



Office for  
Transition  
Ministry

# Ministry Portfolio

*Full Portfolio (last updated Dec 18, 2025)*

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## St. James, San Francisco, California

4620 California St, San Francisco, CA, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge

[deniseo@diocal.org](mailto:deniseo@diocal.org)

Weekly Average Sunday  
Attendance (ASA)

**53**

Number of Weekend  
Worship Services

**2**

Number of Weekday  
Worship Services

**1**

Number of Other per Month  
Worship Services

Current Annual  
Compensation

Cash Stipend

Housing / Rectory Detail

Utilities

SECA reimbursement

Compensation Available for  
New Position

Housing Available for  
**3**

Pension Plan

**We're in compliance with  
CPF requirements.**

Healthcare Options

**Full family**

Dental

**Yes**

Housing Equity Allowance in  
budget

Annual Equity Amount

Vacation Weeks

**One month, including 5  
Sundays (standard)**

Vacation Weeks Details

Continuing Education Weeks  
**Other**

Continuing Education Weeks  
Details

Continuing Education  
Funding in budget

**up to/including  
\$500/year**

Sabbatical Provision

**Yes**

Travel/Auto Account

Other Professional Account

*Diocesan minimum compensation grid for B size congregation.*

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Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

Sinjin was new to San Francisco and to St. James when he rose at Life Changes one Sunday to ask for prayers for his dog Scoop, critically injured in a fall. Sinjin surprised himself by choking up as he spoke; he was more surprised by how many people came up to speak with him after church, and how many people continued to check in with him - "How's Scoop doing?" - Sunday after Sunday. "I'd really never experienced anything like that," Sinjin says. When Scoop was well enough, Sinjin began bringing him to church on Sundays. Both of them are familiar and welcome at St. James, and Sinjin now serves on the Vestry. St. James practices ministry in many ways - community service, social justice, diocesan participation. The heart of our ministry always happens person to person: in welcome, in attention, in prayer.

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How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?

When the Covid shutdown hit in March 2020, St. James didn't miss a Sunday. We learned about online liturgy on the fly, and kept experimenting. Sunday School became activity kits, planned and assembled by volunteers and delivered to homes with children. Clergy stayed in touch with older parishioners without computers. We took every opportunity to meet on Zoom - Women's Group, Bible study, midweek Evening Prayer, a talent show, the blessing of the animals on St. Francis Day, even online events substituting for our usual Parish Retreat. Since in-person services resumed, we have continued to livestream the 10 a.m. Eucharist on Zoom and to meet online for Evening Prayer as well, keeping these services accessible for the homebound and friends living at a distance. St. James has long been dedicated to fostering shared life in God's love, and to responding creatively as new challenges arise. As we ponder ways to nurture an aging congregation, open our doors wider to younger families, and partner with other groups to serve our neighborhood, we are blessed by a collective spirit of trust, curiosity, and willingness.

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Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

collaborative leader, inspiring preacher, spiritually grounded, Biblical Scholar, pastoral and personable

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Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services provided by your community.

We enjoy two Sunday Services: 8 a.m. contemplative service, and 10 a.m. service with music led by pianist, cantor, and choir. Communion - with home-baked bread and wine - is shared around the altar during both services. The majority of services are Rite Two with frequent changes to liturgy using Diocesan-approved alternative prayers and other liturgical resources inspired by local, national and world events. In addition to our Rector and retired volunteer clergy, we have a core group of lay preachers called to this ministry for both services. The 10 a.m. service includes a Children's Story by volunteer storytellers using Godly Play principles. There is a small area dedicated to children, set up in the back of the nave to help them feel welcome and comfortable during the service. A dedicated team of ministers rotate to provide healing and laying on of hands during communion. Other forms of worship include weekly evening meditation and online Evening Prayer, and monthly Lectio Divina.

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How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

This is a joint effort by the rector, vestry, and lay leaders within the various ministries. As members/newcomers become comfortable and express interest in a particular ministry, they are invited to join. Those who have been part of the community make an effort to get to know newcomers or invite members who might be a good fit for a particular ministry through a gentle and supportive suggestion. The vestry may formally announce specific requests for positions at quarterly congregational meetings followed by announcements in weekly email newsletters and in the Sunday bulletin. If someone has a new idea, the community is open to supporting it. Newcomers are invited to all congregational meetings.

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As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

St. James nurtures our collective well-being in three main ways: we pray together, talk together, and break bread together. After 8 a.m. Eucharist, worshippers meet in the Parish Hall to share breakfast and personal news and offer candid sermon notes to the preacher. At 10 a.m., Life Changes surrounds those announcing joys or challenges with love, hands-on healing prayer takes place during Communion, and Coffee Hour is tasty and chatty. Parish meetings open with prayer and potluck, followed by engaged discussion. Silent meditation and innovative Evening Prayer services are offered weekly, and a Healing Prayer team intercedes regularly for those in need. St. James' Feast Day in July and our autumn Retreat at the Bishop's Ranch celebrate our community with fun, laughter, and (always!) good food. Going forward, we are committed to continuing our active prayer life. We hope to uphold transparency between vestry, rector, and congregation, revive social activities lost since Covid, and draw newer members into active parish involvement. We hope a new rector can help us learn new ways to reconcile (rare) personal conflicts, and reach out to members who step away from St. James.

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How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

St. James has a rich tradition of outreach and service, but with the decline in attendance and the interruption of COVID, those efforts have waned, and parishioners have taken on that role individually: one family, for example, helps Ukrainian refugees find housing and jobs, and another teaches immigrants English. Outreach and social justice is a core value for our church and we would love for our next rector to help us revitalize our focus in that direction. One place where we have maintained our efforts, however, is through our Faith in Action ministry, focusing on homelessness and housing justice. Our members volunteer with Project Homeless Connect (PHC), at the local PHC site. Several volunteers have also participated in the quarterly PHC Community Days of Service at Bill Graham auditorium, where people are provided with essential resources. Faith in Action also collaborates with local advocacy groups to further housing justice efforts for our neighbors. Seasonally, the congregation collects goods for those in need, such as through the Advent Giving Tree program.

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Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.

St. James has an active presence on the San Francisco deanery, including past roles in leadership and hosting deanery meetings. St. James clergy and laity have actively served our diocese in various capacities. In recent years this included membership on the Executive Council, Standing Committee, General Convention deputation, and the Bishop Search and Transition Committee. Currently a parishioner serves on the board for The Bishop's Ranch.

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Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?

During COVID, we transitioned our Wednesday evening service to an online format, which allowed us to serve more parishioners, including friends and family from other places. To this day, the service has continued to provide a midweek respite, offering time for prayer, reflection, and community. Custom slide presentations guide 10-15 worshipers who join, with participants taking turns reading lessons and prayers. Spiritual themes have an intentional and sometimes celebratory focus on a wide range of meaningful topics. We've explored the importance of animals, honored indigenous peoples, examined military service, considered climate change, and learned about world religions.

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What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

Our stewardship practice is a direct reflection of the love and care we have for St. James. The Stewardship Committee runs a purposeful and transparent fundraising campaign in the fall. It's firm but gentle - firm in revealing the realities of the parish's financial picture, and gentle in inviting but never pressuring people to pledge. The vestry and finance team make a concerted effort to be transparent about the numbers so people understand why pledges are so important and how funds are spent. During church services, we hear personal testimonies from both long-time and newly pledging members who speak from their hearts about why they give, how God is working in their lives, and what St. James means to them. We believe giving sustains our worship, fellowship, community outreach, and service to others, and ensures that St. James continues to share God's love and make a difference in people's lives.

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What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

At St. James, conflict is rare but can be consequential. When it happens, it too frequently goes undiscussed. When interpersonal disputes have gone unresolved, it has led to instances of members silently leaving the congregation. This goes against our values and is something we want to address. We would be well served by a rector who is available when needed to act as a mediator of interpersonal disputes, and to ensure that everyone involved feels their opinion and input is heard and valued.

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What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

As a church and a tight-knit community, hard decisions, such as laying off staff members or making budget cuts, can have significant impacts. Congregants can take personnel losses especially hard. While leadership has to make these choices, they are easier for the congregation to accept when communicated well and clearly. In cases when that hasn't happened, it's led to hurt feelings, confusion, and anger. Sometimes, we have struggled to make needed decisions because of the fear of their impact. The result can be equally harmful. Currently, we are in the midst of a significant renovation to upgrade the church's plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems. Current leadership has made a notable effort to communicate clearly with the congregation about upcoming changes and challenges - and the congregation has responded in a forthright, generous fashion.



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### Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
The Rev. Christopher Chase	Interim	2025-07	

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
The Rev. John Kirkley	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2010-11	2025-06

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
The Rev. Mary Moore Gaines	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	1997-01	2009-01

Church School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School

Number of Teachers/Leaders for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Students for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Adults School	Number of Students for Adults School

Day School	Number of Students for Day School	Number of Teachers for Day School	Number of Total Staff for Day School



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Worshipping Community Web site: <https://www.stjamesf.org/>

Media Links:

Online References:

Languages Significantly Represented:

**English**

Provide Worship or Classes in:

**English**

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### References

Bishop:

**The Rt. Rev. Austin Rios**

Diocesan Transition Minister  
**Canon Denise Obando**

**deniseo@diocal.org**

Current Warden/Board Chair

**Helen Archer-Duste**

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

**Jan Vennari & John  
Harrison**

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader