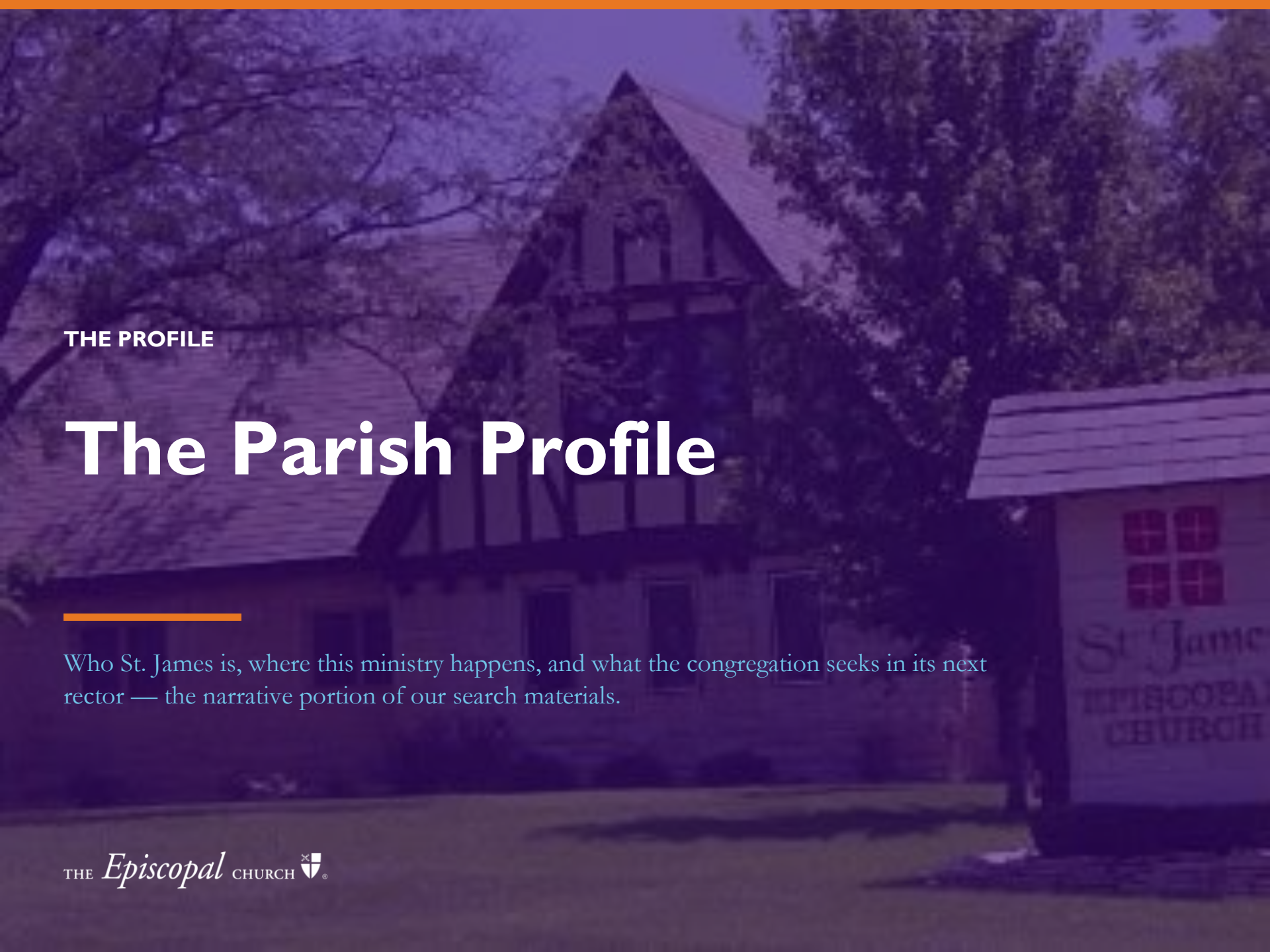


THE PROFILE

The Parish Profile

Who St. James is, where this ministry happens, and what the congregation seeks in its next rector — the narrative portion of our search materials.

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH



AN INTRODUCTION

St. James Episcopal Church

Wichita, Kansas — the parish, its worship, its ministries, and how it is organized

THE Episcopal CHURCH

Welcome to St. James

A century-old Wichita parish — established, generous, and carried by its lay leaders



"Whoever you are and wherever you find yourself on your journey of faith, you are welcome here."

"St. James will meet you where you are."

The parish at a glance

Founded: organized in 1920 and rooted in College Hill ever since; the parish celebrated its centennial in 2020.

Where: 3750 E. Douglas Ave., Wichita, in the walkable College Hill neighborhood — the church building and campus follow on the next page.

Worship: Holy Eucharist on Saturday evening and twice on Sunday morning, with Christian education between the Sunday services. The latter service is livestreamed.

Size and resources: a congregation of long-tenured and generous members, an operating budget over $580,000, and an endowment over $1.5 million that has distributed some $2.2 million since 1992.

Clergy and staff

An associated priest and a deacon share worship, welcome, and pastoral care, with a small paid staff for music, formation, bookkeeper, and parish life. An Associate Rector has shared this work in the past.

Lay leadership

Dozens of active ministries are run by parish volunteers — lay leadership has long been the working engine of St. James.

Beyond the parish

The Diocese of Kansas, seated at Grace Cathedral in Topeka, and the Wichita Minster — a cluster of area parishes that share clergy coverage and joint ministry.

For a candidate: *St. James is an established, financially stable, deeply lay-led parish that knows who it is and is inviting others into its next chapter.*

Our Church Home

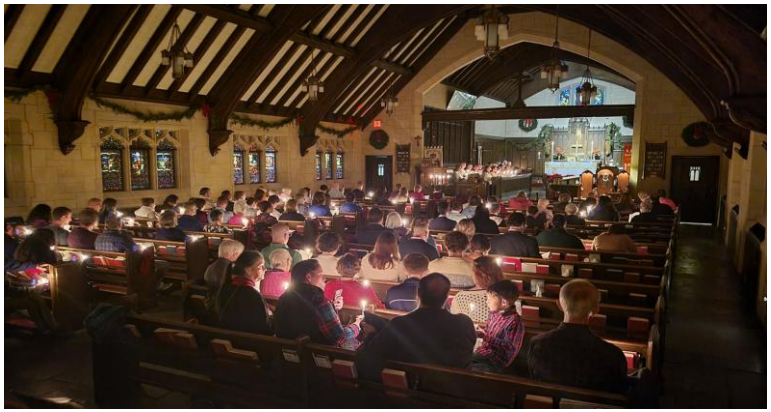
A 1925 landmark in College Hill neighborhood, listed on the National Register of Historic Places

The building

Built: 1925, in an early English style combining Gothic and Norman, with an exterior of Silverdale and Bedford stone from Kansas and Indiana.

Size: 28,000 square feet over two floors plus 5,800 in the basement — Nave, chapel, Guild Hall A and B with a stage, kitchen, choir and parish offices, nursery, and lounge.

Light: the Nave and Guild Hall are oriented to catch the morning and evening sun through the stained glass windows.



Arrival and grounds

A drive-through porte cochere on the east side gives newcomers an easy way into the Grand Lobby. A memorial garden and playground sit on landscaped grounds, amid tree-lined bungalow streets, with a fine city park nearby.

Accessibility today

A railed ramp links the Nave to the education wing, restrooms are fully accessible, and wheelchair spaces sit in the center of the Nave — welcome made physical. A new elevator serves the south basement with a second going in upstairs by 2027.



> *"Our sanctuary is beautiful; looking at the stained glass I can feel God's presence."*

For a candidate: *The parish has invested steadily in its home — a well-kept, accessible, historic campus that arrives as an asset to build on rather than a burden to manage.*

Worship and Music

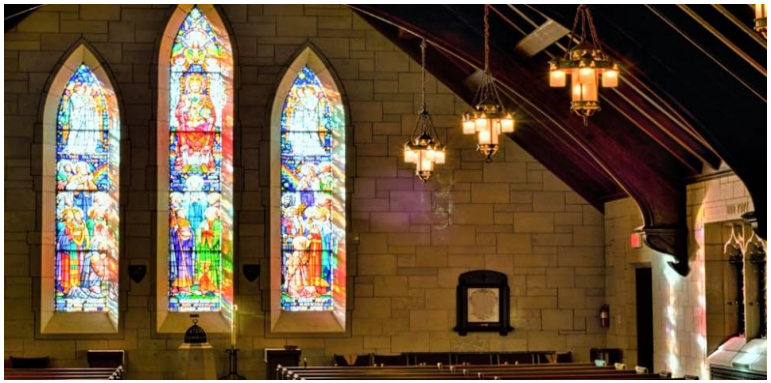
Prayer Book liturgy in a traditional Episcopal idiom, with a strong music program

The pattern of worship

Weekly liturgies: three weekend Eucharists, the later Sunday service being the principal choral liturgy — Prayer Book worship offered with reverence and care in a beautiful setting.

Sacraments and seasons: the full round of the Church year, baptisms, confirmations, weddings, burials, and the sacramental life of the Book of Common Prayer, with Evensong marking major occasions.

Online: the principal Sunday service is livestreamed on the parish YouTube channel — often a seeker's first welcome, before ever arriving.



Music

An adult choir with paid section leaders and a handbell choir sing under a Director of Music, drawing on the 1982 Hymnal and the wider Episcopal hymn tradition. Sacred choral music is central here, and the choirs are where newcomers connect and belong.

Formation

Adult formation, youth and children's ministry, a nursery, Vacation Bible School, and spiritual direction — plus Social Justice and Creation Care groups that connect study to action.

> *"This isn't a concert where Jesus is the star - it's more introspective and personal."*

> *"Choir and music are great conduits to belonging."*

For a candidate: *Worship here is traditional and well-resourced; the parish values dignified liturgy and good music, and expects its rector to preside with confidence and to give strong support to its music ministry.*

Ministry and Outreach

How the parish serves its members, its city, and its ecumenical partners



Serving the city

Breakthrough Episcopal Social Services: the Episcopal agency walking with neighbors facing poverty and mental illness for over forty years; our associated priest serves as its CEO.

Saint Francis Ministries: the Kansas-born Episcopal agency for children and families, a partner of the parish since its earliest years.

Justice Together: a multi-faith organization of Sedgwick County congregations pressing local officials on housing, health, and safety.

Children and youth: sustained support for the Wichita Children's Home, Kansas Children's Service League, and the Pando Initiative in USD 259 schools.

Hands-on and hospitable: pantry and shelter support, Sandwich Saturday, and ShowerUp ICT with the Wichita Minster.

Pocket Change and drives

Small change, gathered continually, has sent more than $36,000 to community charities since 2016 — Breakthrough ESS, the Wichita Children's Home, Kansas Children's Service League, and the Pando Initiative, among others.

Five product drives each year: hygiene supplies, school supplies, blankets, Christmas food and gifts, and diapers.

Youth ministry

Sunday School, a youth group, and an ecumenical Vacation Bible School with neighboring congregations form the parish's youngest members.

St. James also charters a Scouting America unit, and a number of young families have recently joined the parish.

Prison ministry

Parishioners supply greeting cards to men at the Winfield Correctional Facility so they can keep in touch with family and friends. The parish has also advocated for and given toward a Spiritual Life Center on the grounds.

For a candidate: *Outreach at St. James is public, long-running, and largely volunteer-run — the rector convenes and blesses the work rather than inventing it.*

Parish Life and Fellowship

How the parish gathers, forms, and welcomes — and how it shows up in the city







Gathering and hospitality

The Olde English Tea, held since 1921 and often called Kansas' biggest tea party, fills the parish hall on the first Saturday in May with silver service, homemade sweets, an English marketplace, and music.

Breakfast Sundays, shared dinners, and movie nights keep the table set the rest of the year.

Shoulder to shoulder

The Shrove Tuesday Oyster Dinner began in 1959 as the men's supper and opened to the whole community in 1979. Volunteers serve an all-you-can-eat meal, raising funds to support the Wichita Children's Home, and newcomers are seated and served like guests.

The same good humor turns out for Altar Guild, the lawn crew, and Creation Care, among others — fellowship that often wears work gloves.

Formation and the arts

The Guild Hall Players, a community theater company at home in Guild Hall, stage a season each year with parishioners and Wichitans on stage together.

Christian education meets between the Sunday services for every age, with adult formation and study groups alongside the children's classes with faith that attending becomes belonging.

> *"If someone comes to our door, we listen and try to help."*

> *"You can just be here."*

Invite Welcome Connect: since 2024 the parish has been implementing this Episcopal ministry of evangelism, hospitality, and belonging — laity-led work to turn a warm greeting into lasting connection.

For a candidate: *parish life at St. James is lay-built and outward-facing; these gatherings are where the parish is most itself, and where a new rector will meet the most people.*

Our People

An honest look at the congregation that will call the next rector

Long-tenured

membership often measured in decades

Young families

a small number, and growing

Faithfully giving

a broad, steady pledging base

A deeply rooted core

The congregation is largely long-tenured, stretching from newer members through legacy and lifelong families. That means deep institutional memory, real loyalty, and the stability to support a new rector well.

Welcoming the next generation

St. James is actively welcoming a steadily growing number of new young families and wants them to find a real home here — building on this momentum is work the next rector is being called to supplement and amplify.



For a candidate: *a stable, loyal, generous base ready to invest, paired with a clear-eyed call to welcome the next generation and help them belong.*

Strengths, Challenges, and Aspirations

What the congregation said about itself, in its own words

Our strengths

Genuine community: a warm welcome and real relationships, named again and again as our greatest strength.

Mutual congregation support: a parish that notices and tends to one another.

Reverent worship and music: well-led liturgy that anchors parish life.

Committed lay leadership: generous giving and a strong core of talented volunteers.

Our challenges

Growth and newcomers: sharing our faith and passion to help visitors become members, and members become friends — with particular attention to young families.

Pastoral care: the most-named skill priority is recognized and acknowledged as we actively build our capacity.

Formation for all ages: harnessing momentum and energy to expand programs for children, youth, and adults.

Sustaining volunteers: recognize; celebrate; recruit

Our aspirations

Support and grow all generations: help newcomers and young families find a lasting place here.

Deepen faith: connect to richer formation and discipleship at every age and stage.

Reach outward: celebrate and multiply visible service to the Wichita community.

Lead together: cultivate the talent around us to broaden and continue the legacy of lay leaders sharing the ministry.



For a candidate: *these are not weaknesses the parish is hiding — they are the work the congregation of St. James, in its own words, is calling a rector to help lead.*

What We Seek in Our Next Rector

Drawn directly from what parishioners ranked in the listening sessions

In ministry

Pastoral care: the parish already cares for its own — a rector who strengthens that work rather than carrying it alone.

Worship and preaching: reverent liturgy and preaching that feeds a congregation that values both.

Growth and formation: church growth alongside ministry with youth, young adults, children, and families.

Community and belonging: widening the circle with Invite Welcome, Connect, with the rector's presence felt in each part of that ministry.

In leadership

Collaborative: by far the most-selected leadership skill — a partner to work with, not a top-down director.

Adaptive to change: leading a rooted parish through real change without losing its heart.

Congregational development: helping the parish grow in number and in depth.

Developing leaders: inviting and sustaining the lay leaders who carry parish life.

In a sentence: St. James seeks a pastoral, collaborative, adaptable rector whose first gift is presence — a preacher and liturgist who will lead a beloved, rooted parish toward the next generation alongside its lay leaders.

For a candidate: *the congregation is quite clear about what it wants – a partner: a rector who leads from relationships will find the structure and the goodwill already in place.*



WHERE THIS MINISTRY HAPPENS

Wichita, Kansas

The city St. James calls home — what a prospective rector and family would find in the community, its churches, and its common life.

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH

Welcome to Wichita, Kansas

The city St. James calls home, and what it offers a new rector and family



A real city, at an unusual cost of living

Wichita is Kansas's largest city — about 400,000 residents in a metro of 650,000 — with the institutions of a much larger place and a cost of living below the national average.

Long the Air Capital of the World, it has one of the nation's most diverse manufacturing bases — Textron Aviation, Boeing, Koch Industries, strong local banks, and multiple major medical centers with university collaboration — with incubators and low operating costs drawing new ventures.

Getting around

Most commutes run about twenty minutes, and the airport has direct flights to major hubs. Kansas City is about 3 hours away; Tulsa and Oklahoma City about 2½.

Schools and study

Wichita Public Schools is the state's largest district, alongside parochial, private, and suburban options — plus Wichita State, Friends, and Newman universities.

Options for leisure

Parks and riverfront trails, kayaking, public golf, the Keeper of the Plains, the Sedgwick County Zoo, Exploration Place, Botanica, minor league baseball and pro hockey, and Old Town dining.

In short: *a mid-sized city where a rector's household can afford a home and find good schools, and still reach a concert, a play, a ballgame, or a gallery opening on a weeknight.*

The Wider Church at Work in Wichita

Episcopal ministries in the city, and the wider network of faith-rooted partners alongside them



Episcopal life in Wichita

Four parishes in the city: St. James, Good Shepherd, St. John's, and St. Stephen's — with St. Andrew's in Derby, St. Matthew's in Newton, and St. Jude's in Wellington close by.

The Diocese of Kansas: seated at Grace Cathedral in Topeka, supporting congregational development, formation, and youth ministry.

Episcopal Social Services: including Breakthrough, a clubhouse community for adults living with serious mental illness.

Saint Francis Ministries: begun in Kansas as an Episcopal ministry to children, now a major regional child-welfare agency.

Shelter and housing

HumanKind Ministries, Union Rescue Mission, The Salvation Army, and Catholic Charities' Harbor House carry the emergency shelter work; Breakthrough, Habitat for Humanity, and Mennonite Housing move people toward stable homes.

Hunger and basic needs

The Lord's Diner serves a hot meal 365 nights a year, United Methodist Open Door has met basic needs since 1965, and the Kansas Food Bank supplies pantries across 85 counties.

Interfaith and civic

HumanKind Ministries convenes congregations across traditions, United Way of the Plains runs the 211 helpline, and Justice Together unites some 40 congregations — St. James among them — to press officials on local needs.

What this means for a rector: *Episcopal ministries here are real and staffed, and the ecumenical partnerships around them are already built — outreach rarely has to start from scratch.*

Arts, Humanities, and Life Outside the Office

Professional companies, groups to join, and the events that mark the Wichita year



A performing-arts scene above its weight

The Wichita Symphony Orchestra, Wichita Grand Opera, Ballet Wichita, and Music Theatre Wichita — a nationally known summer company — perform here, with Broadway tours and touring artists at Century II, the Orpheum and INTRUST Bank Arena.

Most of it sits within a few blocks downtown — an easy evening out rather than an expedition.

Museums and galleries

The Wichita Art Museum holds a notable American collection, the Ulrich Museum anchors a large outdoor sculpture collection at Wichita State, and Final Friday opens downtown studios and the Fisch Haus artists' space monthly.

Groups to join

Mark Arts runs studio classes for all ages, while the Wichita Chamber Chorale and community stages — Wichita Community Theatre, ICT Theater, Kechi Playhouse, and the Guild Hall Players at St. James — welcome capable amateurs.

The annual rhythm

Wichita Riverfest fills the riverbank each spring, Shakespeare plays the parks in summer, and the Tallgrass Film Festival brings independent film downtown each autumn.

Worth saying plainly: *candidates ask what an ordinary Tuesday evening looks like here. It can look like a rehearsal, a gallery crawl, a ballpark, or a seat in the concert hall.*

Where to Look Next

Links for a candidate — and a candidate's family — to research Wichita firsthand

Church and diocese

Episcopal Diocese of Kansas
Find a parish in Kansas
Episcopal Social Services, Wichita
Saint Francis Ministries in Kansas

Community and service

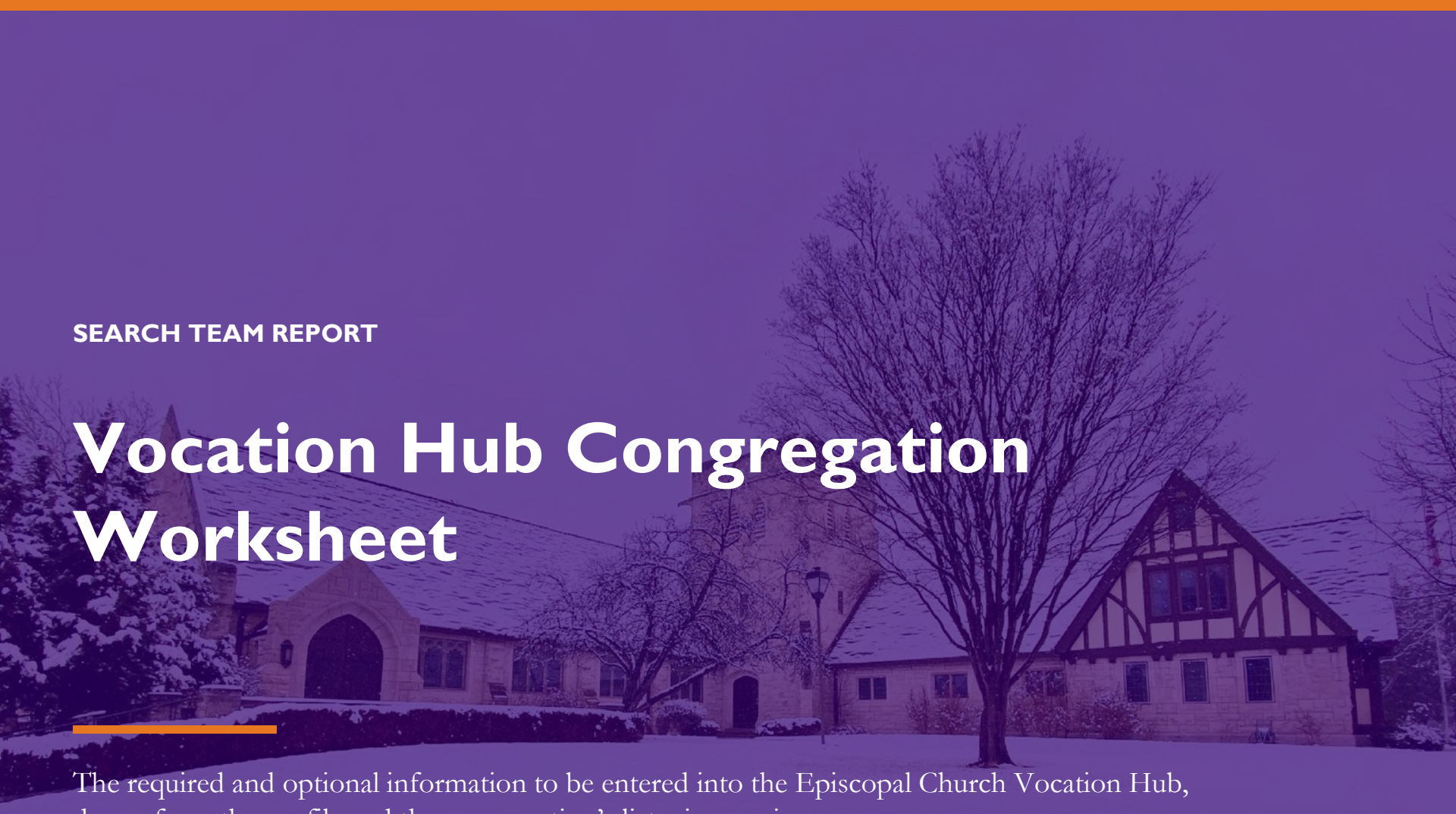
Catholic Charities · HumanKind Ministries
Union Rescue Mission · The Salvation Army
Breakthrough Wichita · Mennonite Housing
Habitat for Humanity · UM Open Door
Kansas Food Bank · The Lord's Diner
United Way of the Plains · Justice Together

Arts and humanities

Wichita Art Museum
Wichita Symphony Orchestra
Music Theatre Wichita
Wichita Grand Opera · Ballet Wichita
Mark Arts studio classes
Ulrich Museum of Art
Wichita Chamber Chorale · Orpheum Theatre
Wichita Riverfest
Tallgrass Film Festival

For a family moving here

Wichita Public Schools (USD 259)
Wichita State University
Sedgwick County Zoo
Exploration Place
Botanica, the Wichita Gardens
Housing market research (WSU)
Visit Wichita, things to do



SEARCH TEAM REPORT

Vocation Hub Congregation Worksheet

The required and optional information to be entered into the Episcopal Church Vocation Hub, drawn from the profile and the congregation's listening sessions.

THE Episcopal CHURCH

Preferred Candidate Narrative Questions

The questions the Vocation Hub asks us to answer about the priest we are seeking

FROM THE VOCATION HUB CONGREGATION WORKSHEET

"These questions from the Candidate Profile are especially important to our discernment as a Search Team."

The five questions we have selected

#1 How do you approach pastoral care in your ministry?

#2 How are you preparing yourself for the Church of the future?

#4 How have you experienced and addressed conflict in ministry?

#5 What has been your experience leading change in the Church?

#10 What theological convictions shape your ministry?

Candidates answer these narrative questions in the Vocation Hub; their responses are visible to the search committee.



Ministry Context

THE QUESTION *What are your community's hopes for this position, and what qualities in applicants will help you live into them?*

St. James is an active parish community with potential for growth. We want to serve as a welcoming visible presence for God's work in the complex larger Wichita community.

There are several complementary leadership attributes that our parish wants to see in our next Rector. This priest needs to be collaborative in the approach to leadership, eager to work with others, inviting them to share together their expertise, viewpoints, and insights. The rector will work with the Vestry and other leaders to shape goals and plans together, rather than prescribing a course of action. This priest should be responsive to evolving needs and circumstances and react with wise flexibility. When challenges and opportunities arise in the life of the church, the rector must be a trustworthy guide through change and transition. St. James' prays for a servant leader who lives out a faithful calling and commitment to loving service to all people as made in the image of God.

We hope that the next rector will be equipped to help the parish grow in our corporate health and engagement. We want a rector who recognizes gifts in others and cultivates them in current and emerging leaders. When conflict happens, we hope that our rector will respond with directness, interpersonal skill, and grace.

There are a variety of ministry skills that the parish hopes to see a new rector excel in or champion them in others in the parish. The members love warm, reverent leadership in liturgical worship and academic/theologically based preaching – thought-provoking while very relatable and practical. St. James looks for a rector who has a vision and, ideally, experience with promoting church growth. We are steadily growing the programs for children, younger families, youth, and young adults for an even more vibrant, visible, welcoming, loving community. The church seeks a prayerful rector who will model a genuine spirituality while helping others to listen for God's movement in their lives.

Desired Skills: Leadership

The leadership skills selected in the Vocation Hub, with definitions

LEADERSHIP SKILLS 5

- **Adaptive Leadership** — A rector who can read changing circumstances and respond wisely instead of relying on one fixed approach.
- **Collaborative Leadership** — A rector who works with others, invites shared wisdom, and does not lead as though everything depends on one person.
- **Congregational Development** — A rector who can help the parish become even healthier, more engaged, and more grounded in mission.
- **Leadership Development** — A rector who notices gifts in others and helps lay and staff leaders grow.
- **Servant Leadership** — A rector who leads from humility, service, and faithfulness rather than ego or control.



Listed alphabetically, not in priority order.

THE Episcopal CHURCH

Desired Skills: Ministry

The ministry skills selected in the Vocation Hub, with definitions

MINISTRY SKILLS 10

- **Academic / Theology** — A rector who is especially strong at Christian thought, theological depth, and helping people wrestle with faith seriously.
- **Child & Family Development** — A rector who is especially attentive to the spiritual life of children and the realities families face.
- **Church Growth** — A rector who can help the parish grow in numbers, engagement, visibility, and vitality.
- **Community Building** — A rector who helps people know one another, trust one another, and feel that they truly belong.
- **Pastoral Care** — A rector who is good at showing up for people in joy, illness, crisis, discernment, and ordinary life.
- **Prayer & Spirituality** — A rector who can help people deepen their relationship with God through prayer and spiritual practice.
- **Preaching** — A rector who can proclaim God's word clearly, faithfully, and compellingly in sermons.
- **Spiritual Direction** — A rector who is gifted at accompanying individuals as they listen for God's movement in their lives.
- **Worship & Liturgy** — A rector who can lead worship that is reverent, meaningful, well-prepared, and grounded in Episcopal tradition.
- **Youth / Young Adult Development** — A rector who can connect with younger generations and help them grow in faith, leadership, and belonging.



Listed alphabetically, not in priority order.

THE Episcopal CHURCH

REQUIRED NARRATIVES

Required Congregation Narratives

The six narrative responses the Vocation Hub requires of every congregation — mission and focus, ministry context, leadership, liturgical style, cultural identity and inclusion, and special projects.

THE Episcopal CHURCH

Our Mission and Focus

1,885 characters / 2,500 limit

"What is your organization's mission and focus?"

Describe your core mission and ministry priorities. What values guide your work, and what is your community or organization striving to embody in this season of ministry?

"Our mission is to worship and glorify God, proclaim the Gospel through word and deed, and serve our community and world as disciples of Christ." This mission is expressed each week through a simple premise: Whoever you are and wherever you find yourself on your journey of faith, you are welcome here.

Worship anchors everything else. Our common life is centered in reverent, God-focused worship as the Eucharist is celebrated at every weekend service, each reflecting a distinct expression of our shared Anglican tradition. Traditional and other forms of spiritual music enriches our worship and draws us more deeply into prayer.

We proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ. Scripture-based preaching invites reflection, spiritual growth, and faithful action in daily life. Faith formation takes place through Adult Forum, Education for Ministry (EfM), Bible studies, and programs for children and youth supported by gifted volunteers who are eager to partner with a rector in strengthening discipleship across generations.

We seek and serve Christ in all persons through partnerships with Episcopal Social Services (ESS) Breakthrough and St. Francis Ministries; members participate in Sandwich Saturday downtown, run the Pocket Change Ministry, and deliver food baskets and household supplies in Advent; a team works with the Justice Together coalition. Annual and seasonal events open our doors to hundreds of people who otherwise might not enter, and event proceeds support our community.

We respect the dignity of every human being. Welcome is more than a phrase to us: it is a core expression of our faith. No one is measured by what they might contribute or where they come from, and belonging here has never depended on believing or worshiping the way anyone else does. Those who arrive with hard questions or wounds from another tradition find a welcome here.

Our Ministry Context

2,412 characters / 2,500 limit

"How would you describe the ministry context?"

Share about the setting and community you serve. What are the unique characteristics of your context — such as urban, rural, or suburban dynamics; multi-faith or multicultural environments; community partnerships; or social and cultural factors that shape your ministry?

St. James stands at the corner of Roosevelt and Douglas Avenue in the historic College Hill (CH) neighborhood in east central Wichita. Douglas Avenue is one of the main arteries connecting east Wichita to the downtown business district. The CH neighborhood was developing in the 1920's when St. James' Church was built. The neighborhood is a mix of middle/upper middle class, early 20th century and mid-century homes. There are commercial properties on Douglas and other streets bordering CH. There is a large beautiful city park on Douglas very close to the church. This setting offers opportunities to engage people from a variety of backgrounds and life experiences while remaining rooted in a strong sense of neighborhood identity.

There are several other churches in the CH neighborhood or adjacent: Blessed Sacrament, a busy Roman Catholic parish with a parochial school, Plymouth Congregational, East Heights UMC, College Hill UMC, and Grace Presbyterian. All are active congregations. St. James is part of the Wichita Minster, a network of 5 Episcopal parishes and 2 support organizations previously mentioned. The closest of those parishes in distance (2 mi.) is the historic St. John's, downtown.

Wichita (pop. 400,000+) is a racially/ethnically diverse city. Approximately 60% is White, 17% Hispanic, 9% Black, and 14% other groups. There are many congregations in Wichita directly serving the Black and Hispanic communities - our efforts with them have been primarily through support organizations. Wichita has on-going challenges with homelessness, mental health issues, and gun violence. The parish has strong relationships with ESS Breakthrough and Justice Together, organizations dedicated to addressing systemic challenges and strengthening the broader community.
Our Associating Priest is CEO for ESS Breakthrough. Many of our parishioners volunteer in support of Justice Together, St. Francis Ministries and ESS.

Our parishioners come from throughout Wichita and the surrounding communities. The members' educational level is high with many having professional degrees. Many are deeply engaged in civic life, education, healthcare, business, the arts, and nonprofit service. While St. James benefits from the wisdom of many long-time members, we are also encouraged by growing participation among younger adults, families, and newcomers seeking a thoughtful and welcoming Episcopal community.

Our Approach to Leadership

1,726 characters / 2,500 limit

"How would you describe your congregational leadership culture?"

Reflect on how your community approaches leadership — what styles and qualities you value in clergy, how leadership is shared between clergy and laity, and how you navigate change and challenges.

At present, leadership is shared between laity and clergy, with a heavy emphasis on lay leadership. Our parish is too large for one rector to directly manage every ministry and event, thus lay leaders have stepped up to ensure things keep running smoothly. Our parish values collaboration, encourages emerging leaders, and cultivates new opportunities for service and discipleship. Many parishioners who have attended other churches in other dioceses/traditions state that the culture of shared leadership at St. James is among the parish's greatest strengths and they hope this tradition continues to flourish.

We have an active and engaged Vestry that is very supportive of our parish needs and of the role and mission of the rector. The unexpected death of our rector in 2025 was a profound loss for the congregation. As the parish grieved, members relied on one another, their faith, and the leadership of the Vestry to navigate a difficult season with compassion and care.

The sentiment in the parish is that the Vestry handled the transitional period well, and many gave special thanks and positive feedback for a town hall session in which the Vestry answered questions from the parish and made progress towards getting everyone on the same page, while letting those who felt pain express themselves and get answers from leadership. This was an important way to begin the healing process, with transparency and congregational involvement.

A particular strength of St. James historically has been as a consistent producer of seminarians. We have two active currently, and several more individuals in the discernment process already. Lay Eucharistic Ministers are present, and we try to be there for each other as a parish in times of need.

*From the Vestry - Following our previous rector's resignation and death, the diocese encouraged the vestry to work with our interim rector to reflect on parish leadership's role in those difficult days. Since then, the vestry has recognized signs of triangulation and conflict-avoidance that masked our rector's health issues and lack of energy. Having reflected upon and discussed those difficult times, the vestry has committed to leading the parish with healthier and more transparent communication patterns, including a new approved communication plan.

Our Liturgical Style and Practice

1,294 characters / 2,500 limit

"How would you describe your congregational liturgical styles and practice?"

Share how worship is shaped in your community — what influences your liturgical life, how you balance tradition and innovation, and how liturgy reflects your theology and context.

St. James parishioners greatly appreciate the weekly worship services of the Holy Eucharist with their reverent broad church liturgical practice and style. Weekly services are scheduled at 5:30 pm on Saturdays and 8:30 am and 10:45 am on Sundays. Saturday we conduct a Rite II, spoken word service with Eucharist. At 8:30 on Sunday we conduct a Rite I service with limited hymn singing. At 10:45 on Sunday we conduct a Rite II service accompanied by an adult vocal choir. Additionally, there is a volunteer adult handbell choir and there are supplemental instrumentalists on occasion. All hymns are from the 1982 Hymnal and Lift Every Voice and Sing, supporting worship that is both rooted in tradition and vibrant in participation.

St. James parishioners actively participate in the liturgical "work of the people." Worshippers can follow the order of the service with bulletins or the Book of Common Prayer. Congregational participation in the liturgy and hymns is strong. People are comfortable with sharing the Peace, venturing out of their pews to bless each other. There is a committed group of acolytes and Chalice Bearers. There is a very devoted Altar Guild. Lay leadership is visible throughout the liturgy and reflects the parish's long-standing commitment to shared ministry between clergy and laity.

Cultural Identity and Inclusion

832 characters / 2,500 limit

"How does your congregation approach cultural identity and inclusion?"

Reflect on how your community engages diverse cultural identities, fosters belonging, and responds to the needs of a diverse or evolving population.

While our congregation may not reflect every demographic represented across Wichita, parishioners share a deep commitment to serving neighbors and supporting those experiencing hardship. That commitment is expressed through generous support of outreach ministries, charitable initiatives, and community partnerships.

Given the desire to be welcoming, fostering a sense of belonging is a priority and a challenge. Knowing names is a first step. Newcomers are quickly given name tags and everyone is encouraged to wear them. Volunteers from the Welcome committee greet people when they enter the church. The Connect committee is working on promoting opportunities for social interaction.

We continue to develop intentional pathways that help newcomers become active participants in parish life, ministry, fellowship, and discipleship.

Special Projects and Opportunities

2,382 characters / 2,500 limit

"Other Information."

Share any additional details about the role or organization that would help candidates discern their fit — such as organizational culture, special projects, or unique opportunities and challenges.

In September 2024, the parish launched the INVITE/WELCOME/CONNECT project which mirrored successful strategies presented by the national program then customized for St. James. Lay leaders volunteered and working committees were formed. These committees have met periodically to set goals and put into action their plans. The Invite committee has done personal invitations, mailings, social media, and advertising at public events. The Welcome committee has welcomers at the door for services and other events, reestablished a coffee hour at services, and done receptions for Guild Hall Players (GHP) participants. The Connect committee has created an activities brochure, offered free movie nights, hosted the Greening of the Church, and worked in support of Second Sunday Breakfasts and other parish family events.

The Creation Care Team has taken on the maintenance of the beautiful parish gardens and building on a re-occurring basis. They have also made many presentations live, in print, and on-line.

Several annual popular public events are traditions at St. James. The annual Oyster Dinner and Olde English Tea, both organized and staffed by laity, draw people into the church for raising money for local charities. The GHP, supervised by a team including church members with theatre expertise, completed their 20th season of plays and musicals, performed by over 100 local artists and craft-people in front of over 1000 people from the area.

The parish is very excited to welcome and connect a steadily increasing number of youth and young families. As this vibrant ministry continues to flourish, we offer Sunday School on the first and third Sundays of each month at 9:30 a.m., providing opportunities for children to explore and grow in their faith. Children's Chapel is held during the 10:30 a.m. service on the first Sunday, while a family-friendly Family Service is offered on the third Sunday at 10:30 a.m. This summer St. James hosted an Ecumenical Vacation Bible School (VBS) that engaged children from several CH congregations run by our volunteers and others from those churches. The parish youth program was suspended in 2025 because of low participation and leaders stepping down. Recruiting volunteers and participants for these programs is very challenging, but with the gradual appearance of newcomers and returnees to the church, there is cautious hope for renewal.

Optional Congregation Narratives

The five additional responses we have chosen to answer — pastoral care, well-being, stewardship, accessibility and inclusion, and theology and spiritual identity.

Our Approach to Pastoral Care

1,140 characters / 2,500 limit

"How does your congregation approach pastoral care?"

Reflect on how your community walks with one another and with neighbors through life's joys and challenges — what guides your approach?

St. James values a visible, accessible, and compassionate pastoral presence that helps people navigate both life's celebrations and challenges. Our approach is rooted in the belief that pastoral care is a shared ministry.

As is the case in many Episcopal churches, pastoral care never seems fully adequate to meet the needs of the congregation, and St. James is no different. In response, we have expanded our ministry of care by increasing the involvement of our deacon following his retirement from the teaching profession. He now provides more frequent hospital and home visits and is leading the effort to identify, train, and support additional lay Eucharistic visitors.

Pastoral care at St. James extends beyond clergy leadership. Parishioners deeply appreciate the care provided by our lay ministers and volunteers, recognizing that pastoral care is not the sole responsibility of the rector, but of the whole faith community. Members of the congregation share in the ministry of caring for one another through times of illness, grief, transition, and celebration, and we are seeking a rector to lead, guide, and direct that ministry to ensure its continued growth and success.

Sustaining Our Well-Being

1,771 characters / 2,500 limit

"How does your congregation sustain its spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being?"

Ministry is deeply meaningful and often demanding. Share how your community nurtures its collective health and sense of call.

Our congregation seeks to sustain a healthy and vibrant parish life through worship, fellowship, and shared ministry. Prayer is central to our community. Twice a year we offer Choral Evensong in the Anglican tradition offering opportunities for reflection, renewal, and connection with God.

During Lent, we re-introduced a weekly Rite I service of morning prayer providing a meaningful expression of our Anglican tradition. The addition of Children's Chapel beginning this month on Sunday mornings reflects our dedication to welcoming and forming our youngest members in a way that is engaging and age-appropriate.

Our parish also finds joy in gathering beyond Sunday worship. Community events such as Woofstock bring together parishioners, neighbors, and their beloved animals in a celebration of creation, hospitality, and fellowship. At St. James, parish events including the annual Blessing of the Pets, book club, Oyster Dinner, English Tea, church gardening, Sunday coffee hour, and breakfast provide opportunities to build relationships, strengthen our community, and celebrate our shared life of faith.

Our commitment to long-term sustainability is reflected in our successful 100th Anniversary Capital Campaign, which raised significant support for major facility improvements, building repairs, and Outreach Ministries. Looking ahead, we have already begun setting aside funds annually toward our 200th Anniversary celebration in 2120. The centennial also included special events and a commemorative hymn, strengthening parish fellowship and identity.

In terms of physical well-being St. James does not currently have any established practices; however, our parish understands the importance of physical well-being and look forward to re-starting in the future.

Stewardship at St. James

1,715 characters / 2,500 limit

"What does stewardship mean to your congregation, and how do you practice it?"

Describe how your community approaches generosity, resource management, and financial discipleship.

Stewardship at St. James genuinely encompasses "time, talent, and treasure." Parishioners demonstrate remarkable generosity through financial giving, volunteer leadership, service, and active participation in parish life.

We are very grateful for how we are able to use the resources God has provided. The congregation has demonstrated a long history of faithful financial stewardship. Parishioners consistently support the parish through generous annual commitments and regular giving. The Vestry and parish leadership are committed to responsible financial oversight, thoughtful planning, and transparent management of resources.

Financial stewardship campaigns are in the Fall and rather low-key. Many express thanks for a campaign that is more spiritually focused and not aggressive or manipulative. In addition to mailings, a centerpiece has been laity sharing during worship services what the ministry of St. James means to them and why they give. The stewardship campaign ends in November with an in-gathering and blessing of pledges during worship.

An elected Endowment Fund Board oversees the "St. James Perpetual Memorial and Endowment Fund" and the St. James Church Legacy Society. The Endowment provides an important foundation for future ministry and supports both parish initiatives and outreach efforts.

One of the greatest expressions of stewardship at St. James is the generous sharing of time and talent. Dozens of ministries are sustained by dedicated volunteers who serve in worship, formation, outreach, hospitality, governance, music, and pastoral care. Another way parishioners contribute their time and talents include serving on diocesan boards, planning committees, and board of directors for ESS.

Accessibility and Inclusion

2,204 characters / 2,500 limit

"How does your congregation incorporate accessibility and inclusion in your shared life?"

Share how your community strives to create welcoming, inclusive spaces for people of all abilities, backgrounds, and experiences.

St. James is committed to creating a parish environment where people of all abilities can participate fully in worship, fellowship, learning, and ministry. In the 2000s, a long railed ramp with a comfortable slope was installed alongside the main interior entrance to the Nave. This ramp goes down from the ground level to the lower-level education wing and the main public restrooms. In the second stage of the remodel, those restrooms were made fully handicapped accessible.

Over the last 5 years we've made the church more accessible to those in wheelchairs and those who have walkers. A portion of the middle pews were removed to allow wheelchairs/walkers to be accessible in the middle of the Nave. During Communion, ushers notify the Celebrant and Chalice Bearer about people with mobility concerns to administer the elements. While not commonly utilized, we do provide hearing assistance devices upon request.

This summer an elevator accommodating a wheelchair and up to 2 additional people has been installed to the south basement. An elevator to the second floor is being installed to be completed in early 2027 and the second floor restrooms have been upgraded to be ADA compliant.

St. James is regarded as an accepting spiritual home by those who attend in the queer community. The parish is described as a safe place to just "be," allowing individuals to be as open or as private as they choose about their sexual orientation or gender identification. Many parishioners have found at St. James a community marked by compassion, hospitality, and acceptance. Some long-term members have encouraging stories about their own coming-out with the support of this community. Gay couples, some with children, are a commonplace part of the parish. St. James has been a welcome haven for several going through gender identity transition. Many LGBTQ+ people are in leadership or support positions at St. James and their queer status is seen as just another aspect of their identity. Some, including allies, say the parish should work to be more visible in the Wichita queer community to let others know this is such a good spiritual place to be.

Our Theology and Spiritual Identity

1,752 characters / 2,500 limit

"Describe your congregation's theology or spiritual identity."

Reflect on key moments or experiences that have shaped or challenged your congregation's theological understanding or self-identity.

Our identity is well expressed by "Whoever you are and wherever you find yourself on your journey of faith, you are welcome here," and by the words of the baptismal covenant: We "proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ, seek and serve Christ in all persons, strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being." Our identity is rooted in inclusive orthodoxy from the pulpit, with sermons always centered on the Scripture readings from the Bible. We place a strong emphasis on the openness of the Eucharist, and host events that engage other denominations, as well as the secular community in our city.

The central spiritual identity of St. James is one of compassion. Seekers, questioners, and those exploring spiritual questions all find a place within our community. In addition to our inclusivity, this shows itself through our ministries: we do many works of mercy in the community, ministering to the poor, the sick, the homeless, and children in need. While parishioners bring a variety of perspectives and experiences, we are united by our shared faith in Christ and our commitment to worship, service, and community.

The liturgy and the Scriptures aid in promoting growth of diverse thinking. As a congregation predominantly of college-educated people, we appreciate preaching that one "can chew on," and we aren't afraid to grapple with difficult topics; however, we celebrate the fact that our leaders rarely, if ever, tell people that they must interpret Scripture a certain single way. It is seen as a point of strength that we recognize and appreciate learning traditional interpretations, but welcome alternate points of view, so long as they do not threaten the dignity of others.