Cathedral to the March 2 installation of The Very Reverend Lisa Hackney-James as Dean of the Cathedral, as well as welcoming everyone to the celebration. Craig Backhus, Marcy Backhus, Norma Bramsen, Kjersti Cooper, Eric Curl, JoAnn Evans, JoAnn Faulhaber, Sandy Giger, Stuart Hall, Russell Hatch, Sharon Peterson, Tom Stabnicki and Xinyang Xiao extended a warm welcome and helped clergy find the vesting room, honored guests find their seats, and everyone find the reception.

Chrism Mass

On April 15, Norma Bramsen, JoAnn Faulhaber, Sandy Giger, and Tom Stabnicki reprised their roles, assisting Diocesan staff in welcoming the multitude attending the Holy Week Eucharist at which Bishop Paula Clark blessed the chrism.

World Labyrinth Day

The St. James Cathedral Labyrinth is included on the website for [World Labyrinth Day](#) and on May 3 parishioners Mike Hess and Tom Stabnicki were available to welcome visitors who found their way to us. We encountered twelve people who walked the labyrinth that day.

Open House Chicago

Once again, St. James was invited by the Chicago Architecture Center and Open House Chicago to be a site host. On the weekend of October 18 and 19, we welcomed and engaged 1,478 visitors. This was down a bit from 1802 visitors in 2024. The massive No Kings Rally on Saturday, October 18, probably contributed to the decrease. A wonderful crew of volunteers served as greeters (Robert Black, Eric Curl, Scott Dankert, Alvaro de Salas, JoAnn Faulhaber, Adrienne Gervais, Michael Kremer, Laura McVey, Lori Rotenberg, Tom Stabnicki, Carolyn Sunderman, Norman Sunderman, Judith Tribbett, Jillyn Turunen, and Katie Valchar) and docents (David DuPre, Beth Mitchell, and Charlie Ockerlund.) Tom Patterson, docent extraordinaire, was greatly missed.

Hospitality Ministry *Katie Valchar, Ministry Member*

The Hospitality Committee, established in 2024 as a volunteer-led initiative, continues to pursue a vibrant culture of welcome. Our deepest gratitude goes to the sexton team; their tireless behind-the-scenes work remains the backbone of every successful gathering.

Coffee Hour Ministry: Homemade or thoughtfully procured treats continue to draw our community to coffee hour. Building on the standard-menu and cost-saving mug initiatives of 2024, Coffee Hour attendance has stabilized at around eighty guests per week. The sign-up rate for volunteer hosts has doubled since last year, largely driven by effective word-of-mouth. The 11:00 AM service is supported by six consistent hosting parties, accounting for ~60% of services. However, the 9:00 AM services present a growth opportunity, as only 25% of services have sign-ups. Paper sign-up sheets in the Welcome Center have proven the most effective method for volunteers to express their intent. Our goal this year is to increase volunteer sign-ups to engage coffee hour hosts for 80-90% of 9:00 and 11:00 services.

Receptions and Special Events: Evensong receptions continue to grow, averaging fifty attendees, with peaks of 150 for major services like Nine Lessons and Carols. To ensure these events remain sustainable and are offered in celebration of our music, we are actively seeking non-choir volunteers to lead food & beverage planning,

procurement, and event management. Major milestones in 2025 included the Dean's Installation, a landmark event hosting over 250 guests for which we partnered with professional caterers, and the Easter Vigil Potluck, a beloved tradition that flourished with decorations in the Great Hall and high parishioner participation.

Looking Forward: As we approach the remainder of Cathedral's Sesquicentennial year and beyond, we look forward to supporting celebratory events, including the upcoming concert featuring the organ music of Leo Sowerby. There are many opportunities to further enliven our hospitality; we invite all interested parishioners to join us.

Sacred Yoga *Randy Pierson, Head Verger*

St. James Cathedral offers the opportunity to practice yoga in the beautiful nave and be part of a warm, friendly community. Classes are held on Mondays from 5:30-6:30 p.m. and are taught by Gary Alexander, a life-long Episcopalian and yoga instructor with over 16 years of experience teaching all levels of students. There is also a Zoom option for people who want to practice from home. A few mats are available, but students are encouraged to bring their own. Classes are offered on a pay-what-you-like basis with a portion of proceeds going to the programs of the Cathedral.

St. James Book Group *Craig & Marcy Backhus, Leaders*

The St. James Book Group meets the first Tuesday of the month, 6:30-8:00pm, in the second-floor conference room at St. James Commons, 65 E Huron.

Our group read ten books last year, ranging from current bestsellers (fiction and non-fiction) to classic literature, to a novel written by a first-time author who was able to join us, via Zoom, for discussion of her book. Book titles are suggested by members of the book group. We generally read and discuss one book per month. New members/visitors are always welcome.

If you would like to join us, have questions, or would like to be added to our email list, please contact Marcy (marcybackhus@me.com) or Craig (craigbackhus@gmail.com) Backhus.

60s & 70S Group *Anne Driscoll, Ministry Leader*

As I mentioned last year when I announced my interest in forming a small group for those in their 60s and 70s, I was motivated by my envy of the 20s and 30s group. I longed for a group of like-minded people with whom to talk about this new stage of life, as well as delving into more serious topics such as our mortality, the legacies we want to leave, and what happens after we die. Hopefully, sprinkled amid these discussions would be some laughter.

It turns out there are others who have the same interest. A group of us gathered twice in 2025 and plan to continue meeting at least twice per month going forward. We are in the process of getting to know each other as well as planning outings and engaging in a mission project.

Because of the very personal nature of these discussions, the group sees this more as a "Covenant Group," meaning we make a commitment to the group to regularly attend and be able to form deep bonds. This feels more appropriate than one where people "drop in" from time to time. The plan is to open the group twice per year so that new and curious people are welcome to join.

So far, everyone has found our meetings and conversations to be rewarding and meaningful. If you have questions or would like to know more, please contact me at anneandsam@gmail.com.

Sacramental Life Events

Baptisms (8)

James Patrick Citrome
James George Fisher
Eve Janet Grindley
Ellis Joel Miller
Mona Jiah Elliott Paik
Hugo Walter Reyes
Waileen Stephanie Chu Root
Jane Mei Root

Confirmations (7)

Aubrienne Bradford Aille Abele
Zara Ahmad
Molly Alvarez-Rivero
Matthew James Maus
Ashwin Rishi Munge
Reid Primo
Todd Rhoades

Receptions (4)

Brandon M. Blazo
Kenneth L. Jacobs
Michael Kremer
Douglas Lee Vivian

Ordinations (1)

The Rev. Timothy Beltran del Rio

Marriages (5)

Alexandra Brandt and Brandt Hafstad
Rowland Waton Chang & Pamela Anne Semanik
Jason Andrew Doyle & Kelly Elizabeth Wagner
Shelby Leigh Hill & Kenneth Michael Lakowske
Margaret Kathleen Quinn & Matthew Thomas Wilkerson

Funerals (3)

Frances Amanda Edna Horn
Anstiss Hammond Krueck
Thomas Gilliam Patterson

OUTREACH

St. James Meals *Seldon Moreland, Ministry Leader*

The St. James Meals program offers two meals a month each to an average of 120 guests. The food is prepared by volunteers in the church's kitchen in the basement of Kyle's Place. We use fresh ingredients as often as possible, most notably for the soups we serve at the Tuesday meal, which are always highly complemented.

We offer a wide range of menus at each meal, based on a theme, (e.g., Mexican, Asian, Soul Food), to keep the food interesting, and we always include a vegetarian option. During the holidays, we provide special entrees to help our guests celebrate the season. We also offer amenities, such as soap, socks, and other toiletries for guests to take with them after the meal.

Three important changes have occurred in the past year. We have expanded our outreach to other rescue food banks in Chicago for donations thereby reducing food costs despite inflation. Secondly, the number of volunteers from Saint James has grown to the extent that there are sometimes more people than workstations! Finally, the Youth Sunday School class is now serving on the buffet line for each Sunday meal to interact with our guests.

This program is fully funded by St. James and as the Director of the program, I want to thank you for your support. If you would like to learn more about this or any other outreach program and how you can help, please contact sbalke@saintjamescathedral.org

Meals Among Us *Walter Shalda, Ministry Leader*

"Meals Among Us" or "MAU" is one of St. James' current iteration of sandwich and feeding ministries, ministries that have been a part of our history for over 150 years. We currently serve about 750 meals every month!

MAU relies upon volunteers to make and distribute bagged lunches to hungry people in our community. This ministry involves shopping, storing, sorting, packing, and delivering various bagged lunches. Our teams place items in bags and make sandwiches on Sundays after church services. Deliveries occur on both Sundays and Mondays.

Our strong and dedicated group of volunteers are happy to help with our various tasks throughout the week, especially before and after Sunday services. For those whose cannot volunteer their time, we are always willing to accept financial assistance to support the feeding program.

If you would like to explore our community after church, just stop by our workspace on the second floor of the modern building after the 11:00 AM service on a Sunday morning. We would be happy to meet you. You can also reach out to one of our team leadership - Lib Gray, Tim Zeller, or Walter Shalda. You can learn more by contacting The Rev. Steven Balke at sbalke@saintjamescathedral.org.

Bombas Socks Ministry *Cathy Hill, Ministry Leader*

The Meals ministry was accepted as a Giving Partner with Bombas in 2018. Our first delivery was in 2019, and each year since. To date we have been blessed to receive 43,500 pairs. Not only our guests at Meals and Meals Among Us (MAU) are recipients of Bombas' generosity! We are privileged to have shared with others in Chicago and the greater Chicago area including:

- St. Martin's Episcopal, Church, Chicago
- Northern Illinois Food Bank, Mundelein
- University of Illinois Street Medicine, Chicago
- St. Paul's Lutheran clothes closet, Waukegan
- St. Andrews Lutheran assistance to arriving migrants, Mundelein
- Ann Killey Development Center for Disabled Adults

A few words about Bombas:

We are 1 of 4,000 active Giving Partners. While they currently do not accept applicants on a regular basis, they onboard new qualified Partners on a rolling basis as inventory allows. Bombas donates in all fifty states, and since the program began have shared over fifty million pairs, keeping their promise that for every pair of socks bought, another one is shared. Bombas now sells and shares underwear and t-shirts. We hope to be included in their next allocation. Please consider volunteering at St. James Meals and MAU! And keep Bombas in mind when shopping.

Summer In The City *The Rev. Canon Vicar Steven Balke*

One of the major tent-pole outreach ministries of St. James Cathedral, Summer In The City (or "SITC") has been going strong for over a quarter century. SITC is a summer enrichment program that is offered free-of-charge to children in the City of Chicago that would otherwise never be able to participate in this kind of life-changing experience. For two weeks, children participate in fun and educational activities, including kayaking, gardening, rock climbing, art, team building, photography, cooking, and more. This past year featured an ecology-themed camp, where kids learned botany, life cycles, made terrariums, visited the Lincoln Park Zoo, studied botanical art at the Driehaus Museum, and more!

Most recently, as part of St. James and St. Martin's partnership, SITC has been growing as a mutual parish ministry. This year volunteers from both St. Martin's and St. James facilitated the camp for one week based at each parish.

The experience was enhanced by what each parish contributed, the skills, resources, and experiences each could add. This partnership made SITC better able to meet the needs of children the most in need and was a great step toward achieving the vision of what is possible with SITC.

The program director Arlicia Corley, administrative intern Jacob Perkins, chef Cyndie Ha, and so many other volunteers and church staff worked together to plan and achieve memories that will last a lifetime. They lifted the dignity of campers and showed them that they are worthy of love and respect as fellow human beings.

This past year also featured so many financial contributions that the entire cost of SITC was covered by donations, furthering the financial stability of this program for the years to come. This ministry has been made possible because of all the volunteers, generous donations, and the support of both parishes. Without a doubt this ministry made a difference in the lives of the children who participated, and we thank all the supporters.

This year we look forward to even more enrollment, engagement, and collaboration with St. James and St. Martin's at Summer In The City! If you would like to know more about how you can support this important ministry, please contact sbalke@saintjamescathedral.org

Revive Christmas Gifts *Nicole Spencer, Ministry Leader*

For 104 years, the ReVive Center for Housing and Healing – formerly known as Cathedral Shelter – has coordinated the donation of thousands of Christmas gifts to families in need. ReVive Families are our neighbors - parents struggling to support children and senior citizens who live alone – who might go without on Christmas day.

What began as “Christmas baskets” more than a century ago are now boxes of wrapped presents (from a ReVive Family’s wish list) and food gift cards. Today, participating in the effort is a tradition for many St. James families and small groups.

In 2025, our collective generosity sponsored Christmas for 147 people representing forty-three households experiencing poverty or homelessness. We matched our ReVive Families with sponsors in record time. The introduction of self-adhesive labels for the Christmas boxes improved the process. We thank every person, family and small group who participated in 2025. We look forward to your support in 2026.

The ReVive Christmas Gifts ministry is a once-per-year event that brings Christmas joy to our neighbors. We kick-off the appeal with coordination in late October and end with the send-off of Christmas boxes in early December.

Whether you prefer to shop for a ReVive family, assist with coordination, prepare for pick-up day, or donate funds, there is room for you on the ReVive Christmas ministry team. Please join in the fun! To participate in this Christmas tradition or learn more about the ministry, please contact The Rev. Canon Steven Balke at sbalke@saintjamescathedral.org or Nicole Spencer at nabs92@gmail.com.

LGBTQ+ Pride *Jillyn Turunen, Ministry Co-Chair*

The St. James Pride group was formed in May 2025 as a space for St. James parishioners and community members who are LGBTQ+ and allies to find community and serve others. Our mission is threefold:

- 1. To provide a space for LGBTQ+/allied SJC congregants to build community with each other, especially in this difficult season of political change.*
- 2. To reach out to other LGBTQ+/allied Christians throughout Chicago for community building.*
- 3. To perform community service as an outward demonstration of God's love for all.*

We meet on the third Sunday of each month to plan events and build community, and we host monthly events outside of these meetings. In June, we attended the Chicago Pride Parade; we also had four members walk in the parade, representing St. James within the Coalition of Welcoming Churches. At the same time, a group of St. James parishioners held a welcome table in the narthex, passing out water and offering shade and air conditioning to those returning from the parade.

In August, we invited Dr. Peter Carlson to come speak about his recently published book of LGBTQ+ affirming sermons. Around thirty people from around Chicago attended this talk. In October and November, we wrote cards for the Pinta Pride Project, an organization that sends cards to LGBTQ+ individuals who feel isolated from their families during the holidays. We wrote around 125 cards to be sent all over the world. Thanks to Beth Mitchell for hand-making each card, and to St. James clergy for providing postage! In November, we also held our first social event, which was attended by around twenty people from around the parish.

Looking ahead to next year, we have some exciting events and service opportunities planned, including movie screenings, a book group, attending the Pride Parade again, and working with the Rainbow Railroad organization to support LGBTQ+ refugees. We are grateful for our fulfilling first year and look forward to the year ahead!

Community Partnerships *The Rev. Canon Christopher Griffin*

Hebrews 13:16 “And do not forget to do good and to share with others”

We remain excited to be in partnership with St. Martin's Episcopal Church strengthening and supporting one another through prayer, shared book readings, and joint retreats. Together we share our resources with community groups near St. Martin's on the west side of Chicago. We have continued to support BUILD and Nash Elementary School through their Back-to-School backpack and school supplies drive—this year we targeted all the 1st and 2nd graders, following the recommendation of the Assistant Principal. The children (along with their parents, teachers, and the AP) were all so elated. St. James was also able to deepen our support to Task Prevention and Community Services this year providing semi-monthly meals through our Meals Ministry and supplementing the meals with winter coats and clothes. The winter clothes drive has been a tremendous success that continues to meet a huge need among the youth served.

This past year our popular camp, Summer in the City (SIT-C) experienced a slight transition as we intentionally as we expanded our base to spend more time at St. Martin's to be more present in the community where several of our campers live. As a result, we were able to attract children from a nearby homeless shelter to participate in SIT-C. They had an amazing experience.

St. James continued to offer meeting space for Moms Demand Action; however, earlier in the year they acknowledged that many of the moms interested in supporting them lived further away from our offices. Still, we let them know we are here if the need for space resurfaces. We also recently began conversations with the RAINBOW RAILROAD, a non-profit organization that helps get at-risk LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees to safety and exploring opportunities to collaborate.

GOVERNANCE & FINANCE

Senior Warden Report *Susan Fickling, Senior Warden*

As I look back over the past year, and more broadly over my time on the Cathedral Chapter, we have so much to be proud of and so many more exciting things ahead of us.

Over the past year we have accomplished so much, including the following:

- The naming and installation of Lisa as Dean- positioning us to meet the opportunities and challenges that await
- Continued progress on the real estate front, with an eye to controlling our future opportunities and operations on this campus (with more details in the real estate task force write up)

- An incredible annual pledge campaign
- A resilient and strengthening capital campaign
- Launching our Sesquicentennial Celebration to honor the 150 years since the building was rebuilt after the Chicago Fire and the next 150 years to come, including :
 - Pilgrimage in Spain
 - St. James Art Installation Timeline Exhibit
 - Various musical offerings; and
 - Upcoming Events
- Celebration of Joy Rogers's deanship
- Gala- April 17, 2026, at the Driehaus Museum
- Chicago pilgrimage on July 25, 2026, and more!
- And perhaps most exciting, a renewed and committed level of involvement by our community in various ministries, sub-committees, and task forces; a quick look at all the reports in this binder are a great indicator of the passion and energy that people feel here every day which is also reflected in the amazing growth we have had in our average Sunday attendance numbers.

It is an exciting time at St. James, and we should all be very proud of how we have grown and the trajectory of our future growth.

2025 OPERATING BUDGET REPORT *Paul W. Thompson, Treasurer*

Ending my fourteenth year as our treasurer, I find that the preliminary and unaudited financial results for our nearly two-million-dollar operating budget for the year ending December 31, 2025, show St. James Cathedral had a strong year, with results gaining momentum heading into Fiscal Year 2026.

Expenses were ever so slightly over budget (0.4% or \$7,083). Considering inflation, I am ok with that! And you can read in your Annual Meeting materials about the exciting program activities that were supported by the staff, space and supplies included in our operating budget.

The value of pledge dollars received was the highest ever, at \$837,030. This exceeded the value of pledges pledged for the first time ever (by \$20,136)! And we received an amazing 58.5% (or \$70,282) more plate offerings than we budgeted for.

Overall revenues for the operating budget were 9.5% higher than budgeted, and so much higher than expected that our reliance on investment draws from Vanguard was \$105,075 less than budgeted. That is a huge step in the right direction for any established non-profit organization.

And we received \$138,593 in fulfillment of pledges toward the 2026 operating budget before the year even began. Our year-end checking balance was high.

Counting prepaid pledges for 2026, 2025 operating budget revenues (including offerings from our many visitors), and capital campaign gifts for projects like replacement of the pipe organ, renovation of the historic building, and purchase of the modern building, we received almost \$1.2 million in our checking account at Chase in the month of December. That is remarkable.

Also in December, Chapter approved an operating budget for 2026 that totals \$2,148,694, which represents a continuation of current operations without reflecting any impact of acquiring ownership of the combined campus. One of our first tasks in the new year will be to craft and approve a revised operating budget, taking into consideration new costs and new revenues that will result from this shift in status to a quite different financial structure.

We look forward to a new era of paying for our operations with funds pledged, given, and earned now, partnering with the Diocese of Chicago, other organizations, and friends from far beyond our walls in this exciting new reality. While honoring our history, we will not be relying on the past. Instead, we will work in the present to set up our children in the faith for future success in this place.

Next month, we will say “thank you and farewell” to Christine Price, our accountant for the past decade, one like no other decade in our history. She has already welcomed her successor, Sai Mamatha Akkineni, who will oversee our accounting needs as we proceed into God's future.

For those of you interested in taking a closer look at the budget figures, we will hold a special Adult Forum on Sunday, February 8, at 10:00 a.m. in Kyle's Place to take a deeper dive and to answer any of your questions.

Statement Of Activities
For the Year Ended December 31,2025 (with Budget) / 2026 Budget

1/21/2026
Accrual Basis

Preliminary and Unaudited

	2025			2026	
			Variance to	Variance to	
	Actual	Budget	Budget	Budget	2025 Actual
Public Support and Revenue					
Diocese Distribution-Otis Fund	143,982	146,000	(2,018)	133,000	-7.63%
Pledges & Prepaid Pledges	837,030	850,000	(12,970)	950,000	13.50%
Offerings	190,282	120,000	70,282	140,000	-26.42%
Other Gifts	83,831	10,000	73,831	10,000	-88.07%
In-Kind Gifts	470	500	(30)	500	6.38%
Stewardship Events	0	25,000	(25,000)	10,000	
Wedding Income	7,079	9,000	(1,921)	1,000	-85.87%
Facilities Use Fees	26,084	16,000	10,084	5,000	-80.83%
Other Miscellaneous Income	0	100	(100)	0	
Total Regular Income	1,288,758	1,176,600	112,158	1,249,500	-3.05%
Other Income Sources					
5% Investment Draw	167,000	167,000	-	115,000	-31.14%
Additional Investment Draw	453,232	558,307	(105,075)	690,194	52.28%
Draws From Restricted Funds	38,500	52,900	(14,400)	94,000	144.16%
Draws From Meals Ministries	12,000				
Draws From Memorial Garden Funds	2,400				
Total Other Income Sources	673,132	778,207	(105,075)	899,194	33.58%
Total Income	1,961,890	1,954,807	7,083	2,148,694	9.52%
Expense					
Administration	450,642	445,554	5,088	494,912	9.82%
Buildings & Grounds	353,170	355,183	(2,013)	385,622	9.19%
Communications	108,132	98,500	9,632	116,111	7.38%
Diocese	117,057	116,000	1,057	117,000	-0.05%
Clergy/Program Staff	641,736	606,483	35,253	708,742	10.44%
Faith Formation & Stewardship	19,167	35,880	(16,713)	35,630	85.89%
Worship	175,540	208,007	(32,467)	200,299	14.10%
Parish Life	34,276	23,200	11,076	25,478	-25.67%
Pastoral Care	1,656	2,000	(344)	2,000	20.77%
Outreach	60,514	64,000	(3,486)	62,900	3.94%
Total Expense	1,961,890	1,954,807	7,083	2,148,694	9.52%

Investments *Alan Gunn, Finance Commission Member*

the Finance Commission oversees St. James Cathedral's reserve financial assets. The Cathedral began 2025 with \$2,720,809 in assets in restricted and unrestricted investment accounts and ended the year with \$3,790,613. The year-end amount includes \$850,516 in an account set up in 2020 to receive Capital Campaign donations and \$1,164,029 in an account set up to receive donations for the purchase of 65 E. Huron.

The total rate of return for the Cathedral's assets in 2025 was 4.3%.* Asset appreciation was \$28,885 and income was \$65,069. 2025 draws from the investment assets in 2025 for Cathedral operational expenses totaled \$850,000. 2025 draws from the Bishop's fund to pay for the renovation of the new organ were \$743,802.

In 2025, Some of Cathedral's assets were invested in four Vanguard exchange-traded funds (ETFs): a domestic bond index ETF (BND: 7.11% 2025 return), an international bond index ETF (BNDX: 3.00% 2025 return), a domestic stock ETF (VTI: 17.14% 2025 return), and an international stock index ETF (VXUS: 32.23% 2025 return). Invested cash was held in a money market fund (VMFXX: 4.22% 2025 return). 2025 Vanguard fees were approximately \$1,900 based on average fund balances.

*The Finance Commission sold all the Cathedral's stock and bond ETFs on May 22, 2025, in anticipation of higher expenses following the purchase of 65 E. Huron. Some of those assets were reinvested on Oct. 2, 2025 (\$400,000) as cash needs became clearer. Additionally, on May 5, 2025, the cathedral received \$800,000 of its share of the Otis fund held by the diocese which were invested in the Bishop's Fund.

2026 Annual Pledge Drive *Marcy Backhus, Ministry Chair*

During this year's Season of Faith annual pledge campaign, St. James Cathedral was deeply encouraged by the generous and faithful response of our community. We are pleased to report both a strong financial outcome and a meaningful increase in participation.

To date, parishioners have pledged **\$1,002,245** for 2026 toward our shared ministry. That is a **23% increase** over the prior year. **207 pledges** have been received as of January 19, 2026. If the **twenty-six not-yet-renewed** 2025 pledges are made, we will reach **\$1,063,965** in annual pledges. These results reflect not only generosity in giving, but a deep commitment to the life, mission, and future of the Cathedral.

This campaign would not have been possible without the dedication of the Stewardship Committee and the many volunteers who gave their time, talent, and energy throughout the season. From planning and communications to follow-up and encouragement, their collective efforts helped ensure a welcoming, thoughtful, and faith-filled stewardship experience.

We are profoundly grateful to all who participated. Every pledge truly matters, and together these commitments strengthen St. James Cathedral as we continue to serve, worship, and grow as a community of faith.

Count Ministry *Marianne Culver, Ministry Leader*

The Count Ministry manages all the various items that appear in the collection plates and drop boxes at St. James Cathedral. The team counts and tabulates all cash collected at services and deposits it in the Cathedral bank account each week. We count special collections, too, like the Lenten and Christmas collections for special charities. Our happy band of human calculators includes Molly Alvarez, Alexis Anderson, Mary Jo Barton, David Briere, David DuPre, Crystal Elapumkal, Laura Jenkins, Norman Sunderman and Cynthia Urbytes. All perform a demanding job with accuracy and good cheer. Sadly, this year we lost two long-time members and good friends, Fran Horn and Tom Patterson. We miss them.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS

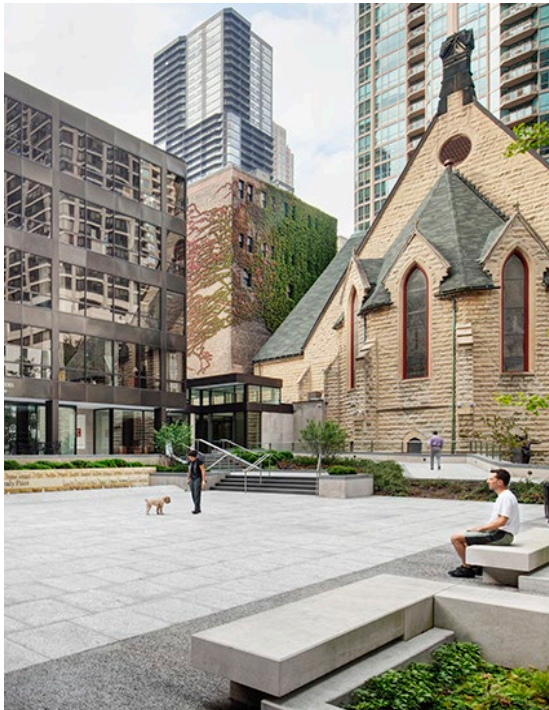
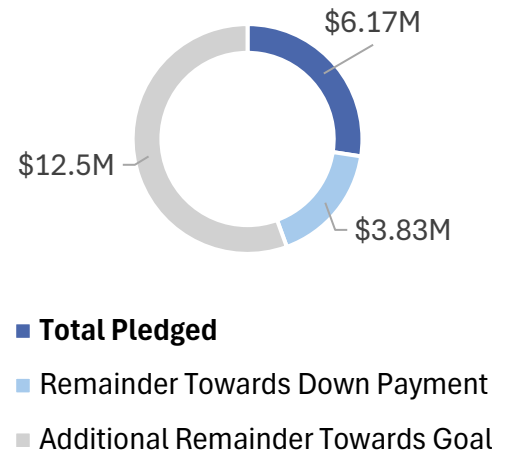
Liturgical Space Planning Committee *Craig Backhus, Chair*

The Liturgical Space Planning Committee presented preliminary plans for the proposed reconfiguration of the cathedral's chancel area (the first phase of the planned renovation/restoration of the entire cathedral campus) at the Sunday Forum on June 15, 2025. A survey document was distributed to all who attended the presentation. Plans and the survey questionnaire were also made available to all congregants on the St. James Cathedral website. The response was extremely positive. Installation of the new organ is scheduled to occur fall of 2026, with the first phase(s) of cathedral renovation work beginning in the spring of 2027.

St. James Episcopal Cathedral seeks to raise a total of **\$22.5 million to purchase 65 E. Huron St.** from the Diocese of Chicago. The initial benchmark goal is **\$10 million as a down payment** required for St. James to provide on the closing date of the sale.

	Total \$	# of Donors
Campaign Goal	\$22,500,000	
Total Pledged to Date (Documented)	\$6,170,000	17
<i>Activated Prospect Pipeline</i>	<i>\$14,900,000</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Additional Prospects Identified</i>	<i>\$5,250,000</i>	<i>18</i>
Total Pipeline Capacity	\$20,150,000	68

Campaign Progress



In addition to a robust network of prospective donors from within St. James and across the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, the campaign has also activated a group of passionate modern architects and their supporters. These individuals are concerned with preserving the building and its plaza in memory of the architect Peter Roesch, the building's designer, and in celebration of the democratic values of the modern architecture movement by ensuring that the plaza outside of 65 E. Huron St. remains open and free to the public.

Throughout this campaign, our vision for the full campus of St. James Cathedral – the historical cathedral building, 65 E. Huron St., and the plaza – remains steadfast. By acquiring the building and stewarding it as a resource for ministry, we can return our campus to its original vocation: a hub for Episcopal ministry, civic life, celebration of the arts, and a convening place for our Chicago community.

Simultaneously, St. James is maintaining fundraising progress on the historic cathedral restoration and new organ campaigns. **Fundraising for these goals totals \$3,373,896 from 94 gifts to date.** In 2026, you will see status updates and campaign activity for these projects alongside St. James' continued focus on securing the future of 65 E. Huron St.



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This image shows a full page of white paper designed for handwriting practice. It features 18 evenly spaced, horizontal dashed lines that run across the entire width of the page. The lines are thin and light gray, providing a guide for letter height and placement without being distracting. There is no text or other markings on the page.

MEETING NOTES

This image shows a full page of a handwriting practice worksheet. It consists of multiple sets of three horizontal dashed lines, evenly spaced across the entire page. These lines are designed to help children learn letter height and placement as they write. The background is plain white, and there are no other markings or text present.



St James Cathedral

CHICAGO

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