



The Cathedral Church of St. Paul

Cathedral Church of St. Paul Names the Rev. Joseph C. Alsay as Eleventh Dean of Historic Detroit Episcopal Church

DETROIT, Dec. 8, 2025 — The Cathedral Church of St. Paul, the first Episcopal church in Michigan, is proud to announce that the Rev. Joseph C. Alsay has started as its new dean.

Alsay joins from St. Augustine of Canterbury in Oklahoma City, where he served as rector since 2010. He takes over as the eleventh dean for the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, succeeding Dean Scott Hunter, who retired in June 2024 after 17 years in the position.

Alsay said he is excited to join a congregation known for its vibrant music, community outreach and diverse representation.

“For 200 years you have been a linchpin in Detroit and an anchor for the Diocese of Michigan. It is my privilege to take on the mantle of ministry and work with you as we continue to build up the kingdom of God in Detroit and beyond,” Alsay said.

Alsay becomes the cathedral’s first Black dean, a move praised by Episcopal Diocese of Michigan Bishop Bonnie A. Perry. “Electing Joseph Alsay to lead the Cathedral Church of St. Paul is a bold, historic choice, and the perfect next step for this community of faith to become the soul of the city and heartbeat of our diocese. I could not be more delighted!”

Alsay received his Bachelor of Arts in Pastoral Studies from Oklahoma Baptist University and his Master of Divinity from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

Alsay made history on Aug. 6, 2005, at the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral. At 10 a.m. that day he was married in the cathedral to the former Cecelia K. Gray of Philadelphia. Two hours later, after a small reception, he stood in the same spot and was ordained as a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

On Jan. 15, 2011 — the same day that year as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday — Alsay joined the Episcopal Church as part of the Called to Common Mission agreement. In Oklahoma, Alsay was known for his passion, positive energy and leadership. During his time at St. Augustine of Canterbury, he developed new programs, increased membership and moved the congregation from mission to parish status.

Alsay's official start at the cathedral was Sunday, Nov. 30, 2025, the first Sunday of Advent. In addition to his wife, Cecelia, joining Alsay will be children Zoe, Zipporah and Caleb, who says the family "[can't wait to go to Michigan](#)" in a video posted by Alsay.

"We look forward to welcoming Dean Elect Alsay into our cathedral family and to the ways his gifts and vision will help guide us in this new season to come," said John LaDuke, senior warden, Cathedral Church of St. Paul.

About The Cathedral Church of St. Paul:

The Cathedral Church of St. Paul is the cathedral church of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan. Formed in 1824, the congregation was the first Episcopal and first Protestant church in Michigan. The cathedral, located at 4800 Woodward Ave in Midtown Detroit, was designed by architect Ralph Adams Cram and constructed in 1907.

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