

The Annual Report of
St. James Episcopal Church
For the Year 2024



Presented at the 129th Annual Parish Meeting
Sunday, January 12, 2025



ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
A joyful, inclusive community

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Table of Contents

AGENDA FOR THE 129th ANNUAL PARISH MEETING	3
CLERGY, STAFF, AND VESTRY MEMBERS DURING 2024	4
OFFICIAL ACTS IN 2024	5
RECTOR'S REPORT	6
SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT	8
JUNIOR WARDEN REPORT	8
DEANERY REPORT	9
TREASURER'S REPORT	10
FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT	13
STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT	14
ST. JAMES PLEDGING HOUSEHOLDS FOR 2025	15
VITAL+THRIVING PROGRAM	16
WOMEN'S CIRCLE REPORT	17
ALTAR GUILD REPORT	17
FLOWER GUILD	18
MEDITAITON GROUP	18
FAITH IN ACTION	19
GARDENING GUILD REPORT	20
LITURGICAL MINSTRERS	21
HEALING PRAYER MINISTRY	21
LECTIO DIVINIA GROUP	22
HOSPITALITY REPORT	22
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	22
MUSIC REPORT	23
BREAD ROTA REPORT	23
VESTRY CANDIDATES	24
DEANERY AND DIOCESAN CONVENTION CANDIDATES	27
MINUTES OF THE 128th ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - JANUARY 21, 2024	29

Agenda for the 129th Annual Parish Meeting

1. Call to Order & Prayer
2. Organizational Matters
 - Appointment of Clerk of the Meeting – Tracey Thomas
 - Certification of quorum
 - Appointment of Parliamentarian – John Harrison
 - Certification of Minutes of the 128th Annual Parish Meeting
3. Rector's Report – the Rev. John Kirkley
4. Senior Warden's Report/Rector Transition – Jan Vennari
5. Junior Warden Report/MEP Presentation – the Rev. John Kirkley & Ryszard Pochron
6. Treasurer's Report/Chow Bequest – Doug Bewsher & Tom Matthews
7. New Business
 - a. Revisions to the Parish By-laws
 - b. Presentation & Election of Vestry/Deanery Candidates
8. Volunteer Recognition
9. Open Floor
10. Closing Prayer

Please read the annual report for more details about our ministries in 2024 at St. James.

St. James Mission Statement

*To bring an ever increasing number of people
into an ever closer relationship with Jesus Christ
so that God's love may be a transforming force
for the community in which we live.*

Clergy, Staff and Vestry Members During 2024

Clergy

The Reverend John Kirkley, *Rector*
The Reverend Gwen Buehrens, *Priest Associate*
The Reverend Shari Young, *Priest Associate*

Vestry

Doug Bewsher, *Treasurer*
Jan Vennari, *Senior Warden*
Ryszard Pochron, *Junior Warden*
Helen Archer-Dusté
Mary Balmana
Jim Dycus
Tom Matthews
Eleanor Scott
Tracy Thomas, *Clerk*
Warren Wong

Staff

Jack Mills, *Parish Administrator*
Margaret Fondbertasse, *Accompanist*
Katherine Nägele-Lin, *Cantor*

Official Acts in 2024: Saint James Episcopal Church

Official Acts in 2024: Saint James Episcopal Church

Baptisms: 0 (4 last year)

Confirmations & Reaffirmations: 0 (0 last year)

Marriages: 1 (0 last year)

Tom McNamara & Claire Penzel

Memorials: 2 (3 last year)

Isabel Conte
Fern Marder

Celebrations of Holy Communion: 117 (117 last year)

Sundays – 105
Weekdays & Holy Days – 6
Private – 6

All other offices & services: 120 (109 last year)

Daily Office – 119
Other – 1

Average Sunday Attendance – 59 (60 last year)

Easter Attendance – 142 (154 last year)
Christmas Attendance – 126 (79 last year)

Rector's Report

2024

St. James continues to be a healthy congregation with a promising future. Our participation in Vital & Thriving, a diocesan sponsored congregational development program, has fostered collaboration with our neighbors and is exploring ways to build on the work of our Faith in Action Team. From conducting a successful sock drive, monthly volunteer support, and annual fundraising for Project Homeless Connect; to sponsoring and advocating for refugee families; and hosting a successful candidate forum for District One Supervisor candidates, we continue to be an outward facing congregation. St. James also made grants from our Outreach Fund to Episcopal Community Services and Sojourn Chaplaincy at San Francisco General Hospital.

One of the most significant changes this past year has been the transition to a new model of music program leadership and children's ministry at the 10 am worship service. We moved from a single Music Director position, to a two-person team of an accompanist and a cantor. We are fortunate to have Margaret Fondbertasse and Katherine Nägele-Lin in these roles. They are both gifted musicians, team players, and consummate professionals. Along with our dedicated volunteer choir, we have a solid foundation for the future of our music program.

Given our small number of families with young children, we also adapted the liturgy at 10 am to be more welcoming of children, including a weekly Children's Story before the sermon in lieu of Sunday school. This is working well, and we have a wonderful team of story tellers. It has added an element of joy and welcome to our worship, and challenges us to be inclusive of all ages as we sing and pray together. Our healing prayer ministry is a source of consolation and occasional miracles. Worship is the center of our common life, and it is a blessing to see attendance slowly growing in the second half of 2024, and new people joining us. I continue to be indebted to the Rev. Shari Young for her volunteer ministry of preaching, prayer, and pastoral care.

We also continue to foster the spiritual growth of adults in our community through a variety of weekly and seasonal opportunities to pray and study together. One of the most significant developments in this regard has been a growing collaboration with the Mary of Pentecost Community (MPC). MPC is an inclusive Catholic congregation that is part of the Association of Women Catholic Priests. They worship monthly at St. James (3rd Wednesday at 6 pm.) This past year, we shared a Lenten program and Holy Week Services with MPC, two quiet day retreats, and a summer book study. We also hosted the ordination service for one of their priests! I hope that this collaboration will continue and grow.

At St. James, we are blessed with strong lay leadership across the board. I'm particularly grateful for our vestry, especially our outgoing members: Senior Warden Jan Vennari, Junior Warden Ryszard Pochron, and Mary Balmana. They have given countless hours in service to our community. Managing the resources of our congregation is a sacred trust, and a constant challenge with our 100 year old buildings. Our Treasurer, Doug Bewsher, and our Finance Chair, Tom Matthews, have provided solid, shared leadership in this area. I am thrilled that they have agreed to continue serving in this capacity in 2025.

I also want to acknowledge the extraordinary service Elia Pochron has provided as the executor of the estate of Oi Yun Chow, of which St. James was a major beneficiary. Elia's stewardship of Oi Yun's generous gift to St. James of more than \$1.65 million will provide the resources to meet our medium-term needs for capital improvements to the church's buildings and grounds. And I would be remiss not to mention yet another Pochron – Erazm Pochron – whom we have employed as a contractor to oversee the Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing infrastructure project that is underway. Erazm has been a great asset in managing a complicated project with multiple players.

In my own ministry, I have assumed a larger role in diocesan leadership. I concluded my second year as a member of the Executive Council of the diocese in January 2023, and am serving as co-chair of the Strategic Visioning Committee, working closely with our new bishop, the Rt. Rev. Austin Rios. I plan to bring this work to its initial conclusion in October 2025, even though I will be retiring earlier in 2025.

My last Sunday with you will be March 2, the last Sunday after the Epiphany. Thereafter, I will be on sabbatical until my official retirement date of June 30, 2025. I am delighted that the Rev. Ron Willis will serve as part-time sabbatical priest, beginning March 3 through June 30. Thereafter, the vestry will be selecting a full-time Interim Rector to serve until the completion of the search process for the 9th rector of St. James. Next year's vestry will be guided by the capable leadership of Helen Archer-Dusté, who has agreed to serve as Senior Warden.

We will gather on March 1 at 3 p.m. for a Solemn Evensong with Bishop Austin to celebrate my retirement, followed by a festive dinner reception. Please mark your calendar to join us, so that I can share my heartfelt gratitude and bittersweet leave-taking with you then.

Senior Warden Report

Submitted by Jan Vennari

While 2023 was largely a year of reflection and renewal, 2024 was more formative—maybe even rejuvenating. We built on what we love and do best while continuing to explore new directions. Here are several stand-out areas that the vestry focused on this year.

We evaluated a comprehensive building program to upgrade many of the aging mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems in our three buildings. Much of the work will literally be behind the walls so we won't see it, but it's important work to "take care our house" and improve safety for the St. James Preschool and all who are part of our community. We are blessed to have Erazm Pochron acting as project manager.

The generous property bequest we received from the Oi Yun Chow Estate provides a unique financial picture for St. James and our future. Elia Pochron, as executor of the estate, was hugely instrumental in orchestrating the receipt of this gift, and Tom Matthews graciously represented St. James through the sales process.

Early in the year, the vestry continued discernment based on insights and direction from the Vital + Thriving program. This resulted in identifying our missional challenge which Petrina Grube and the newly formed Missional Innovation Team are using to find opportunities to connect with others in our community. This discernment also highlighted other areas of importance to us, such as the role of music in our worship. Music at the 10:00 service has been greatly enhanced with the addition of Margaret Fondbertasse as our permanent accompanist and Katherine Nägele-Lin as our cantor.

Lastly, John's announcement of early retirement was unexpected for many of us. We've seen John grow so meaningfully as our pastor, spiritual guide, and leader that it's hard to imagine St. James without him. His notice gives us time to get used to the idea of him leaving, to grieve, to reflect, to plan, and not too long from now, to say our goodbyes. But thankfully, not just yet!

John made it easy for me to be senior warden, thanks to his vision, spiritual wisdom, organization, and his care for us. St. James is an amazing community of love, friendship, spirituality—dedicated to building a beloved community right here. I'm so grateful to be part of it.

Junior Warden's Report

Submitted by Ryszard Pochron

- * The onsite storm drain has been repaired. This is a major accomplishment.
- * The church elevator is requiring more work or replacement.
- * The church heater unit recently worked on, is not functioning properly.
- * The courtyard Lynch Gate is still difficult to open after a major retrofit.

Erazm Pochron was hired to work with Architect, Beth Morris and MEP Contractors, to oversee the plans for an upgrade remodel project for the St. James community.

Deanery Report

Submitted by Warren Wong

Deanery Convocation

The 2024 delegates to the Diocesan Convention were Warren Wong (convener) and Mary Balmana with alternates Kristen Huber and St. John Barned-Smith. We are one of 16 congregations in the San Francisco Deanery with two delegates and two alternates representing us at the quarterly Deanery convocation.

The deanery meetings comprised four hybrid Zoom sessions plus an in-person summer potluck social activity with Bishop Austin Rios. This year's programs included delegate orientation, ministry formation, budget reports, nominations, resolutions, grants, and other preparation work for the Diocesan Convention.

The deanery officers were president Rev. Hannah Cornthwaite (St. Cyprians), vice-president - laity Regina Walton (Grace Cathedral), vice president - clergy Rev. Kira Austin-Young (St. Mary the Virgin), secretary Gretchen Lintner (St. Mary the Virgin), and treasurer Peter Fairfield (St. Aidan's). The two deanery representatives to the DioCal Executive Council were Father John Kirkley (St. James – until 12/2025) and Ms. Christine Bensen (Grace Cathedral - until 12/2026).

At the final deanery convocation, we elected the Rev. Kira Austin-Young (VP of clergy) and Gretchen Lintner (secretary) to full 2-year terms. Both serve at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in neighboring Cow Hollow.

Bishop Transition

- The Rev. Austin K. Rios, rector of St. Paul's Within the Walls in Rome, Italy, was elected as Bishop Coadjutor-Elect on the 2nd Ballot on December 2, 2023. He subsequently received the required canonical consent churchwide.
- On May 4, 2024, the Rt. Rev. Austin K. Rios was consecrated Bishop Coadjutor by Rt. Rev. Diane Jardine Bruce - Chief Consecrator and assisted by 20+ bishops during an Ordination Service at Grace Cathedral.
- During Trinity/St. Peter's Church's 175th Anniversary Service, the diocesan community celebrated Bishop Marc H. Andrus's final service on July 20, 2024, with a retirement event in San Francisco.
- Bishop Austin K. Rios formally was installed and seated during a special service at Grace Cathedral on August 11, 2024.

175th Diocesan Convention (October 25 - 26, 2024)

Bishop Austin presided over his first DioCal Convention. The Diocese of California received five resolutions and three canonical amendments. The proposed 2024 DioCal Budget was approved, and action was taken on the four resolutions and three amendments to the diocesan canons. Warren Wong completed a short 2.5-year term opting not to continue on the Standing Committee. Thus, creating an extra lay seat, so one clergy, and two lay representatives were

elected. The Executive Council elected two large seats with nominees from four different deaneries (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, and San Francisco).

Starting in September 2024, Bishop Austin began a yearlong Strategic Vision Process Discerning God's Future for the Diocese of California: this Strategic Vision Process is underway. The Executive Council of the Diocese of California established a Strategic Vision Committee (SVC) to foster long-term planning and is chaired by Father John Kirkley. More can be found at <https://www.diocal.org/?s=DioCal+Strategic+Vision+Process+>

Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Doug Bewsher

2024 has been a consistent year for St. James on the operating side, with financial outcomes that broadly align with our budget in an overall position of financial strength. As we move into 2025 we will have a number of changes, but plan to have a balanced budget for the year.

2024 Revenue (\$353,000 for 2024)

Our estimated 2024 Revenue was below plan, driven by lower than budgeted rental income. We also need to aim to fulfil all the outstanding 2024 pledges as we move into 2025.

- In a challenging San Francisco commercial real estate market, we experienced lower occupancy, with units/offices remaining un-rented throughout the year. While this reflects broader market trends in commercial leasing rather than specific issues with our spaces, we continue to prioritize efforts to maximize occupancy in the coming year.
- A significant positive development was the successful renegotiation of the Preschool rental contract. This adjustment reflects our strategic focus on long-term sustainability for our rental revenue streams, aligns their rates more closely with market comparables, and will lead to increased rental income over the next two years as the adjustments are phased in. This represents a significant step toward ensuring the sustainability of our rental revenue streams. Together with the underperformance in the room rentals, our rental income was \$14,000 below budget.
- Also on the positive side we achieved our fundraising event goal for the second consecutive year, raising over \$11,000—a testament to the incredible dedication and generosity of our community.

2024 Expenses (\$362,197 for 2024)

Estimated Expenses for 2024 were very much in line with the budget, reflecting careful management across all categories. A key highlight was the successful hiring of both an outstanding Music Director and a talented Choralist, strengthening our music program and enriching our community's worship experience.

2024 Net Operating Loss

The reduced rents resulted in a \$9,000 shortfall on an operating basis. In addition, we have not yet collected a number of pledges from before 2024 (\$10,651) which we chose to write off.

Finally the Vestry in December 2023 chose to put 2024's annual distribution from the endowment fund (\$19,000) towards the building fund this year, leading to an operating loss of \$19,727 for the year. While this loss for 2024 is significant, it stems from unpaid pledges and maintaining occupancy of the rental properties - both which are key to achieving an ongoing Operating Profit before any endowment distributions.

2024 Capital Accounts

Our overall Assets continued to strengthen in 2024, with St James ending the year with \$951,000 in our Endowment Fund and \$73,000 in our building fund. With the upcoming sale of bequeathed property in hopefully Q1 2025, netting potentially over \$1.5 million, this puts us in a strong capital position and to be able to cover the planned investment in building improvements and our annual distribution to support the operating fund. .

Looking Ahead to 2025

2025 is going to be a year of change. However, the outlook for St James on the financial side looks good to manage through the year.

2025 Planned Income

Our budget foresees a similar income from contributions, rents and fundraising in 2025 as 2024, supported by a distribution from the Endowment of around \$24,000, based on the formula in the endowment fund policy for annual distribution at the start of each year, leading to a total income of \$372,000 for 2025.

2025 Budgeted Expenses

On the expenses side, we are planning on the costs of a "Sabbatical" Priest during the period of Sabbatical between when John begins his sabbatical and his formal retirement date of June 30, 2025. This is not covered in our operating expense as it is a one off item related to when a Sabbatical is taken and we continue to pay the Rector while on Sabbatical which is part of our operating expense. We have then planned for an interim priest beginning from July 1st during our search process. Though the exact costs associated with this are yet to be finalized for the latter part of 2025, we are confident in our ability to manage these expenses within our overall financial plan.

In addition to inflation, there are a few other items (benefits, etc) that will increase our operating expenses slightly in 2025 to \$373,000. We plan no major operating expense increases or changes in 2025, as we go through the search process.

2025 Operating Break Even.

Between our planned income, endowment distribution and expected expenses, we are planning a break even year for 2025. No doubt there will be changes throughout the year, but we are in a good position to adapt as needed.

Closing Thoughts

St. James is in a strong position as we navigate these transitions and opportunities. Our financial foundation, bolstered by prudent planning and a growing endowment, ensures we can adapt to changes while continuing to serve our community. For those interested in a deeper dive into our finances, including our income, spending plans, and capital outlook, I invite you to join me for Pie Sunday, where I'll provide more detailed insights and answer your questions.

Thank you all for your continued generosity, support, and engagement.

Note: the numbers in this report and the attached financial report are year end estimates as we have not yet closed the books for 2024.

	2023 ACT	2024 BUD	2024 Estimate	2025 BUD (draft)
Contributions				
Pledge	192,443	210,000	210,000	210,000
Plate Offerings	6,465	6,500	6,124	6,000
Memorials	826	4,000	4,000	4,000
General donations	14,332	10,000	8,207	5,000
Total Contributions	214,066	230,500	228,331	225,000
Total Designated Use	4,284	2,000	6,184	3,500
Total Special Events & Holidays	6,963	5,000	4,070	5,000
Total Fundraising Events	12,511	12,000	11,062	10,000
Total Rent	99,820	117,722	103,474	105,336
Total Endowment				24,000
Total Revenue	337,644	367,222	353,121	372,836
Total Salaries	138,274	143,332	138,454	136,763
Total Other Personnel Costs	52,479	53,718	54,277	60,831
Total Music	2,778	2,000	3,553	2,450
Total Other Clergy Expenses	52,547	50,949	51,743	53,854
Total Liturgical	2,960	4,250	3,340	3,500
Total Spiritual Life	3,920	5,300	2,638	3,770
Total Outreach	6,722	1,000	4,103	4,000
Total General Administrative Costs	53,788	57,361	57,290	59,732
Total Building and Grounds	42,917	44,987	46,549	48,411
Miscellaneous	0	250	250	250
Total Expenses	356,385	363,147	362,197	373,561
Total Asset Write Off (Pledges)			10,651	
Operating Profit	-18,741	4,075	-19,727	-724

Finance Committee Report

Submitted by Tom Matthews

The Finance Commission is the group that oversees the finances of St James' Episcopal Church – including the operating fund, building fund, outreach fund, and endowment fund.

The Commission meets quarterly, with additional meetings as necessary. The commission met 4 times in 2024 in this capacity.

During 2024, our work included the following –

- Completed renewal of lease agreement with SJPS – effective 1st July 2024
- Review of the insurance coverage of the Church – including renewal, consideration of higher deductible, and ensuring adequacy of coverage.
 - Will be moving to a higher deductible to balance coverage with costs in steps – from \$1k in 2024, to \$5k in 2025, to \$25k when MEP project is completed (e.g., water valve shut off and fire alarm – to mitigate damage / enhance safety)
- Reviewed acquiring earthquake insurance – and, recommended to decline / vestry approved based on cost of premium
- Review, update, rebalance investment allocation for building and endowment funds – including adding a socially responsible fund (rebalancing normally done in late Spring / early Summer – but, in 2024 completed in December)
- Review and retain coverage of the Balboa flats that were bequeathed to us very generously in Oi Yun Chow's estate.
- Readyng and commencing sale of Balboa flats
- Participated in MEP building design planning

The following individuals are on the committee:

- ◆ Tom Matthews – Chair, St. James' Finance Commission
- ◆ Doug Bewsher, Treasurer
- ◆ Carla Cooper
- ◆ Alan Le Blanc

The oversight of the finance area includes the following:

- ◆ Review/monitor budget – including monitoring variances from budget, and review of expense and income items

- ◆ Review/discuss cash flow
- ◆ Review/discuss financial issues as needed
- ◆ Review insurance needs/coverage
- ◆ Advise on financial considerations – including lease negotiations
- ◆ Approve financial adjustments during year to budget (subject to vestry approval)
- ◆ Oversee weekly counting process, rota, and training
- ◆ Investment allocation of building fund and endowment fund – including annual rebalancing to adhere to investment allocation target

Our annual task/checklist of events also includes the following:

- ◆ Complete Prior Year Pledge Campaign (1st Q)
- ◆ Complete Parochial Report
- ◆ Communicate Performance/Needs/Requirements of Church (1st Q) – Pie Sunday
- ◆ Complete Audits (1st Q)
- ◆ Review Pledge Tracking System (2nd Q)
- ◆ Chart of Accounts review (3rd Q)
- ◆ Assist in Determining 2008 Stewardship Target (3rd Q)
- ◆ Lock in Next Year Stewardship targets (3rd Q)
- ◆ Craft Next Year Church budget (3rd Q)
- ◆ Monitor Stewardship Campaign (3rd/4th Q)
- ◆ Draft Annual Report (4th Q)
- ◆ Adjust/Finalize Next Year Budget (4th Q)
- ◆ Present Next Year Budget to Vestry for Approval (4th Q)

Please do not hesitate to talk to me at any time if you have any questions or concerns.

Stewardship Committee Report

Submitted by The Rev. John Kirkley

Many thanks to committee members Ann Alpers, Carla Cooper, Dave Davies, Blake Hallanan, Tracey Thomas and the Rev. John Kirkley. Highlights of the year included a very successful Harvest Festival fundraising event in September, which raised more than \$10,000. Our Fall Pledge Campaign has secured pledges totaling \$195,000 as of December 31, 2024, with a goal of \$210,000 in pledges for 2025. We still anticipate some pledges coming in. Please see the list of pledging households below, and let us know if you wish to make a pledge if we have not yet received it.

In addition, St. James received a significant bequest from the estate of Oi Yun Chow in 2024: a 3-unit residential property at 3009-3011 Balboa Street. The property is currently in escrow pending final sale. The proceeds are designated for St. James Endowment Fund per the bequest. We all owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Elia Pochron, who is serving as trustee of the estate and has managed a very complex process. Tom Matthews, our Finance Committee chair, has overseen the sale of the property on our behalf.

If you have not yet included St. James in your will or estate plan, please consider doing so.

St. James Pledging Households for Year 2025

**As of 01/12/2024

Thank you for your generosity and loving support of St. James Church!

Ann Alpers
Jim Anderson and Sin Yi Chan
Helen Archer-Dusté and Marc Dusté
Auntie Fe Baldonado
Mary Balmana
Sinjin Barned-Smith
Brooke Bengier and David Lydon
Doug Bewsher and Alessia Pesciaioli
The Rev. Gwen and Rev. John Buehrens
Deidre Brodeur-Coen and Michael Coen
Kathy Crosby
Heather and Dave Davies
Sandra Dratler
Jim Dycus
Tracy Edmonson and Wesley Skow
Peter Fish and Anne Johnson
Robert Foster
Jim French
The Rev. John Gallagher
Scott Golde and Chau Tai
Jim and Martha Gregg
Blake Hallanan
John Harrison
Christie Higgins
Noreen and Nelson Huey
Kirstin and Gaby Huiber
The Rev. John Kirkley and Andrew Aldrich
Peter Krag and Mary Ann Buxton-Krag
Ryan and Allen LeBlanc
Tom Matthews and Ann Rieger-Matthews
Pat and Richard Mayer
David and Patrice Miller
Charles and Natalie Neal
Wy and Kevin O'Connor
Grant Paul
Elia and Ryszard Pochron
Erazm and Mira Pochron
Rose Scarff

Lynn Sondag
Margaret Stark-Roberts and John Anglim
Harriette and Myles Stevens
Jette Swan
Tracy Thomas
Jan and Patrick Vennari
Barbara Webb
Roger Wickstrom and Petrina Grube
Ed Wilcox
Sally and Steven Winn
Warren Wong
The Rev. Shari Young

**If you have made a pledge and do not see your name on this list, please contact the church office

Vital + Thriving Report

Submitted by Petrina Grube, Jan Vennari and Helen Archer-Dusté

Sponsored by the Diocese of California, Vital + Thriving is a multi-year program to foster congregational revitalization and missional creation of the Beloved Community. In 2024, the St. James' congregation participated in these developmental phases.

At the January 2024 Vestry Retreat, we discussed the key themes from the Congregational Discernment event held in Nov. 2023. We identified functions for which the Vestry would be responsible and defined an initial high level missional challenge for our Missional Innovation Team: *“Serving as a convener to address community and social justice issues.”* This missional challenge will continue to be refined as we develop connections with community partners and discern where the Holy Spirit is leading us.

Actions in 2024 included:

- Recruited key members for the Missional Innovation Team (MIT). Petrina Grube continued from the initial Steering Committee to serve in this next phase, along with new members Blake Hallanan, Wy O'Connor, Leo Balambao and Roger Wickstrom.
- The MIT has met regularly throughout 2024, conducted several community connection interviews, and continued to explore where and how the Holy Spirit is guiding us.
- The MIT and Vestry representatives attended the April and Oct. 2024 ingathering events sponsored by Vital + Thriving as well as holding a consultation with the V+T leadership in November.
- In partnership with Project Homeless Connect and the St. James Preschool, the MIT sponsored a sock drive in Dec 2024.

We invite congregational participation in these efforts in the coming year as we continue to explore how St. James is being called to partner with others in our wider community to be a vital and thriving part of growing the Beloved Community here and now.

Women's Circle Report

Submitted by The Rev. Shari Young

Women's Circle gathers monthly to pray, to share personal stories, and to converse about a short reading. We have recently started using Spiritual Literacy by Frederick and Mary Ann Brussat as our source.

Topics for reading and discussion are chosen by the monthly "Convenor" who then leads the meeting.

We meet on the second Saturday at 10am in the Parish Hall, and on Zoom. Prayer opens and closes the Circle; we read Parker Palmer's "Circle of Trust" to lay down guidelines of interaction; and our "Sharing" time is limited to each individuals' comfort zone.

Participants include: Sally Winn, Gwen Buehrens, Auntie Fe, Petrine Grube, Ann Alpers, Blake Hallanan, Heather Davies, Mary Balmana, Rose Scarff, Helen Archer-Duste, Margaret Stark-Roberts, Elia Pochron, Shari Young, Kathy Crosby. Please join us!

Questions? Please speak to the Rev. Shari Young

Altar Guild Report

Submitted by Tracey Thomas

With great thanks to our dedicated Altar Guild volunteers, this past year has been smooth and successful! Our 8am altar guilders are Mary Ann Buxton-Krag, Tracy Thomas, and Sally Winn. At 10am, we have Petrina Grube, Heather Miles, John Harrison, and Jette Swan.

I'm working on swapping our wax candles for oil filled candle "shells," it's a little complicated to find shells that fit into our candle holders. Also, I'm experimenting with new brass polishes. The candle-topping brass followers are now cleaned with ketchup. Laugh all you want, it works beautifully!

Flower guild Report

Submitted by Noreen Huey

The Flower Guild: Mary Balmana, Heather Davies, Heather Miles, Elia Pochron & Noreen Huey brings seasonal florals to beautify and enhance our worship space. This year we give thanks to Chau Tai for joining us in arranging Easter florals and to Brandon Mendiola for his assist with Christmas florals and decor. We are also thankful for support from our favorite plant guy - Taylor Pochron!

We continue to have a mix of fresh flower arrangements and plant arrangements for the various seasons, reducing the need for weekly purchase and arrangement of fresh flowers.

As we begin 2025, we look forward to exploring the SF Flower Mart at their brand new location in Potrero Hill as well as other nearby floral resources.

We'd love to welcome new volunteers to this ministry - anyone who loves flowers, plants and creativity to join flower guild! No previous experience is necessary, and we are happy to partner with newcomers to show them the process. Speak to Noreen if you are interested in participating in the Flower Guild!

Sunday Silent Meditation Report

Submitted by Sandra Dratler

The Sunday Evening Silent Meditation Group began meeting nearly eight years ago. Our core group of St. James members is joined each Sunday by neighbors not otherwise affiliated with St. James.

We find a quiet space to end the weekend, to take a break from the busyness of life, and to feel the power of prayerful meditation with a group. The group gathers quietly at 5:30 p.m. and prepares for our meditation together, listening to Gregorian chants. At 5:45 p.m. we commence 20 minutes of silence. We begin and end with spoken prayer. All are welcome.

St. James Faith in Action Report

Submitted by Sandra Dratler and Barbara Webb

Faith in Action is a ministry of St. James focused on social justice issues affecting parishioners and our community. Our collective efforts during 2024 were directed primarily at homelessness and housing justice issues. We hold bi-monthly meetings to provide updates and plan for future activities.

Project Homeless Connect

Our work with the PHC CareVan gives opportunities to volunteer to bring services to our homeless and housing insecure neighbors. The primary activity is the monthly outreach walk. Volunteers, including Ed Wilcox, Margaret Stark-Roberts, Tom Matthews, Barbara Webb and Sandra Dratler, pair up and go into the neighborhood, distributing hygiene kits and encouraging those in need to visit the PHC remote site set up at 7th and Geary to meet with counselors that day.

Members of St. James and friends joined others at Bill Graham Auditorium for the quarterly Project Homeless Connect Community Days of Service. On that day, people are provided with needed medical, dental, housing and DMV services among others. This is an impactful event - both for participants and the volunteers. Helen Archer-Duste, Scott Golde, Barbara Webb and Sandra Dratler provided their time to this activity this year.

The 3rd Annual Craft Sale organized by Elizabeth Nelson held in October resulted in a donation to Project Homeless Connect amounting to over \$1,000. St. James Youth and St. James Pre-School students held a sock drive over the Christmas holidays that benefited Project Homeless Connect.

Barbara and Sandra also put together special Christmas bags that included hygiene items and toiletries with extra socks, gloves and Christmas cookies. They were distributed just before Christmas in the name of St. James Faith in Action.

Evening Prayer

SJFIA led six Wednesday Evening Prayer Zoom services ranging from a summer revival to prayers for peace and hope in this trouble world. The services are well-attended and well-received. Plans are already laid out for next year. Please join us!

District 1 Supervisor Candidate Forum on the Future of Housing in the Richmond District

St. James Faith in Action and St. John's Presbyterian Church co-sponsored a well-attended forum for District 1 Supervisor Candidates on the future of housing in the Richmond District. The forum was held on Thursday, September 26 from 7-8:30 p.m. at St. James. Housing issues addressed included creation of affordable housing for low- and middle-income residents, tenant protections, providing services and living situations for our unhoused neighbors, and understanding the implications of new legislation on the height and density of housing on our main corridors and corner lots. All five supervisor candidates participated.

Faith in Action at St. James also provided testimony several times before the Board of Supervisors committees and Planning Commission advocating for more truly affordable housing in the City.

Richmond District Advocacy Groups

SJFIA has continued its efforts to collaborate with other social justice organizations in the Richmond District. To that end, Richmond District Rising and West Side Tenants Association are now holding their general meetings at St. James.

Other Activities

Individual members of SJFIA were active participants this year in environmental and immigrant justice including issues related to contamination at Hunter's Point, accompanying newcomers from Ukraine and collaboration with Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity accompaniment of immigrants.

This report also wishes to recognize the many unsung/unnamed heroes and heroines of St. James who put their faith into action every day through prayers and their own community activities.

Gardening Ministry Report

Submitted by Peter Krag

The grounds of St. James are maintained by Elizabeth Nelson, Margaret Stark-Roberts, and Peter Krag.

There are five small garden plots scattered around St. James' grounds: the rose bed, the children's bed east of the nave, the bougainvillea bed to the west and privet hedge east of the entry gate, and the secret bed off the alley west of the nave – which we call Debbie's Garden, after Debbie Sham.

In 2024, the rose bed was replanted. Several of the roses and rosemary plants were removed; four new roses were added, and two roses and one of the rosemary plants were transplanted. The large Podocarpus ('Brother Tree') had major (professional) pruning, and several new plants and mulch were added under it. The street tree wells were mulched, which has helped with weed control. The secret bed, children's bed and the bougainvillea saw no work other than routine maintenance chores.

Liturgical Ministries Report

Submitted by Roger Wickstrom

Our St. James community is graced by a rich tradition of Liturgical Ministry and graced by a wide and diverse group of lay and clerical volunteers who serve and support our community through these ministries.

From serving as Eucharistic Ministers to serving as Coffee Hour hosts we offer and find nourishment; from ushering for services to carrying the Crucifer or processional candles we offer up a worshipful space; from reading scripture and prayers to singing in the choir we raise our voices in worship.

Supporting our worship and community we are held up by the Healing Prayer Team, by the Flower Guild, by the Altar Guild, by the Offering Counting Team.

Liturgical Ministry is a way to serve our St. James community in rich and meaningful ways. All are welcome and if interested in serving in any of these or other ministries, speak to Rev. John or Rev. Shari, a Vestry member or myself, Roger Wickstrom.

Healing Prayer Ministry Report

Submitted by Elizabeth Nelson

Healing ministry has been a vibrant, lay-led ministry at St. James for decades. There are two “layers” to this ministry:

In-person, hands-on healing prayer at the 10:00 a.m. Sunday service during Communion, in the side-chapel. Warmest thanks to the small group of prayer leaders who conducted these weekly prayer liturgies in 2024: Kathy Crosby, John Harrison, Rose Scarff, and Shari Young.

Ongoing intercession by the Healing Prayer team, whose members faithfully remember all those for whom prayers have been requested at St. James. It’s a privilege to join in prayer with Mary Balmana, Robert Foster, John Harrison, Anne Johnson, John Kirkley, Pat Mayer, Rose Scarff, and Shari Young.

If at any time, for any reason, you’d like to ask for prayers for yourself or for someone you know, here’s how it works:

- Contact me (eanelson415@gmail.com, or 415-387-5169), or the Rector or supply/interim clergy, and let us know your request.
- With your permission, the name of the person for whom prayers are requested will appear in the Sunday bulletin, and be spoken aloud in the Prayers of the People, for three Sundays in a row.
- During *and after* those three weeks, the person you’ve named to us will stay on the Healing Prayer team’s prayer list *for as long as you confirm to us that they need prayer*. The Prayer Team coordinator checks in with requesters periodically to see if there are updates to help us “pray smarter.”

We’re here for you – and for anybody you love! Let us know how we can support you.

Lectio Divina Report

Submitted by Roger Wickstrom

As part of the St. James community's continued exploration of the contemplative call of our faith walk, a small, intimate group of parishioners and others gathers at St. James the second Thursday of most months for an evening of prayer and meditation. Guided by the ancient Christian practice of Lectio Divina, a practice that through scriptural readings, prayerful meditation, voluntary sharing and prayer for each other, our community and our world, we are invited to step apart for a moment to rest in the presence of God.

Begun some 15 years ago the Lectio Divina group is committed to continuing this practice and invite any interested in these evenings of prayer and quiet to speak to Rev. John, Mary Balmana, Petrina Grube or myself, Roger Wickstrom.

Hospitality Report

Submitted by Helen Archer-Dusté

Breaking bread together is a joyful part of our community! We are grateful for the members of our congregation who host this fellowship after the 0800 and 1000 services each Sunday...as well as those who contribute delicious gifts to our various special events throughout the year. Thank you for nourishing us in body and spirit!

Christian Education Report

Submitted by The Rev. John Kirkley

Given the small number of families with children at St. James, we transitioned our Sunday morning offering for kids. In lieu of Sunday school, the children are included in the worship service, and are encouraged to serve as oblation bearers, acolytes, readers and choir members. A children's story time is now included as part of the 10 am worship service. Nursery care continues to be available in the preschool building.

Many thanks to our gifted storytellers: Helen Archer-Dusté, Jim Dycus, Kirsten Huiber, Ryan LeBlanc, Eleanor Scott, the Rev. Shari Young and the Rev. John Kirkley. Grant Paul will be joining the team in 2025.

Adult Christian formation included our regular Sunday meditation (led by Sandra Dratler), bi-monthly Lectio Divina (led by Roger Wickstrom), and monthly Men's and Women's gatherings (thank you to the Rev. Shari Young for organizing the Women's Circle). Our weekly Zoom bible study on Tuesdays included study of the Books of Esther, Genesis, and Exodus. Members of St. James completed our third Sacred Ground Circle, an intensive 10 week curriculum exploring race and religion in the United States. Many thanks to Helen Archer-Dusté for her leadership of this program.

We also shared a Lenten Series with the Mary of Pentecost Catholic Community, studying Marin Laird's book, *Into the Silent Land*, and a Summer Book Club, reading *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, PhD. We hosted a Summer Quiet Day in June, led by the Rev. John Kirkley and an Advent Quiet day in December, led by the Mary of Pentecost community. All of these programs were well attended, and we hope to build on these relationships to develop shared programs in the future.

Music Report

Submitted by Jan Vennari

St. James music program was greatly enhanced this year with the addition of two professional musicians at the 10:00 service:

- **Margaret Fondbertasse** was hired as our permanent accompanist. We've been enjoying her virtuosity for several months with classical preludes and postludes, choir anthems, and service music.
- **Katherine Nägele-Lin** is newly hired as cantor. Her rich contralto voice propels the choir and has allowed us to explore new musical formats such as singing psalms with solo verses with congregational responses.

Margaret and Katherine are helping source new anthems and guiding our rehearsals, and both bring humor and fun to our small but mighty group of Kirstin Huiber, Ryan LeBlanc, Grant Paul, Rose Scarff, Paul Sinclair, Roger Wickstrom.

Come join us!

St. James Bread Report

Submitted by Peter Krag

In roughly 1998, at the instigation of Peabody Bradford, St. James congregation began to prepare our own eucharistic bread, using a recipe we obtained from the Diocese. It's a fairly simple and delicious recipe, including egg, milk & honey. Since then we have had a small rota to deliver sufficient bread for our services, and we have chosen to remain largely anonymous in our weekly contribution to the liturgy. The rota currently includes Ann Alpers, Dave Davies, Peter Krag, and Margaret Stark-Roberts; we could always use more participants in this group.

2025 Vestry Candidates

Brooke Bengier

Two years as a pledging member of St. James



Statement of Interest

I feel called to serve because I am a strong believer in community and St. James helps fill this critical role. In an increasingly digital world that was made more insular with Covid, I feel the church can be a place for people to come together and find connection and belonging. At St. James, I love the post-church coffee hour and the part of the service recognizing personal hardship and highlights. We are supporting one another through hard times and celebrating our personal wins. I also often run into other members of the congregation when I am walking around the neighborhood, grounding me more in my local community. I believe that we can find a greater purpose united together.

Biography

I believe I would bring to the Vestry both my business skills and my parent perspective.

I work in digital advertising as a marketing consultant, so I can help with our social media, marketing and outreach. We have an opportunity to engage more with parishioners on Instagram and Facebook, sharing photos and bringing the community together in this digital format. This may help us attract younger parishioners and encourage more engagement in volunteer opportunities and church activities.

I also am a mom to Arielle (age 8), Luke (age 5) and Chloe (age 3), so I can help brainstorm ways to encourage more participation and attendance from parents with young children. The nursery program and the teaching portion of the service are great additions, however, I can also see these are difficult to maintain since families are unpredictable in their attendance. I don't have any fast and easy ideas, but I know that if we come together as a vestry and community in open discussion, we can brainstorm ways to find the next generation of parishioners.

Kathy Crosby

One year as a pledging member of St. James

**Statement of Interest:**

I'm interested in serving on the Vestry of St. James because I believe followers of Jesus Christ are called to live out our faith in community, not just as individuals. Though I am quite new to St. James and had not considered serving on the Vestry, when I was asked I realized that I would like to be part of nurturing the ongoing growth of the already healthy community that I am discovering at St. James.

Biography:

Raised in a loving, Christian home, I made a serious decision to follow Jesus Christ when I was 18. In the intervening 60 years I have consistently been part of a local church and have served in many leadership capacities, including full-time pastoral ministry for 18 years. I have been involved in the ministry of inner healing prayer for the last twenty years, and I am currently a spiritual director. I am now on the prayer ministry team of St. James.

Sinjin Barned-Smith

Two years as a pledging member of St. James



Statement of Interest

I'm a lifelong Episcopalian and have found community and support at St. James' after moving to San Francisco in 2022. Pastor John asked if I'd be willing to serve on the vestry and after thinking about it, I think it's a way that I could give back to a community that I have found invaluable in my new home.

Biography

I'm a reporter at the San Francisco Chronicle. I've been somewhat involved in St. James', attending men's breakfasts, visiting Gwen during her husband's trip to Europe, and participating in the Deanery (but that was fairly limited).

I think I bring a different perspective which might be helpful, both given my own faith journey and my experiences prior to moving to CA

2024 Deanery and Diocesan Convention Candidates

Warren Wong

Thirty-six years as a pledging member of St. James



Statement of Interest:

St. James Mission Statement:

To bring an ever-increasing number of people into an ever-closer relationship with Jesus Christ so that God's love may be a transforming force for the community in which we live.

We continue to be blessed by a strong and loving congregation. St. James is a wonderful, vibrant spiritual community transforming people's lives and building our relationship with Jesus Christ.

I love the Church and the work of the diocesan convention and have an affinity for our governance and legislative process. I continue to work collaboratively with our clergy and lay delegates from around the diocese to find and build disciples locally and church-wide. Over the past 12 years, I have authored key resolutions and canons to enhance the tools for creative, wellness ministries for congregations in the Diocese of California. I enjoy being a delegate, and I would be honored to continue serving St. James in the deanery and at Diocesan Convention.

Biography:

Currently serving as a delegate and leading voice for our group to Diocesan Convention, I have participated on the following parish activities: healing ministry, vocation (chair), endowment, Lay/Visiting Eucharistic Minister, rector search, stewardship (chair), and finance (chair).

Deanery and Diocesan Convention Alternates

Mary Balmana

Eighteen years as a pledging member of St. James.



Statement of Interest:

I believe it is important to have Diocesan representation with diverse backgrounds and interests. My involvement with area ministry, the SF Deanery and training with the IAF (Industrial Areas Foundation) an interfaith and non-profit organizing coalition gives me a perspective that is unique that I wish to share with our St. James community, as well as an openness to serve and work with other leaders who have different experience and talents that are different from my own.

Biography:

A former vestry member and serving the SJ community through various ministries: Flower Ministry, Liturgy, and Lector, balanced with participation in social and spiritual programs, I believe that I am qualified to represent our congregation's interests at a Diocesan level at quarterly meetings and at the Annual Convention. My commitment to Area Ministry and community outreach, interest in gun prevention violence as a San Francisco Deanery Delegate on the Bishop's Task force (Urban Peace Coalition), coupled with a personal commitment to spiritual growth and concern for church in the world, has given me an opportunity to provide a unique perspective and voice as a Deanery Delegate for the time served. It is an honor to serve as a representative of St. James and connect with others at the Deanery level.

Minutes of the 128th Annual Meeting

January 21, 2024

St. James Episcopal Church – Zoom Meeting
4620 California Street, San Francisco, CA, 94118

1. Call to Order and Prayer.

*Pastor John Called the meeting to order.

2. Organizational Matters:

- * Appointment of the Clerk of the Meeting: Jan Vennari.
- * Certification of Quorum: Pastor John certified that we have a quorum (10% of adult members of the Parish)
- * Appointment of Parliamentarian: John Harrison.
- * Certification of Minutes of the 127th Annual Parish Meeting: John so certified.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

* The agenda was adopted.

4. Senior Warden's Report (Ann Alpers)

- * Please review the written report.
- * Ann Alpers served a 2-year-term as Senior Warden through the end of COVID and covering while John was on sabbatical. .

5. Junior Warden's Report (Heather Davies and Ryszard Pochron)

- * Please review the written report.
- * Our 100-year-old building requires commitment and ongoing maintenance.
- * There's a need to hire a firm to look at aging electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems.
- * We have a grant approval to get a backstop on the sewer line between church and preschool.
- * Heather Davies has suggested hiring a temporary project manager to oversee this assessment to get work identified and started.

6. Treasurer's Report (Doug Bewsher)

*Please review the written report.

As reported by John:

- * We are close to meeting pledge goal for 2023.
- * Our March Auction was very successful, contributing \$12,000 to the budget.
- * The Endowment fund is strong from Newmeyer family contribution plus potential \$600-\$800k from the estate of Oi Yun Chow.
- * The Finance Committee passed resolution within the vestry to annually pull 4% from Endowment to the operating budget.

7. Rector's Report (The Rev. John Kirkley)

*John reported about his work on the Diocesan Executive Council. The Executive Council has created functional groups to address various ministry areas in the Diocese (eg clergy housing, property management; finance and budget work, congregational needs). John is chairing the

Committee on Diocese of the Future, a working group to think, create, and adapt to changing circumstances – which very nicely dovetails and grows out the Vital _ Thriving Program (V+T).

* Like V+T, this committee creates space for collective thinking and continuous learning. It will look at the identity of the Diocese and make recommendations to the Bishop and Council about how to align practices and ministries with the vision of the Beloved Community. This work is rooted in the Executive Council values of spirituality, church vitality, inclusive community, and transparent and accountable leadership.

* As part of this focus on change and the future, John has been referring to Meg Wheatley a management consultant and the author of Who Do We Choose To Be? Her key questions are: Where are we (St. James, Diocese) on the arrow of time? How adaptive is the Diocese as a living system?

* Meg Wheatley has 6 principles of living systems that allow organizations to be vital and adaptive. The congregation broke out into groups to discuss each of them. Summary discussions follow:

Quality of Thinking: V+T gives us intentional time to think about the future. It would be valuable to maintain it on a more ongoing way. Parents have valuable time to be intentional during church when kids are in Sunday School or nursery. Sacred Ground represents important thinking, as do small group learning groups (book groups, Joh's offerings). Programs need to be intentional to have the most meaning and relevance. One question becomes how to get the message out to the community about what's going on here. There's interest in carving out time between Vestry and congregation; how to include everyone.

Willingness to Contribute: The group talked about the importance of how you ask people to do thinks so they say “yes”. We generally have a flat level of financial contribution from a smaller number of donors. The goal is to ask new people to contribute. At the other end of the spectrum, we are burning out people by asking them to contribute to much/too often. We need a change management and growth mindset: Change is hard; people object; need to share context and why to help people move through change. Having a growth mindset helps our willingness to adapt and feeds into willingness to contribute.

Fear vs Love: We are a loving community – it keeps us here. One can sense love when they walk through door. It's seen it in Life Changes where we see people's vulnerability. We don't use fear to motivate; our sense of love is greater. The group agreed that we don't feel judged; can be ourselves without judgement. A fear we had in the past was centered around the potential creation of the Community Learning Center. That fear didn't linger; Won Jae Hur, as interim rector after the CLC was dissolved helped recenter us.

Quality of Relationships: People became accustomed to being remote and are now more elective and protective of their time – so we need incentives.

Crisis Management: We do well overall. We recognize when there's a problem, reach out, communicate clearly, generally stay calm. We may not speak openly about the issue; it may be addressed by small group and not those who could resolve it. We don't have processes in place to solve problems and John often ends up as a mediator. People who are more involved at St. James have more trust with each other from their time together; it dissipates further out the circle.

8. Presentation and Election of Vestry Candidates

*Three Vestry members are completing their terms: Ann Alpers, Sherrie Ayers, and Heather Davies

- * Vestry Slate: Tom Matthews, Helen Archer-Dusté, and Warren Wong
- * John opened the floor to nominations. None.
- * The Vestry Slate was elected by acclamation.

9. Presentation and Election of Deanery Candidates

* Deanery Delegates: These are lay representatives that represent the Parish at quarterly SF Deanery meetings and annual Diocesan Convention (governing body of the Diocese). The number of deanery delegates per parish is based on size of congregation. They are elected annually.

- * Proposed Delegates: Warren Wong and Mary Balmana
- * Alternates: Will be confirmed at Pie Sunday.
- * John opened the floor to nominations. None.
- * The Deanery Delegates were elected by acclamation.

10. Volunteer Recognition

- * Jack Mills for his help and dedication as Parish Administrator
- * Ron Willis (now to Palm Springs), Shari Young, Gwen Buehrens, and Nancy Pennekamp for their support in worship leadership.
- * Noreen Huey and Elia Pochron for the new St. James parish Banner.
- * Mark Wanless, our music director.
- * Healing Team

11. Closing Prayer

- * Meeting adjourned.