ANNUAL REPORT

ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Hendersonville, North Carolina

Mission Statement: Following the example of Jesus' servant ministry, every member is vital as we welcome all, love all, serve all through Christ.

Annual Meeting

JANUARY 21, 2023

2023 Staff and Officers of St. James

Clergy

The Rt. Rev. José McLoughlin, Bishop

The Rev. David Henson, Rector

The Rev. Tim Jones, Deacon

Staff

Brad Gee, Director of Music/Organist

Christoph Herpel, Director of Youth & Family Ministries/Lifelong Formation

Mindy Campos, Director of Operations for Administration & Communication

Teri Smith, Facilities Manager

Perry Jones, Sexton

Sharon Miller & Rebecca Levi, Financial Associates & Bookkeepers

Lisa Whitfield, Director, Allelu!

Liturgical Support Team

Jim Loy, Bell Tower Captain, St. James Guild of Change Ringers

Vestry

Jan Shefter, Senior Warden
Lenore Threlkeld, Junior Warden

Carson Carpenter
Robert Greene
Elizabeth Henry
Randy Hunter
Keaton Jones
Tom Marshall
Bill Medina
Laurie Parkerson
David Reese
Anne Valentine

Table of Contents

CLERGY:

Rector 4

VESTRY:

Senior Warden 5

Corporate Worship

Worship & Music

Acolytes 10
Adult Choir 10
Allelu! Folk Group 11
Altar Guild 11
Change Ringers 11
Celtic and Contemplative Services 12
Chalice Bearers 12
Flower Guild 12
Lectors 12
Ushers 13
Vergers 13

St. James Players 14

Adult Formation

Short Stories for the Soul 14
Searchers 14
Passage Meditation 14

Youth, Children & Families

Youth & Family Formation 15
Children's Formation 15
Nursery 15

Evangelism

Congregational Development

Welcoming Committee 16

Parish Life

Hospitality Guild & Auxiliary 16
Funeral Reception Committee 17
Fun Force 17
Foyers Dinner Group 17
Prayer Shawl Knitting Group 18
Common Ground 18
Yoga 18
St. James Women's Group 18
Single Women's Group 18
Men's Fellowship Breakfast 19

Justice & Mercy

Outreach Commission 19
Thursday Thrift Shop 20
St. James Charities 21
Home Repair Ministry 22
Creation Care 22
Community Garden 23
Cuba Mission 24
Candlemas 24
Feed the Kids 25

Caring for People

Pastoral Care

St. Joseph's Guild 25
Lay Eucharistic Visitors 25
Food Angels 26
Greeting Card Ministry 26
Intercessory/Healing Prayer 26

Administration & Communication

Library 26
Offering Counters 26
Volunteer Receptionists 26
Weekly service bulletin & Ebulletin 27
Internal/External Communications 27
Website 27

HR & Policy

Human Resources Committee 27

Caring for Our Resources

Building & Grounds

Memorial Garden Committee 28
Safety & Security 28
Wednesday Work Crew 28

Finance

Finance Committee 29

Stewardship

Stewardship Committee 29
Legacy Giving Committee 30
St. James Endowment Board 31

Rector's Report
The Rev. David Henson

"There is one Body and one Spirit; there is one hope in God's call to us; One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all."

So begins our service of Holy Baptism, the sacrament through which we enter the Church and by which God establishes an indissoluble bond of love.

And it's straight out of Paul's letter to the Ephesians in which he exhorts the people of God to live as one, recognizing the many gifts of individuals that build up the body of Christ. He writes, "Walk in a manner worthy of your calling, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: there is one Body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. He himself granted that some are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry." (Ephesians 4).

When I read through this annual report, when I look out at our parish gathered in worship each Sunday, when I pray for our parishioners and our common life, I see, hear, and feel so clearly this call from St. Paul lived out in so many beautiful ways at St. James. I see the saints equipped for ministry and equipping others for ministry. I see a people walking in a manner worthy of our calling.

> "I see the saints equipped for ministry and equipping others for ministry. I see a people walking in a manner worthy of our calling."

We have much to celebrate from the past year and we have much to look forward to in 2024. We have grown in membership and participation this year. We are ending the year with a surplus in our operating budget thanks to your generosity and fiscal stewardship of the Vestry. We made some much-needed investments in our sacred space, repairing the Nave interior, replacing aging roofs, and opening up new worship space in the Sanctuary Garden Chapel. St. James has raised up new ministries like the Fun Force, St. James Players, Creation Care, St. Joseph's Guild, Common Ground, Yoga, the Community Garden, fellowship groups, and more. Our parish is seeing the deepening of long-standing ministries and the renewal of life into some as well, such as a new vision to transform the Candlemas concert for its next chapter for the next generation.

It is such a gift and a blessing to be your rector. God has used this parish to renew my own faith. This is the symbiotic work of a Church, in which the mutual love and genuine affection of our community becomes a renewable resource we can all draw upon during challenges and difficult moments.

And, we have experienced challenges this year, too. We spent the summer worshipping in the parish hall—and found our parish grew and discovered new energy. We weathered two staff situations, the departure of associate rector Christie Walton and the serious illness of our youth and families minister Christoph Herpel. I am so extraordinarily grateful to the Vestry and our wardens Jan Shefter and Lenore Threlkeld who helped us navigate these challenges. We are also blessed with a staff that took on extra work and pulled together to support one another and the ministries of St. James in the midst of all that, as well as the countless people who have supported Christoph, Joshua, and Jazmine.

When I begin to consider the past year, I confess to being a little emotional because I am simply overwhelmed with gratitude for this parish community and the faithfulness exhibited day-in and day-out by so many in ways both large and small. Which is to say, as 2023 closes and 2024 begins, I'm feeling renewed and energized for the ministry to which we have been called.

I pray you are, too. Because none of this is a solo act by any one purpose. It takes all of us to live out the shared gift of ministry in the name of Christ because there is one Body and one Spirit, one hope, one faith, one baptism, one God, and one St. James.

Senoir Warden's Report
Jan Shefter

Over the years I have witnessed many changes at St. James. Our campus and buildings have changed dramatically. In 1984, the Stillwell Hall was not connected by a cloister to the Narthex and both were smaller. We did not have a reception area. There was no wing for meeting rooms such as the Trinity Room nor a nursery/music wing where the choir could practice. There was the St. James School for Little Folks which was a half-day preschool. It shared space with the Sunday School. My guess is that there were about half the number of ministries that we have now. New ministries have begun; some have exceeded expectations; some have continued their vital work; and some have met the needs and are no longer needed. However, there was and still is one constant—the vitality of the congregation and the generosity of our parishioners in giving of their time, talents, and treasure. Thank you.

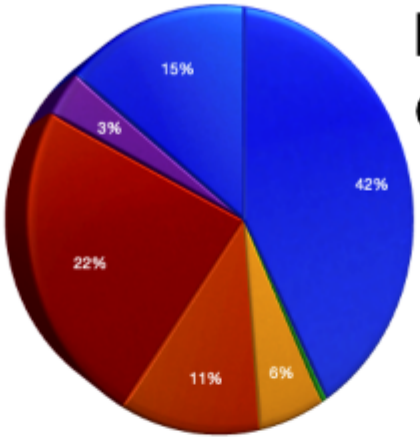
In this Annual Report you will have the opportunity to learn about the different ministries which make up St. James. I encourage you to actually read about each one. You may find one you did not know even existed. You may even find one that peaks your interest and would like to join. The list of our ministries is long and provides a way for one to find a place in St. James. When one looks at our calendar of events, it is impressive how full it is!

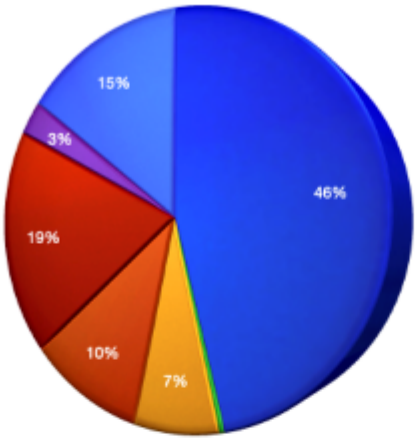
This year we again found many things to celebrate and welcome some changes as Fr. David listed in the December *Epistle*. To name just a few:

- Thanks to Buildings and Grounds, the Nave was repaired and renovated to return to the wonderful and beautiful space where we worship. We had to move into Stillwell Hall in June for the construction to begin which challenged us to change our worship schedule.
- We are still growing and welcoming new parishioners. Our Welcoming Committee is an action committee dedicated to our vision of *Welcome All, Love All, Serve All.*
- The Cox House was repaired and provides a space in which new ministries can be created to reach out to the community (plus our youth love a space of their own!).
- The Wednesday Work Crew is an invaluable asset to St. James. Their willingness to repair what needs to be repaired and take on almost any project is amazing!
- The Sanctuary Garden Chapel is nearing completion. The Community Garden is ready for Spring!
- New ministries were created: St. Joseph's Guild, Common Ground, Yoga Wednesdays and ministries focused on men's fellowship and for single women to name a few.
- Existing ministries continued in meeting the needs in the community and beyond. The Outreach Commission is an incubator for new ministries such as Creation Care and the Cuba ministry. The Thrift Shop supports the needs of the community and of St. James.
- The Finance Committee with the guidance of Matt Henry, Treasurer, presented a much-needed Financial Policies & Procedures Manual to the Vestry which was adopted.

There is not enough space for me to thank all nor recognize all. So, please do read the pages of this report. St. James is a healthy and thriving parish. Watching it grow throughout the years and face some real challenges has given me faith time and time again in the resilience, creativity and dedication of the parishioners of St. James. We really do meet God's call to practice our faith in action and worship.

Investing in Our Parish





Approved Budget for 2024

- Staff and Clergy Salaries $395,505
- Misc Housekeeping/Property Taxes: $4635
- Administration: $53,675
- Outreach (operating budget only): $106,050
- Buildings & Grounds (Utilities, Insurance, Repairs, Landscaping): $208,325
- Direct Ministry Programs (Youth, Music, Worship): $29,525
- Staff and Clergy Health Insurance, Benefits: $135,537

Approved Budget 2023 (Revised in Summer)

- Staff and Clergy (Salaries) $428,890
- Misc Housekeeping/Property Taxes: $3,955
- Administration: $65,974
- Outreach (operating budget only): $95,500
- Buildings & Grounds (Utilities, Insurance, Repairs, Landscaping): $177, 274
- Direct Ministry Programs (Youth, Music, Worship): $25,800
- Staff and Clergy Health and Benefits: $136,038

How the St. James Budget Happens: In the fall, our Finance Team begins the budgeting process by soliciting budget funding requests from our various ministries and staff members at St. James. These budget requests are very detailed, based both on the previous year's spending and the expectations for the coming year for either cost increases or expanded ministry.

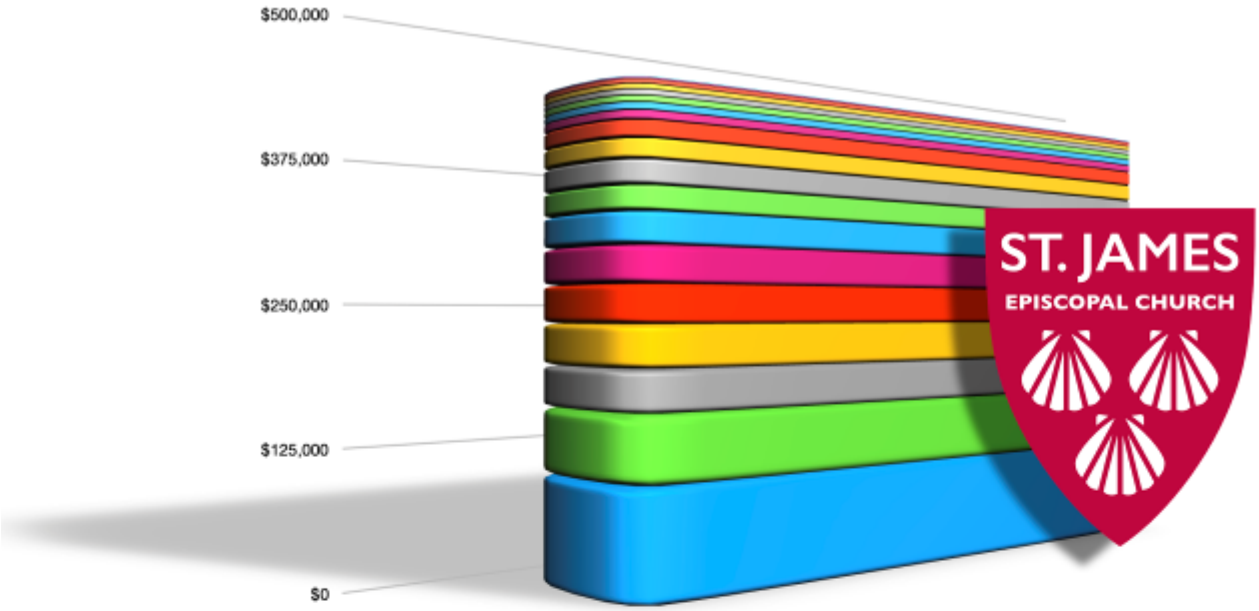
Then for the next several months our Treasurer and Finance Chair painstakingly take those requests and build an initial budget draft for our Finance Team to discuss and make suggestions about. As pledges for 2024 come in, the finance team gets a better idea of how much the likely budget might be for the coming year.

At the beginning of the new year, a final draft of the budget is completed, as the last pledges for the year trickle in. At the first Vestry meeting of the year, and the last Vestry meeting for our senior class, the Vestry is scheduled to approve the budget.

Every year, our leadership gives deep thanks for the generosity of our parish. This year, our pledges total around $719,000. This puts our parish in a strong financial position, which is something all should celebrate given the current environment many churches find themselves in.

Highlights from this year's budget include: Like most churches and organizations, the majority of our budget goes to salaries for clergy and staff. For the annual meeting, health and other benefits are separated as those costs are largely required by diocese or denominational requirements.

For the most part, each category of spending at St. James in 2024 will either remain unchanged or will decrease as a percentage of the budget—salaries, benefits, administration, and direct ministry programs. Direct ministry programs, constituting 3% of the budget, include ministries like Youth and Families, Hospitality Guild, Music, and Altar Guild. Two areas of spending will see increases—Outreach by 1% and Buildings and Grounds by 3%.



Investing in Our Sacred Space

Facilities Spending in 2022 and 2023 at St. James

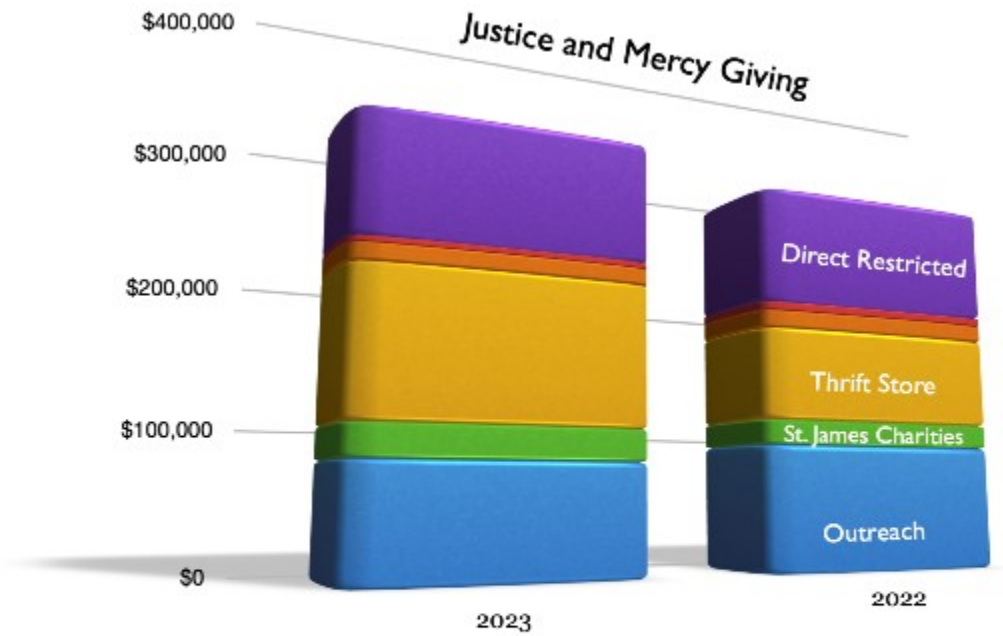
Nave Interior Repair	$99,000
Sanctuary Garden Chapel	$60,000
Budgeted Major Repairs	$37,166
Budgeted Maintenance/Repairs 2022-23	$37,115
Choir/Nursery Wing Roof and Gutters	$33,617
Nave Stone Restoration	$32,390
New Carpet (Offices & Hallways)	$27,945
Windows in Staff Offices	$21,373
Cox House Repairs (roof and water)	$21,350
New HVAC Unit in Choir Wing	$17,250
Bell Tower Lighting Project	$15,160
Bell Tower Rust Abatement	$7,500
Programmable Thermostats	$6,400
Security Cameras	$5,569
Budgeted Major Improvements	$4,951
Bell Tower Plaster Repair	$4,590
Community Garden Water Install	$3,989
Interior Door Locks	$1,137
St. James Room Redesign and Paint	$1,000
Total expenses	**$437,502**

Additionally, in late 2021, St. James funded an emergency repair of the failing mortar of the Nave and Bell Tower exterior at approximately $440,000, **bringing the two-and-a-half year total of facility spending to $877,502, excluding utilities, insurance, and salaries related to our facility**.

This is an extraordinary act of stewardship by our parish. It comes close to amount this parish raised in its most recent $1.2 million capital campaign in 2016.

We give thanks for the incredible generosity and faithfulness of our parishioners, as the overwhelming majority of these projects listed was funded through awards from the St. James Endowment, reserve funds, individual gifts, bequests, and outside grants.

On top of this, each year the Wednesday Work Crew provides hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of skilled work on our building and grounds. In 2022, a conservative estimate was the equivalent of some $350,000 worth of skilled labor.



Investing in Our Community

Sharing our Abundance in 2022 and 2023

St. James remains committed to making the community and world around us a better place. One way we do that is by partnering with other ministries, nonprofits, and organizations actively engaged in the work of justice and mercy.

Our Treasurer will share detailed breakdowns of those organizations during the Annual Meeting. Rest assured, your generosity at St. James makes a difference not just within the walls of this sacred place but throughout the world.

There are multiple ways we do this —through our operating budget, St. James Charities, the Thrift Shop, the St. James Endowment, restricted giving (fundraising for relief efforts, for example), and clergy discretionary funds.

All told, in the past two years, St. James has shared more than a half-million dollars with our outreach partners. This $585,836 makes a difference in the lives of those experiencing hunger, poverty, war, and injustice.

Justice and Mercy Giving in 2023		2022
Outreach (Budgeted)	$78,487	$92,629
St. James Charities	$22,398	$17,996
St. James Thursday Thrift Store	$100,000	$67,900
Clergy Discretionary Fund	$11,689	$12,821
St. James Endowment	$4,000	$6,000
Direct Restricted Giving	$85,500	$86,416
Total expenses	$302,074	$283,762

Total $585,836

Corporate Worship

Worship & Music

The Rev. David Henson

Common Worship is the basis of all we do in the Episcopal tradition and at St. James. Everything flows from our primary Sacramental gifts in Baptism and Eucharist. Our worship unites, restores, empowers, challenges, and nurtures and I am so thankful for the many, many hands that make worship possible each week.

In addition, the leaders of our worship ministries meet quarterly and discuss upcoming changes in worship, plan for the coming liturgical seasons and special services, as well as address any issues or frustrations. It's a dance with so many opportunities to worship.

I am particularly grateful for the diversity we are able to offer here at St. James in worship—from Celtic and Contemporary to Contemplative and Traditional. Choir and organ, guitar and piano, harp, cello, trumpet. Liturgies from across the Anglican communion. Small, intimate Eucharists and large, 150-person+ crowds every single week.

What an incredible blessing and gift from God!

Despite changes brought during the Nave project, worship at St. James has continued to be a robust and joyful experience. During the summer, we worshiped in the Parish Hall and took the change as an opportunity to experiment and ask for feedback on new worship opportunities.

As a result of that feedback, St. James' worship schedule was adjusted to fall primarily on Sundays, with a monthly Saturday Eucharist in the chapel. We added a regular Contemplative Candlelight Eucharist on Sunday evenings, which has been well-received. It's also given our parish a chance to experiment with the diversity of liturgy offered by the worldwide Anglican communion.

There have also been additions to our worship space. Most notably, the return of an Altar to the east end of the Church and the historic and beautiful bishop's chair, which previously lived in a hallway. This has opened up a new worship space where we hold weekly Morning Prayer liturgies on Monday mornings and occasional Sunday evening services. We received a gorgeous missal stand, handcrafted from rosewood by the Rev. Robert Chiles. Other gifts that have deepened our worship experience have been refillable candles for the seven-branch candelabra, new pottery chalices and patens for Advent and Holy Week, wheelthrown by Larry Allen, an award-winning African American potter from Leeds, Alabama, new processional torches and torch stands. A member also repaired pews and refinished the table we use for candle lighting on Good Friday and contemplative services.

We also have a brand new worship space—the Sanctuary Garden Chapel that we will begin utilizing this year!

Attendance has steadily increased this year, with the most significant growth at early service on Sunday morning. A service that once had only 15-18 in attendance now pushes 40 worshippers most weeks. Participation in lay worship leading roles has also increased.

In 2023, we celebrated 229 services of Holy Eucharist. Through baptism, we welcomed 13 new members into the household of God, up from 6 last year.

ACOLYTE GUILD
Jeremy Lee, Ministry Leader

The Acolyte Guild at St. James is a multigenerational ministry. As worship leaders, acolytes serve God by assisting the clergy each Sunday during the 10:15 a.m. service. In addition to Sunday services, our acolytes serve during weddings, funerals, and other special services at the church like Lessons and Carols and Evensong. Acolyte positions include crucifers, torchbearers, Gospel book bearer, thurifer, banner bearer and kite bearer. In order to be an acolyte, you must be at least eight years old and attend a short annual acolyte training session. In 2023, we gained 2 new acolytes. We would like to continue to grow our ranks. Adults and kids over 8 are welcome to join! Contact Jeremy Lee at jlee92505@yahoo.com or (828) 777-9612 with any questions and inquiries.

ADULT CHOIR
Brad Gee, Director of Music Ministries and Organist

The music program at St. James continued to flourish in 2023. It is a privilege to serve as Director of Music Ministries and Organist and to oversee music for the wide variety of services we offer, including Sunday morning Eucharist, Evensong, and Celtic services. I am grateful and honored to have been at St. James for 22 years. As Director of Music Ministries, I attend weekly staff meetings and liturgical planning meetings; schedule the tuning of the pianos and organ; select, order, and rehearse music for the choir; and practice organ voluntaries and hymns for the services, among other responsibilities. The three groups which comprise the music program at St. James are Allelu!, St. James Choir, and Handbell Choir. The handbell choir is conducted by Linda Hill, and Allelu! by Lisa Whitfield. Each group maintains a regular rehearsal schedule and provides music for Sundays and holy days throughout the year.

The St. James Choir sings for most of the 10:15 services. Additional highlights of the year include services of Choral Evensong, Advent Lessons & Carols, Christmas Eve, and Holy Week. We again offered two services of Advent Lessons & Carols which were very successful and relieved both parking and safety concerns for the standing-room only congregation.

The Celtic services and candlelit contemplative services continue to touch the St. James congregation deeply, and these feature quiet music in the style of Taizé chant, world music, and responsorial songs.

One of the challenges we faced in 2022 was moving out of the church for summer and worshipping in the parish hall. In order to facilitate this, we rented an Allen electronic organ which was wonderful to have.

Another milestone in 2023 was signing a contract with Lincoln Pipe Organs to enhance our organ with four 32-foot electronic sounds, and to add harp, chimes, and celesta as well. To enable this, the current organ electronic system will be updated which will give the possibility of recording/playback, self-tuning, and a sequencer.

It is a pleasure to work with our Rector Fr. David Henson and other staff members of St. James. I am deeply grateful for the spirit of collegiality and sense of mission and ministry with which we serve. The Music Ministries Mission of St. James is "worshipping, praising, and serving God together through music." We continue to strive for this goal in the future.

ALLELU!
Lisa Whitfield, Director

Allelu! is a folk-style contemporary praise music group that leads the music for the services on 2nd Sundays at 5:00 (including Taizé services) and 5th Sundays at 10:15. Allelu! also responds when called upon for funerals, special services, church events and even the Children's Christmas Pageant. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays 5:15 – 6:15 in the church.

A rehearsal schedule is posted on Lisa's office door and newcomers are welcome to become part of the group. Currently, members include Debbie Murdoch, Philip Correll, Doug Woofter, Larry Blackman, Elizabeth Tate, Lee Burdett, Beth Beasley, Dave Haskell, Bill Burdett, Steven Studebaker, Linda McFadden, Philip Wiehe. Lisa Whitfield can be reached at farm3346@gmail.com or 828-388-0377.

Allelu! music is chosen from the 1982 hymnal, Lift Every Voice and Sing (LEVAS), and Wonder, Love and Praise (WLP) – all in the pew book racks. Music ranges from old traditional tunes to classic and contemporary hymns and Taizé selections. Director Lisa Whitfield chooses hymns and anthems based on the liturgical themes and weekly readings using the Episcopal Musician's Handbook as a guide.

ALTAR GUILD
Sallie Carr, Ministry Leader

The St. James Altar Guild continues to provide a vibrant, critical ministry for our parish. We continue to set and clear the Lord's Table for the weekly Wednesday Healing Service, the 5:00 Saturday (monthly), the 8:00 Sunday, the 10:15 Sunday, and the 5:00 Sunday Eucharists. We continue to maintain the linens and vessels needed for the services. We are happy to have added a few new members and continue to invite additional members to join including men, women, young people and families. The Guild co-chairs participate in the quarterly Worship and Liturgy meetings which helps maintain communication between all groups involved in the services and allows full collaboration between teams. We have made many adjustments to Eucharist preparations and are planning more quarterly meetings of our guild.

CHANGE RINGERS (ST. JAMES BELL TOWER)
Dorothy Fantle and Jim Loy, Tower Co-Captains
Robert Aldinger, Ringing Master

The change ringers were busy again this year, ringing for the Sunday 10:15 service each week, as well as for funerals, weddings, and special services such the Eucharist at the Diocesan Convention and Lessons and Carols. William and Bob Brackett "moved up" from learners to regulars in our bell band. Jim Wilkie joined Laurie Parkerson as a learner, and recently, Kit Matthew, an experienced ringer who has moved to the area, has joined us as well. Our goal for the new year is to add more ringers – men, women and youth are welcome to visit the tower and try your hand at this fun and brain stimulating ministry! For more information, contact Ringing Master, Bob Aldinger (robertaldinger@gmail.com) or Co-captains, Dorothy Fantle (dfantle@yahoo.com) or Jim Loy (jamesdouglasloy@gmail.com).

Celtic and Contemplative Services

The St. James Celtic Eucharist continues its quarterly worship rhythm with a combination of music from harpist Lelia Lattimore and Allelu! This service is well-attended. In 2024, the liturgies for this service will be revised and revamped to add more Celtic spirituality and flavor, returning the service to its roots.

A monthly contemplative service has been added during months when there isn't a Celtic service. This Eucharist is candlelit and quiet, emphasizing opportunities for silence. Volunteers from the choir join Brad Gee most months in providing Taizé-style chant music. This service began during our experimental time in the parish hall and was so well-attended and received, it was added into our regular service offerings.

Chalice Bearers
The Rev. David Henson

Our chalice bearing ministry, formally called Lay Eucharistic Ministers, continues to thrive at St. James. These ministers serve the Consecrated Wine at our Eucharistic services. In addition to Sunday services, they serve at special seasonal services such as Christmas or Maundy Thursday, as well as funeral services where there is communion.

After years of adjusted parameters during the pandemic, St. James has now returned to traditional ways of serving the Blood of Christ. We have also added new ministers at each of our services, growing this ministry's capacity.

Flower Guild
Nan Payne and Vicki Wright, Ministry Leaders

The mission of the St. James Flower Guild is to provide fresh floral arrangements and decoration for the church. We strive to create an atmosphere of beauty and reverence that will enhance our worship at St. James and reflect the glory of God.

The Guild consists of four teams. Each week an assigned team plans and arranges flowers for the Nave and Narthex. During the Advent, Christmas and Easter seasons, all guild members work together to create decorations appropriate to that season.

The Flower Guild receives no funding from the church budget and is funded by voluntary donations from the people of St. James who sponsor flowers in memory or honor of loved ones. We thank all who provide such support.

If you like flowers and want to learn or actively assist the Flower Guild, please contact one of the leaders. We will love having you join us!

Lectors
Rosemary Pace, Ministry Leader

A lector in the Episcopal Church is a person who reads the Holy Scriptures, except the Holy Gospel, during church services throughout the year. Prayer, practice, and presentation are essential to being an effective lector. St. James currently has 9 lectors for the 8 a.m. service, 25 for the 10:15 a.m. service and 5 for the 5 p.m. service. All who rotate. All lectors who are serving for all services at St. James are doing a great job and are a very nice and dependable group. It is a pleasure to work with them. I am available to train new lectors and would especially like to add young people to our roster. If anyone is interested, please call Rosemary Pace at 828-290-3131 or email roseteacher70@gmail.com.

USHERS
Patti Brotherton, Ministry Leader

The Usher Ministry has continued its services throughout the year in its goal to offer a warm welcome, and guidance, direction and assistance as needed for all congregants during church services.

There are 42 parishioners on the Usher roster to cover 3 regular services and other special event services; 14 new this year.

- Of the 42 people, 10 are inactive, 15 are involved in other worship/support ministries, i.e. altar guild, flower guild, chalice bearers & lectors, hospitality, safety. Frequently, people are serving concurrently with those ministries.

The past year challenges include:

- The closure of the Nave during the summer months for renovation; Services in Stillwell Hall; service time changes.
- Establishing consistent protocols and routines for Ushers to follow.
- Recruiting more parishioners to participate in this ministry.

Reflections on 2023

- Established a positive, consistent communication routine with clergy and staff.
- Quarterly worship ministry meetings with Rector most beneficial.
- Completed 3 overview/guidance sessions; oriented 14 new volunteers.
- Revised the Usher guidelines.

Going forward in 2024

- Assist with usher leadership transition.
- Update volunteers on any changes; continue to review guidelines as needed.
- Ideally, on any given weekend, a total of eight ushers are preferred: 2 for 8:00 am, 4 for 10:15 am, 2 for 5pm.
- Continue to coordinate with clergy to assess church needs and promote consistency.
- Support, acknowledge & appreciate the commitment to all who serve on the St. James Usher Ministry.

VERGERS
Kathryn Woodruff, Ministry Leader

Jeremy Lee and Kathryn Woodruff have continued to serve as Vergers at St. James for another wonderful year. The Verger's role is to assist the Clergy before, during, and after services and to ensure that they and the Acolytes, Lectors, Chalice Bearers, and Ushers have all the supplies they need at the proper times. In addition, we are well known for leading processions into and out of the sanctuary with our wooden verges! We are grateful to parishioner Kathryn Wells for creating and maintaining our beautiful Verger robes, and we remember gratefully former parishioner Bud Zalesky, who carved our verges years ago.

In mid-2023, we were thrilled to welcome the newest member of the Verger team, Patty Hanson. Patty has extensive experience serving as Acolyte, Lector, and Chalice Bearer in other Episcopal parishes. Under Jeremy's expert tutelage, she learned the responsibilities of the Verger role quickly and has been serving in our ministry for several months now. She is a valued member of our team. Thank you, Patty!

St. James Players
Philip Wiehe, Director

The St. James Players came into being in June, 2023, as a direct result of the move to Stilwell Hall for all worship services through the summer. Pondering what creative opportunities were before us, our Rector and I discussed that a liturgical or sermon drama in this flexible space. And so it was, in about six weeks, we cast and produced a sermon drama, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Jericho*. That success led to another play, *Nativity on the Square*, presented in the church on the last Sunday of the year. We have had nine different actors and several other key helpers for set design and construction, and technical assistance. Starting with this base of support, we anticipate expanding the troupe and offering four short plays in various worship services and settings in the next year and will consider offering a full length production in 2025.

Adult Faith Formation

Short Stories for the Soul
The Rev. David Henson

On the second Tuesday of every month at noon, a small group gathers to read and discuss short stories and how it speaks to our spiritual lives and faith. In the past year, we have read a diverse set of authors that span multiple genres and discussions have been lively and wide-ranging. These stories open up theological, spiritual, and personal avenues for discussion. Plus, there's lots of laughter and camaraderie.

This formation offering is open to all and lasts no more than an hour. Stories for the upcoming month are posted on our website under the Formation tab.

Searchers
Kathryn Wells, Ministry Leader

Searchers is a faith formation group focused on spiritual growth and living out our faith in the wider world. We are currently meeting the first and third Wednesdays of the month in the St. James room from 5:15pm – 6:30pm. If you are interested in going deeper in your faith and want the support of fellowship on your journey, please consider joining us. Contact: Kathryn Wells, wellsworksart@gmail.com (828) 243-2895.

Passage Meditation
Anne Murray, Ministry Leader

The Passage Meditation Group meets on Thursdays, 5:30-7:30 pm, during the 2023-24 program year. We have nine active members and attendance averages five people. During our time together we read and discuss aspects of Passage Meditation, watch a video, and meditate for 30 minutes. This group is a resurrection of the group that existed before the pandemic. We began the program year with an Introductory Workshop open to anyone interested in learning this approach to meditation. Our mission is to provide support and information for those interested in learning meditation skills and establishing a practice in this particular approach. With this form of meditation, developed by Eknath Easwaran, one concentrates on the words of an inspirational text or passage from one of the great wisdom traditions. Meditation is the first and the foundational point of an eight-point program which together form a complete spiritual practice for daily living. As the facilitator of this group, I attend workshops and other study activities to deepen my skills and commitment to Passage Meditation.

Youth, Children & Families

YOUTH AND FAMILY FORMATION

This year was an unusual year for youth ministry at St. James while our youth minister Christoph underwent chemo-therapy for a serious form of cancer. During that time, our ministry was supported and led by Bonnie Bryan, Diane King, and our rector David. At the request of the youth, EYC began meeting every other week instead of every month. The theme was "food, faith, and fun". Families and parishioners provided delicious meals for our youth during each meeting. We had Nerf battles, mini-Olympic games, plenty of Sardines (reverse hide-and-seek) as well as spiritual lessons and reflections. We held weekly confirmation classes and confirmed five youth members. Youth were heavily involved in our acolyte ministry as well.

Christoph was able to return briefly to lead EYC in late 2023. In 2024, EYC is beginning with Bonnie, Diane, and David+ as leaders until a new associate is hired.

CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION: CATECHISIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
Diane King, Ministry Leader

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd welcomes children ages 2-5th grade. It is Montessori-based with emphasis on the new Testament. Level II 3rd grade through 5th grade is an extension of Lesson I with more moral parables and studies of the Old Testament books and the Book of Common Prayer.

NURSERY
Teri Smith, Ministry Leader

St. James infant/toddler nursery is not open at this point. In the past year we have advertised to recruit staff, we have followed up with interested parties for the position, and made appointments to interview potential staff. However, we have been unsuccessful in hiring staff. We will continue to find ways to recruit and train and hope to have the nursery open in 2024.

EVANGELISM

CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WELCOMING COMMITTEE
Diane Jacober, Ministry Leader

The Welcoming Committee organizes the visitor cards, greeters, the name tags and the newcomer cafe events. Our goal is to welcome people and help them get connected to others and to ministries.

We were happy to see so many visitors to St. James in 2023. We recorded over 170 visitors during the year who shared their information with us. Sheila DeBettencourt leads a small group of volunteers who call visitors if their visitor card indicates they are looking for a church home or if they list their address nearby.

We continued to emphasize wearing name tags so we could all feel comfortable meeting new people and visitors. We made 110 total nametags, some new and some replacements. If you need a nametag, please fill out the form on the "welcome" stand in the Narthex or contact Diane Jacober.

Our first Newcomer cafe this year was held on February 2, and was a big success. We hosted 28 adults and 4 children. Our table hosts and scribes were inviting and helped answer questions that arose. Two more Newcomer gatherings were held in May and September where we hosted a total of 20 newcomers. During these events, we hear what the newcomers are looking for at St. James, share the ministry opportunities with them, and gather information for the electronic parish directory, called REALM.

In 2024 we plan to continue our work greeting, connecting, making name tags and holding Newcomer Cafe gatherings 3 times per year. We are looking for new members to help us with name tags in particular, but also to lead some of the activities. If you would like to join the Welcoming Committee, please contact Diane Jacober.

PARISH LIFE

HOSPITALITY GUILD & AUXILARY
Sandra Winecoff & Dorothy Fantle, Ministry Leaders

The Hospitality Guild and its cadre of volunteers continued its mission to provide a warm welcome to all and provide opportunities for the members of the parish to gather. In February, the guild hosted a volunteer appreciation tea to express our gratitude to members of the auxiliary. Volunteers who prepare food, bake for Sunday coffee hours, serve at events, set up and clean up were treated to a Sunday afternoon tea at which they didn't have to lift a finger! On Easter, breakfast was served between services to a large crowd. After two years, it seems this has become an annual event. The Sunday crowd gathered weekly at our social hour after the 10:15 service – in the Spring and Summer, known as "Lemonade on the Lawn." Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple visited in July, and we honored confirmands with a reception.

We said goodbye to Reverend Christie in August with a special reception after the 10:00 service, and a large crowd sent her off with love and good wishes. In September, we welcomed fall with the annual church picnic, serving everyone's favorites – hamburgers and hot dogs with all the fixings! November and December were busier than usual, as the Diocese of WNC held its annual convention at St. James, and the guild and volunteers helped with logistics, registration, and refreshments and meals. Not longer after that, the Mexican Consulate set up shop in the Parish Hall for a week to help immigrant families with paperwork. The Guild collaborated with the Outreach Commission to welcome the staff and to keep the coffee brewing and other refreshments available. On Christmas Eve, hot chocolate and cookies were a hit after the very successful Christmas pageant presented at the 10:15 service. We are grateful to be able to bring people together through social

activities. New members of the Guild (leadership team) and the Guild Auxiliary (volunteer as able to bake, prepare food, decorate/set-up/clean-up for events and assist with Sunday coffee hour) are welcome! Contact Sandra Winecoff (winecoff2000@yahoo.com) or Dorothy Fantle (dfantle@yahoo.com).

FUNERAL RECEPTION COMMITTEE
Hardy Chandler, Ministry Leader

The Funeral Reception Committees provided five receptions during 2023. Since the church services were being held in Stillwell Hall during the summer months, one of the receptions took place in the St. James Room, but all the others were in the Parish Hall.

Due to the retirement of two of our Committee Co-Chairs, we now have Three Funeral Reception Committees instead of four. The volunteers from their committee were dispersed into the other three groups.

There are a total of 51 volunteers participating on the three Funeral Reception Committees, but we are always in need of extra workers. Our goal for 2024 is to continue providing this special ministry with love and devotion to our St. James parish family when a death occurs.

FUN FORCE,
THE UNITY AND TOGETHERNESS TASK FORCE
Laurie Parkerson, Ministry Leader

The task force was formed with the mission of creating opportunities for all parishioners to gather in fellowship. We hosted a crawfish boil in June 2023. The event was attended by over 100 happy parishioners and featured an opportunity to feast on crawfish, enjoy side dishes from Daddy D's Soul Food and— dunk the rector!

In 2024, watch for an Art Gala in spring and a repeat of our crawfish boil after Lent.

FOYERS DINNER GROUP
Laurie Parkerson, Ministry Leader

Our Foyers program has been rolling along very well this year. We had 10 groups of participants in spring, and 7 in fall. The groups have been creative – one hosted a costume gathering for Halloween, and another hosted a breakfast pajama party. The randomly matched groups of 6, 7, or 8 people meet for meals and fellowship, usually about 3 times per session. The mission of Foyers – to provide an opportunity for parishioners to get to know each other in a more intimate setting - is being realized in the form of St. James members, newcomers and the old guard alike, developing meaningful friendships.

Prayer Shawl Knitting Group
Laurie Parkerson, Ministry Leader

St. James now has a prayer shawl knitting (or crocheting) group. The group meets every 4th Tuesday to create and offer prayer shawls as tangible symbols of love to members of the community who are dealing with life's challenges. Knitters and crocheters of all skill levels are welcome to join us for our meetings or to make prayer shawls at home on your own. So far this year, over a dozen shawls have been completed, and 7 have been given to grateful recipients.

As life is unraveling we knit it together – hand to hand, heart to heart.

Common Ground
Ann Brönner, Ministry Leader

Common Ground is a new group (named by Kathryn Wells - Thank you!) that meets once a month during the time that EYC Youth Group takes place. Currently that is the first Sunday of every month at 6:15 pm. The purpose of this group is for a casual drop in dinner (with a food truck at Southern Appalachian Brewery one block from St. James and after the 5 p.m. service) to easily get to know others at St. James. It also provides a low barrier activity to be able to bring others who may be brand new to church activities or may not usually attend church to meet some of us. All are welcome. Occasionally we read and discuss a topic of mutual interest. In the past 4 months since this started, about 10-20 folks have attended each time.

Yoga
Dianne Hunter, Ministry Leader

St. James offers yoga to parishioners and non-parishioners on a no-fee basis. Participants are asked to sign a waiver and there is a voluntary contribution to St. James Outreach in the form of a collection basket located next to the sign in roster. To date, we have collected over $400 for Outreach. Instructor, Dianne Hunter, is certified to teach yoga and is further credentialled through the Yoga Alliance. She holds several special certifications in yoga for osteoporosis, yoga for arthritis, yoga for low back pain and chair yoga. She also carries liability insurance.

We have adapted the yoga offering to match attendance. When chair yoga was too Thank y, we offered back-to-back classes of vinyasa, "slow flow" followed by chair yoga. When the number of steady participants dwindled in chair yoga, we consolidated to one class. Now we have a steady base of five participants but anticipate a post January 1 increase. We have a mix of St. James and non St. James members but all contribute to Outreach. Our practice is well suited for incorporating liturgical focuses such as "stillness" from Advent or abiding gratitude at any time.

Thank you to Mindy for consistently communicating about yoga in the St. James bulletin, Teri Smith and Perry for facilities and Christoph for sharing his spectacular sound system.

St. James Women's Group
Diane King, Ministry Leader

St. James Women's Group welcomes all to fellowship and fun. This ministry has enjoyed hikes, luncheons, and parties at homes. It is a support ministry to all women. We meet monthly or bi-monthly.

Single Women's Group
Diane King, Ministry Leader

Our single women's group welcomes singles, widows and divorcees. We meet monthly or bi-monthly for fellowship and fun. It's a great support group and ministry. Events vary from hikes, gatherings at a home, and other events.

Men's Fellowship Breakfast
Mo Rainey, Sub-Ministry Leader for Charles Medd

The men of St. James meet for a monthly fellowship breakfast on the second Tuesday of the month at 9 a.m. They meet at various local restaurants to have fun and enjoy getting to know one another.

Justice & Mercy

Outreach Commission
Alex Kealy, Anne Valentine, and Dorothy Fantle, Ministry Leaders

The St James Outreach Commission supports and promotes hands-on ministry as well as financial assistance to those in need in our local community, the nation, and the world. We are committed to informing the parish of and inspiring Christian response to social and justice issues and challenges.

With so much need here and abroad, the Outreach Commission continues to stay abreast of needs and welcomes new ideas for solutions or contributions that we can make as representatives of St James. In 2023, with the Vestry's charge to engage our growing congregation, we focused on increasing opportunities for hands-on projects of various kinds.

We tried a team approach to chairing the Commission, which has worked well to spread out the responsibilities and grow as a group. We instituted an improved system of reviewing income and expenses. We appreciate the many unrestricted gifts we have received from the parish and community, including regular donations from the Yoga class, which allow us to respond to urgent needs when they arise.

Who/What we supported in 2023:
- Supported our Companion Churches in Cuba who continue to experience serious food scarcity and lack of funds for their own outreach programs; Our Little Roses girls who continue to thrive in their English lessons provided by St James' provision of an English tutor; and our missioner in South Africa, Jennie McConnachie, and her work with Touching Acts, a school for children near the former Itipini community.
- Developed plans for an exciting new spring event "Harmonies of Hope" to replace the long-running Candlemas concert which raises funds for hunger relief in Henderson County. Donations will go to The Storehouse, Interfaith Assistance Ministry and the Hendersonville Rescue Mission in 2024, with plans to transition to making donations to the Henderson County Hunger Coalition in 2025.

- Celebrated Martin Luther King Day with other community groups bagging 2,800 pounds of rice & beans for The Storehouse on MLK Day of Caring.
- Prepared "Welcome" bags for the migrant workers returning to our county for spring and summer planting/harvest. Packed 100 backpacks, and we continued our annual collection and donations of long-sleeved tee shirts, ball caps, work gloves and work pants for those same migrant workers.
- Supported asylum seekers released from ICE detention at Stuart Detention Center and those incoming from Afghanistan and Ukraine.

- Continued to sponsor and participate in the Henderson County Hunger Walk which raised over $10,000. This year's walk was named in honor of our beloved and missed Carroll Toole.
- Sponsored along with Holy Family, a very successful Back-to-School event at La Capilla for returning St James and La Capilla youth. Provided gift cards for school supplies.
- Supported the Creation Care Ministry which continues to lead environmental issues at St. James.

● Provided continuing financial support to the St. James Carpenter's Club to provide the Henderson County Housing Assistance Corporation with supplies and labor for small fix-up carpentry projects for local physically-challenged individuals.
● Participated in Fall Habitat Blitz Build
● Donated funds through Episcopal Relief and Development to support victims of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and to the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem to support humanitarian work in Gaza and Israel.
● Orchestrated monthly collections of food, hygiene supplies and other needs for local food pantries.

● Continued fundraising for Dream Scholarships. Sponsored 2 AB Tech students for a Community Foundation program that enables them to qualify for in-state tuition, hopefully more to come.
● Supported Henderson County Education Foundation "Grow Our Own" scholarship program.
● Collected shoes, hygiene items and other supplies for Church of the Advocate - many opportunities to serve meals, attend worship and support their ministry for the unhomed in Asheville.
● Hosted Adult Formation in November with guest speakers from Rescue Mission, Project Dignity and Safelight, focusing on women's issues in the community, and are looking forward to adding Project Dignity to our active programs.
● Hosted the Mexican Consulate so they could provide assistance to local Mexican immigrants. Collaborated with hospitality guild to welcome consulate staff and provide refreshments throughout the week.

The Thursday Thrift Shop
Elaine McElhinney and Margaret Langston, Managers

The Thursday Thrift Shop had record sales in 2023. The addition of cash registers in February improved efficiency and accuracy. We also were able to determine total sales for each department, which was a valuable tool for pricing items. Knowing where to make some small price adjustments was very helpful.

In November our Board chose 22 organizations who will receive gifts in January. Those organizations include The Hendersonville Rescue Mission, The Free Clinics, The Medical Loan Closet, Homes for Youth, Our Little Roses, The Storehouse, Feed the Kids Coalition among many others. The Board will meet again early in January finalize the amount going to each organization and we expect to approve gifts totaling approximately $100,000 for distribution. This is about $30,000 more than last year.

The Thrift shop also donates several bags of clothing to the Rescue Mission and to Goodwill every month..
The Thursday Thrift Shop welcomed 5 new volunteers to our ministry in 2023 We now have a total of 53 active volunteers and we're always ready to welcome more.

We appreciate the support of the St. James parishioners and members of the local community who keep our shop stocked with donations and for our loyal customers who return each week to shop.

We still have a very generous consignment program, probably the best in the area. The consignor receives 60% of the sale price. For information on what type of items can be consigned please call the shop during business hours at 828-693-3865. You can also call ahead to schedule a time to bring items in for us to look at.

The shop is open on Monday and Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. for donations and consignments and on Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. for sales.

Thursday Thrift Shop Board Of Directors Meeting 01/08/2024

(TS Outreach Gifts Approved by BOD for distribution in January 2024)

TS BOD Approved Recipients (Ref #)	Thursday Thrift Shop's Outreach Mission Organization Gift List for 2024:	Outreach Organization Category:	2023 Gifts (Listed in descending $ Amount Order)	2024 Gifts (Listed in descending $ Amount Order)
1	Hendersonville Rescue Mission (Women & Children Shelter Prg)	Our Community	$ 6,000	$ 8,500
2	The Free Clinics	Our Community	$ 5,500	$ 7,500
3	Homes for Youth	Our Community	$ 5,000	$ 7,100
4	Pisgah Legal Services (Client Emergency Assist Fund	Our Community	$ 5,000	$ 7,100
5	The Storehouse	Our Community	$ 5,000	$ 7,100
6	Thrive	Our Community	$ 5,000	$ 7,100
7	Calvary Episcopal 'Food Pantry Prg'	Our Community	$ 4,300	$ 6,100
8	First United Methodist (Backpack Program)	Our Community	$ 4,300	$ 6,100
9	Feed the Kids Coalition	Our Community	$ 3,500	$ 5,000
10	Vocational Solutions	Our Community	$ 3,500	$ 5,000
11	Dream Scholarships (Henderson Cnty Community Fundation, 401 N. Main St, # 300, Hendersonville, NC 287921) 828-697-6224	Our Community	new in 2024	$ 5,000
12	Our Little Roses (Frank & Ethlyn Fund)	Our World Org.	$ 3,000	$ 4,300
13	St James Church (EYC - Episcopal Youth Community)	St James Church	$ 3,000	$ 4,000
14	Cuban Assistance Program - Food & Supplies	Our World Org.	$ 2,500	$ 4,000
15	Grow Our Own (Henderson Education Foundation Fund)	Our Community	$ 2,500	$ 3,600
16	La Capilla de Santa Maria (181 Saint Marys Dr. H'ville, NC 28792. http://www.lacapilla.org/ (828) 698-7433 (For Insurance & $500 for Discretionary Fund)	Our Community	new in 2024	$ 3,500
17	Literacy Connection' (Previously called 'Blue Ridge Literacy Council')	Our Community	$ 1,800	$ 2,500
18	Children & Family Resource Ctr (851 Case St, H'ville, NC 28792) 828-698-0674	Our Community	new in 2024	$ 2,500
19	Project Dignity of WNC	Our Community	$ 1,500	$ 2,100
20	Medical Loan Closet (1225 7th Ave E, Hendersonville, NC 28792) 828-692-9005	Our Community	new in 2024	$ 1,500
21	Guardian Ad Litem (1347 Spartanburg Hwy, H'ville, NC 28792) 828-694-4215	Our Community	new in 2024	$ 400
				$ 100,000

Thursday Thrift Shop's Outreach Mission Gifts:	2024
Sales Generated Thursday Thrift Shop's Outreach Gift Fund for 2024:	$ 100,000
BOD Approved Gifts to be drawn from Outreach Fund for distribution in 2024:	$ 100,000
Remaining "Unassigned' Outreach Funds available for Gifts later during Year:	$ -

ST. JAMES CHARITIES
Jan Shefter, Ministry Leader

Grant applications were accepted from local nonprofit organizations (501(c)(3) from March 2023 until May 15, 2023. Site visits were made in June and July with grants distributed in August.

The Board recommended and the Vestry approved that the following grants be awarded totaling $22,398.00:

- Blue Ridge Literacy Council, $2,998, for continuing purchase of new and updated teaching materials
- Boys & Girls Club, $3,000, for Fueling Great Futures, continuing to fill the gap in funding for lunches needed during school breaks and teacher in-service days
- Bullington Gardens, $1,000, for Student Raised Gardens
- Children & Family Resource Center, $3,000, for Full Tum, Dry Bum, a project which distributes formula and diapers to parents and babies in need
- Hendersonville Rescue Mission, $2,000, for Reducing Hunger
- Interfaith Assistance Ministry, $3,000, in support of a new initiative their Mobile Pantry
- Love & Respect Community, $1,000, for Recipe for Necessities, distributing basic needs to those who are homeless and recovering from substance abuse
- Project Dignity, $2,400, for purchase and distribution of feminine hygiene supplies for one month

- St. Gerard House, $2,000, for an outdoor classroom
- The Free Clinics, $2,000, for the Diabetes Program

Since 1988, over 100 different agencies have been awarded a total of $669,306.00.

Thank you to the Board members who have fulfilled their term: Derek Allen, community member and parishioners Larry Burge, Jan Shefter, and Fred Wright. New Board members beginning in 2024 are: Don Cooper, community member and parishioners Ellen Lind, Suzanna Waddell, and Bob McCartha.

Respectfully submitted,
Board members Sharon Burlingame, David Reese, Cheryl Scott, Anne Valentine, Paula Irving, Claire Moss, Debbie Murdoch, and Kim Taylor

HOME REPAIR MINISTRY
Bill Burdett, Ministry Leader

The St. James Home Repair Ministry provides hands-on housing repairs and construction assistance in support of the Henderson County Housing Assistance Corp. (HAC) home repair program. The group consists of approximately 25 volunteers, divided into three teams, with each team working one Saturday morning every three months. There is also a team that works every third Tuesday morning. Teams work under the supervision of a staff member of HAC and provide services for the disadvantaged folks in Henderson County. All projects are screened and provided by HAC. The tasks that are generally performed include floor repairs, painting, building or repairing decks, steps and or wheelchair ramps with an emphasis on health and safety issues.

In 2023, St. James volunteer teams worked 17 project days serving 8 homes/21 individuals. Your help contributed to HAC's overall home repair program serving over 120 individuals with more than 400 repairs. This year, 58% of our clients are seniors and 37 % have less than 30% of the area median income (extremely low income limits). 82% of our home repair clients have a disability.

The funding for the Home Repair Ministry has primarily been provided by contributions from the St. James Outreach Commission and various grants.

All interested persons are invited to join. While carpentry skills are a plus, a desire to help people in need and to enjoy good fellowship with other parishioners are the only requirements. If interested, please contact Bill Burdett at 828-693-6036.

CREATION CARE MINISTRY
Mary Lance, Ministry Leader

Ongoing projects for the Creation Care Ministry included educational exhibits in Stillwell Hall, topics included:
Ten Easy Things You Can Do For the Environment
- Recycling Styrofoam
- Food Waste
- What to Recycle

Unfortunately, lack of space during the renovations curtailed other planned presentations.

Parishioners filled the Used Battery Collection box in the parish hall reception area with over an estimated 3000 batteries which were taken to the recycling center.

In February three members attended the symposium presented by Creation Care of WNC gaining many new ideas and inspiration.

With Building and Grounds, we explored the feasibility of solar installation at St. James to reduce our electrical bills and our carbon footprint. Two companies made site visits and one made a detailed proposal.

With Spring came Earth Day Work Day with parishioners sprucing up the grounds, mulching, making rock borders, digging up invading plants, planting trees, and hosting a plant swap. Father David explored our call to care for our creation and one another during formation time.

Summer found Creation Care members participating in planning sessions for the new Community Garden and Sanctuary Garden Chapel. Plant sharing continued.

This Fall, Creation Care places 13 new recycling receptacles in common areas and offices to encourage thoughtful recycling. We have also begun a weekly tip in the bulletin on how individuals can help our environment. Thoughtful reflections on Creation Care also continue in the Epistle.

To bring the year to a close and to recognize the accomplishments at St. James, Creation Care Ministry has applied for the Cool Congregation Grant in two categories: Community Inspiration and Sacred Grounds.

Creation Care Ministry invites interested parishioners to join us in 2024 as we continue to explore ways to care for God's Creation. Please contact Mary Ann Ransom, the 2024 CCM ministry leader.

COMMUNITY GARDEN
Dennis and Victoria Flanagan, Ministry Leaders

In June 2023, conversations began about the possibility of a community garden here at St. James. At least a dozen enthusiastic parishioners suggested that the long-unused land to the north of the Cox House along Grove Street would be the perfect location for this new opportunity. This giving and teaching garden will become a community asset with several raised beds, providing ministry space for the parish and fresh produce for those in need.

Funds and materials were donated and the project commenced. Garden beds were built on site and three water spigots were installed thanks to two very generous donors. In 2024, vegetable seeds will be planted along with starter plants. Grow bags will be added for root vegetables.

Dennis & Victoria Flanagan, both NC state Extension Master Gardeners received consent to add this area to the approved sites for NC State Master Garden Volunteers. This will increase community visibility and potential Master Gardener training for interested parishioners.

Each raised bed will be available for adoption by individuals, families, or organizations. Two have already been adopted!
For more information, contact Dennis and Victoria Flanagan at hopewoodgarden@gmail.com.

CUBA MISSION
Jack and Tari Watson, Ministry Leaders

In 2023, the "Cubits" were hard at work nurturing the companionship relationship with our sisters and brothers in Cuba.

Highlights:
- Gift from the Thrift Shop $2500.00
- Fr. Leandro installed as rector of Todos Los Santos in Guantanamo March 4th

- Sent Fr. Leandro funds to repair the roof, to paint the church, to replace fans & lights, and to purchase chairs
- Sent Fr. Halbert funds to buy air conditioners for each bedroom in the dormitory, to replace bunk beds with individual beds, to purchase a television for the new meeting room and to repair the engine of the KIA
- Large shipment of food, OTC medications and other requested items were shipped to Cuba. Joe Brashier drove the boxes to Magaly, a Cuban travel agent friend in Miami (saving huge costs in mailing) and then she shipped them on to Cuba.
- Held informational meeting about companionship for any new, interested parishioners, and also involved them in packing food and meds for the shipment
- Sent funds to our companion churches with a group from St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Fairfax, Virginia who were visiting their companion in Palma Soriano, Cuba.
- Hosted a "Cuban Coffee Hour" to continue to highlight the Cuba companionship, create awareness and encourage participation
- The Rt. Rev. Rafael Morales Maldonado, current bishop of Puerto Rico, was selected to serve as Cuba's interim bishop at the retirement of Bishop Griselda del Carpio
- Global Missions grant ($4450) was awarded to Fr. Leandro's El Eden project, a micro -business model to produce and preserve fruits and vegetables for year round consumption by the most vulnerable in the parish. This will serve as a model for other churches in the diocese
- Sent funds to our companion churches with a group from Christ Church in Ponte Vedra, Florida who were visiting their companion church in Bolondron, Cuba
- Sponsored "Coins For Change" to collect money for changing lives by providing funds for intergenerational Vacation Bible Schools across the island
- Participated in the 2023 Friends of the Episcopal Church in Cuba's project "Feliz Navidad." Through the generosity of many individuals and churches throughout the US, all 52 of the Episcopal communities across Cuba enjoyed a Christmas meal and joyous celebration of the true spirit of Christmas
- Applied for a grant from the St. James Foundation to establish a "Welcome Table" providing lunch at San Lucas in Santiago three times a week to feed the most vulnerable and to provide breakfast to all parishioners every Sunday to address ongoing food insecurity

We would love to have others join us in this important ministry.

CANDLEMAS
Tari Watson and Dorothy Fantle, Ministry Leaders

On January 29th, West Indian-American concert pianist, Kimberly Cann took center stage on the grand piano for the 2023 Candlemas Concert at St. James. The concert was a multi-cultural celebration of piano music-from classical to modern, Americana to Caribbean, European, and everything in between. Kimberly's special treat and "wild card" as she described her husband, Aaron, wowed the audience as well with his mastery of the bass accompanied by the piano. Two for one was a highlight!!!

The Outreach Commission was pleased to report that the 2023 concert raised $11,000 for three agencies to help alleviate hunger in Henderson County: Interfaith Assistance Ministry, Hendersonville Rescue Mission, and the Storehouse.

The Outreach Commission is thankful to our ever faithful underwriters and ticket purchasers who make this event a success each year. Look for new things to come in 2024!!!

FEED THE KIDS
Patti Brotherton & Carole Haskell, Ministry Leaders

Since 2009 FTK has prepared and served meals to kids at the Boys & Girls Club. Five teams rotate cooking and serving a meal every Friday.

FTK Team #1 consists of volunteers from St. James, First Congregational and Holy Family. St. James supports this ministry with many volunteers, donations and thankfully, the use of the church's kitchen for two days each Team 1 rotation.
Team # 1 has participated in 10 rotations in 2023. They have shopped, prepped & cooked 2200 meals and served over 1800 children. Generously, the volunteers accumulated over 362 volunteer hours in total and an average of 28-30 individuals per rotation.

Team # 1 has facilitated 3 "Food Safety" classes at St. James which are a requirement for anyone prepping and serving food. Jory Wilke enthusiastically leads this instruction. These classes are scheduled when needed.

Last February, Team # 1 hosted a "Mardi Gras Feast" at St. James to benefit the FTK Coalition. It was a most fun event featuring the menu served at the B&G Club (modified) and raised approx. $2000 for the Coalition.

In 2024, the rotation will continue on an average of every 5 weeks throughout this year. This ministry is a fun, enthusiastic, joy-filled effort that benefits so many, and gives them much more than just a meal! New volunteers are always welcomed. Future 2024 dates: Jan. 19, Mar. 8, Apr. 12, May 17, Jun. 28.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
PASTORAL CARE

ST. JOSEPH'S GUILD
Colleen Bell, Ministry Leader

Started in Fall 2023, St Joseph's Guild is comprised of a small group of experienced and trained parishioners who will provide emotional support and compassionate comfort for those in our parish at the end of life and their loved ones. Parishioners supporting parishioners.

LAY EUCHARISTIC VISITORS (LEV'S)

This year, our Lay Eucharistic Visitor ministry underwent two leadership changes, yet it remains one of our most active ministries from week to week. We have added additional ministers this year to grow our capacity to serve and bring the blessed Sacrament to those who cannot be with us in person.

In the past year, our ministers have gone on 115 visits to share Christ's Body and Blood with our members at home. This ministry means so much, reminding those receiving a visit of their continued importance as part of this church family. In order to remind those present on Sundays of our whole parish, we have also begun including a formal "sending forth" at the end of our 10:15 service in order to lift up and highlight this vital, but often unseen ministry.

After a health issue with our long-time, faithful coordinator Ellen Fields, staff member Christoph Herpel took over scheduling and organizing the ministry. Christoph also updated the liturgy and revamped the outdated bulletins our ministers take with them when sharing Eucharist. Unfortunately, his own health required a new coordinator to take the reins overseeing this ministry.

Thankfully, Kristin Huntley has agreed to serve in this capacity and we all look forward to her leadership in 2024.

FOOD ANGELS
Sara Rainey, Ministry Leader

The Food Angels Ministry has 12 active volunteers. In 2023, they provided meals to approximately 18-20 households, with some receiving multiple meals. The meals were taken to parishioners following surgeries, deaths and illness.

GREETING CARD MINISTRY
Bev Jackman & Patricia James, Ministry Leaders

Volunteers send get well, thinking of you, and condolence cards to parishioners who are ill or have lost loved ones.

The Advent Card ministry is coordinated by Patricia James. In 2023,pproximately 145 cards were handwritten or signed by members of the parish and delivered to 15 parishioners who are homebound or in care facilities during Advent. Cards were also sent to 14 families of parishioners who have passed away this year. The recipients were overwhelmed by the show of love from their parish. Thank you to all who wrote and signed the cards.

INTERCESSORY/HEALING PRAYER MINISTRY
Vicki Wright, Ministry Leader

The Intercessory Prayer List is compiled, updated and emailed by Vicki Wright. There are 20 people who actively pray the prayer list on a daily basis. Prayers are confidential. Prayer requests are submitted to Vicki by clergy, lay ministry leaders and parishioners.

ADMINISTRATION & COMMUNICATION

LIBRARY
Margaret Butler, Ministry Leader

The review of our library collection and replacement of some outdated books with those more relevant and suitable for a small church library continues. Please enjoy using the library as usual. To check out a book, follow the instructions on the red cart to the right of the door as you enter from the hall. The reference books on the shelves immediately behind the cart are to be used in the library only. The conference table and chairs in the library provide a comfortable place to use them or to browse the collection.

OFFERING COUNTERS
Sharon Miller, Bookkeeper & Financial Associate

We have a dedicated group of parishioners that come in pairs of two every week and count the weekly offering. Some of them have been counting for St. James for well over 15 years. We thank you for your dedication! If you would like to help with this ministry, please contact Sharon Miller at sharon@stjamesepiscopal.com.

VOLUNTEER RECEPTIONISTS
Mindy Campos, Director of Operations for Administration and Communication

Volunteer receptionists are a committed, knowledgeable, welcoming group of parishioners who work at the reception desk to ensure efficient and productive daily operations. This is a vital ministry and these volunteers serve as important representatives of St. James and are responsible for greeting guests, answering phone calls, and communicating with parishioners and the public in a friendly and efficient manner. Not only do they relay important information about St. James services and events but they also assist with various office and organizational tasks. Their work helps to create a welcoming, accepting, and exciting spiritual home for many. We currently have 10 volunteers who work once a week for either a morning or afternoon shift and we are grateful for their commitment and compassion for our community. If you are interested in becoming a substitute volunteer receptionist, please contact Mindy at mindy@stjamesepiscopal.com.

WEEKLY SERVICE BULLETINS AND EBULLETINS
Mindy Campos, Director of Operations for Administration and Communication

Bulletins are produced and printed for all three worship services: Sundays at 8:00 a.m.,10:15 a.m., and 5 p.m.
The ebulletin is sent every Friday and contains links to access the service bulletin and live-streamed services. They have become more interactive and convenient in allowing viewers to access information and events, RSVP for events or classes, and give online. Ebulletins continue to be an effective method of communication as we average a 66% open rate, which translates to around 500 people reading each email. Our email list has grown from 900 to almost 1,200 contacts in the past year.

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS
Mindy Campos, Director of Operations for Administration and Communication

We communicate our ministry through channels such as Realm, Facebook, Instagram, and local news media outlets. In 2023 we migrated to a new email marketing and digital marketing platform compatible with Realm, our church management platform. The new platform has made the communication flow more efficient and effective in releasing announcements, events, ebulletins, and *The Epistle*, our monthly newsletter. *The Epistle* is edited by parishioner, Amy Williford, and contains reports from clergy and lay leaders, and stories of new and long-time parishioners. The new platform has eased the printing process of *The Epistle* and has made possible sharing to social media.

Just as our email list has grown, so has our social media outlets. Our Facebook and Instagram accounts have each gained over 100 new followers in the past year. We have reached a larger audience on Facebook by utilizing advertising tools and boosting posts for special events and services. Social media contributors include Mindy Campos, the Rev. David Henson, and Brad Gee.

WEBSITE
Mindy Campos, Director of Operations for Administration and Communication

We have been working diligently with a local digital marketing organization to launch a new website that is attractive, dynamic, and interactive. We hope to make the parish calendar, viewing worship and ministry opportunities, and visitor information more accessible to parishioners and the public. We are grateful for a generous donation to the communications ministry which has made this possible. Parishioners Bob Coffey and Diane King have been enormously helpful in providing high-quality images for promotional use by photographing services and events in and around the parish.

HUMAN RESOURCES & POLICY

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Kathryn Wells, Ministry Leader

This committee was created by the reorganization of the parish organizational structure into 12 Resource Teams. This committee will not only help the Rector with Human Resource support but will also be a repository for collecting and developing standard operating procedures for the various ministries of the parish to help with the continuity of lay leadership.

CARING FOR OUR RESOURCES

BUILDING & GROUNDS

In 2023 Building and Grounds over saw the following projects:

- Largest project was the replastering of the Nave and Narthex as well as cleaning of stone work in the church.
- Installation of windows in offices facing courtyard
- Complete the installation of carpeting in offices
- Clean and seal rock above Narthex
- Repair walls, and windows in bell tower ringing room
- Replace roof and gutters over Music wing end of building

- Install programmable thermostats throughout building
- Map locations of all thermostats, fire extinguishers and CO-2 detectors
- Replace roof and gutters on Cox House
- Establish preventative maintenance program
- Installation of heat pump above choir room
- Co-ordination of Sanctuary Garden
- Assist in redecoration by Wed. Work Crew of the St. James Room

MEMORIAL GARDEN COMMITTEE
Nan Payne, Ministry Leader

The St. James Memorial Garden Committee constantly strives to maintain this very special place. We trim hedges, plant perennials and annuals according to the season and weed and deadhead each week of the growing season. We endeavor to create a place of peace and beauty for the living and those now interred within the garden. We encourage anyone who enjoys outdoor yard work to join us in this wonderful effort. We, likewise, encourage anyone considering end of life arrangements to give thought to being interred in this garden.

SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE
Robert Greene, Ministry Leader

This year, we have focused our efforts on monitoring the security cameras that have been installed around the exterior of the church, focused on entrances into the church proper. Two cameras have been added to our existing cameras so that we now have a better view of the entire perimeter of the church and grounds. The Safety and Security team consists of a dedicated group of church members who monitor each camera, and we have a recorder that stores the video 24 hours/day so that if there is a security issue any time of day or night, we would be able to review the video to determine what may have occurred. Our plans may include installing cameras inside the church where children are gathered, including a possible nursery in the future. Additional volunteers are needed to monitor future and existing cameras. Contact Robert Green if you are interested.

WEDNESDAY WORK CREW
Tom Cramer, Ministry Leader

Every Wednesday morning at 9 a group of handyman Fix- It –Up- Chappies meet in the lower parking lot to tackle the parish's Honey Do list which usually involves painting. This year we painted the Bell Tower ringing Room, St. James Room, ceiling and floor at Cox House, walls in school, two rooms in the Thrift Shop, all water stained ceilings, and the fence and arbor near the staff entrance.

If we aren't picking up donated furniture for the Thrift shop, we are shuffling office and bell tower furniture for window and carpet work (except for Mindy who does her own). Similarly we removed and reinstalled everything from the Nave and Narthex for the plaster repair and painting.

Our clever carpenters installed a white edge on the Sanctuary steps; jazzed up the St. James room woodwork, repaired furniture, put casters on the altar, made scenery and props for The St. James Players, installed door locks and weather strips, made pantry and crawl space doors at Cox House, and built a fence outside the Thrift Shop.

We spread mulch and wood chips, yanked out bushes, washed windows, and cleaned toys out of school radiators.

We will be doing inspections of doors, sinks, smoke alarms, and building exterior looking for trouble. Join the fun, contact Tom Cramer 262-627-0854.

FINANCE

Finance Committee
Lenore Threlkeld, Ministry Leader

The 2023 Finance Committee of St. James includes eight parishioners including the finance chair, the Rector and the Senior Warden. The parish treasurer serves as an ex-officio member. Our mission is to review monthly finances to ensure compliance with approved budgetary guidelines. Additionally we prepare and submit an annual operating budget to the Vestry for approval. We also review the annual outside audit and meet with our external auditors to review their findings and recommendations. In addition to these activities, the committee continued in 2023 to work closely with the parish treasurer to minimize the debt service.

Finances at St. James are transparent for any member. If you have a question about our finances, please contact Matt or Lenore who will happily help. We also post monthly updates and summaries on the board outside Mindy's office.

STEWARDSHIP

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
Janet Doyle, Ministry Leader

Purpose:
The Stewardship Committee encourages formation in the spiritual disciplines of gratitude, generosity, and faithful stewardship of all that God has provided for us and thoughtfully and prayerfully motivating all to commit to future support.

Program

- Reviewed 2023 program organized by The Episcopal Network for Stewardship (tens.org).
- Committee members wrote thank-you notes to those who do not pledge but gave.
- The tens.org chosen 2023 theme of "Rooted in Abundance," was approved, and Father David's suggestion to use John 10:10, "That they may have life & have it abundantly,"

was also unanimously accepted. Father David's beautifully rendered "tree of life" logo was incorporated into the stewardship materials—commitment card, appeal letter and thank-you note. The committee is very grateful to Father David and Mindy Campos for their work and great efforts toward completing those materials and incorporating them where appropriate including the church's home web pages.

- In early October, targeted appeal letters written by Janet Doyle and Father David requested commitments for 2024 were mailed to everyone in the church. Committee members prepared this mailing that included Commitment Cards and a return envelope. Near the end of October, Father David composed and mailed a postcard reminding all to pledge and inviting all to the blessing and celebration of our pledges on Sunday, October 29, Commitment Sunday. Father David also wrote and printed flyers twice during the two months to place in pews further enhancing the benefits of pledge commitments.
- We continued the practice of asking St. James members to either briefly speak or write about their appreciation of St. James and why they pledge at the weekly services in September and October. This was very well received again. We look forward to personal narratives in the future (AND, if anyone wants to volunteer to do this in Fall 2024, please let us know!).
- Epistle articles continued to emphasize stewardship and the importance of pledging to equip Vestry members to plan the 2024 operating budget.
- After pledges were received by the bookkeepers, committee members wrote personalized thank-you notes to each household that submitted a pledge card, so that each person who pledged received a handwritten note.
- Commitment Sunday: Traditionally held the last Sunday of October, this weekend again celebrated the receipt of commitments with blessings of the pledges and a festive brunch graciously coordinated by Elizabeth Henry and assisted by Mary Lance, to whom we are most grateful. As begun in 2021, committee members distributed special thanks (bagged daffodil bulbs) to parishioners at the 5 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. services as well, who do not attend the brunch after the 10:15 a.m. service.
- In late November committee members began telephoning those who pledged last year but not yet this year with gentle reminders not to forget to return the 2024 commitment card.

Commentary

Although pledges are still being received (and it is not too late to send in your commitment card!), as of January 4, 228 families had pledged $717,706 (continuing the increases trending recently in both numbers and amounts from last year–219 units had pledged $713,260) for 2024. This positive trend is good for the future of St. James. We are grateful to everyone who has been so generous to the church and our community.

Mindy Campos once again is a model of helpfulness, efficiency, superior skills, good cheer and humor as we move forward in this effort each year. The committee joins me in expressing overwhelming appreciation to her for all the work involved in this stewardship effort.

Members of the 2023 Committee: Janet Doyle, Ginny Faust, Elizabeth Henry, Mary Lance, Tom Marshall, Reverend Judith Reese, and Mo Rainey, with Father David, Ex-officio. Kathryn Wells kindly assisted in mailings too. (Stewardship Committee welcomes new members! If interested, please contact Janet Doyle.)

LEGACY GIVING COMMITTEE
Elizabeth Henry, Ministry Leader

The Legacy Giving Committee's purposes are (1) education on end of life preparation and (2) pastoral solicitation of legacy gifts for St. James. The Committee is comprised of Elizabeth Henry and Tom Morgan.

We are thankful for the legacy gifts of 22 past parishioners who have remembered St. James with legacy gifts since 1990, thus providing the funding for the St. James Endowment and other small endowments. There are 44 current parish members who have informed us that they have planned legacy gifts and are therefore members of the Legacy Society. This year the Committee contacted those members, and we created a small appreciation gift for each person.

We will continue to encourage congregants to include St. James in their estate plans, which will allow the St. James Endowment to support our parish mission and ministries. We plan to have an event in 2024 to thank Legacy Society members, to present their appreciation gifts, and to share information about how past legacy gifts have been used to augment our parish ministries and care for our facilities.

Legacy Society Members:
Anonymous (3)
Carol S. Adams
Peter Bain
Stephanie Richardson-Bain
Barbara Bond
George Bond
Katherine Burge
Larry Burge
Gene Carr
Sallie Carr
Debi Coffee
Carol Crotty
Virginia A. Faust
James Bradford Gee
Maureen Grant
Robert Grant
Elizabeth Key Keesee Henry
Matthew G. Henry
Cheryl Igou
Robert Igou
Bev Jackman
Don Jackman
James D. Loy
Kent M. Loy
Gordan Ludwig
Margaret K. Marshall
Charles Medd
John T. (Tom) Morgan
Dr. Charles G. Moreland
Mark Pace
Virginia Pace
Nan Payne
Clare Sahling
Cheryl Scott
T. Craig Smith
Steven Studebaker
Dr. Elizabeth Tait
Shirley M. Walsh
Donalee Wermeister
Sandy Williams
Cynthia Wilson
Kathryn Woodruff

ST. JAMES ENDOWMENT BOARD
Gene Carr, Ministry Leader

The St. James Endowment Fund is comprised of gifts and bequests that have been made over the years to St. James. Most have stemmed from legacy gifts. The fund is administered by a Board consisting of Vestry-appointed Communicants in good standing, the Rector, Senior Warden, the Treasurer, and the Chair of the Legacy Committee.
The current balance of the unrestricted Endowment Fund is approximately $1.3 million dollars, held in an investment account with First Citizens Bank. The funds available for distribution are up to 4 percent of the value of the fund based on a rolling average of the investment performance over the past three years.
Distribution awards may be used for: (1) outreach ministries, (2) seed money for new ministries and special one-time projects, (3) capital improvements and major maintenance projects of the parish. Applications are usually solicited in the spring of each calendar year, but because of unspent funds for 2023, we have a one time opportunity for new solicitations: applications are due by January 25, 2024.
In 2023, so far the Board approved awards of just over $19,000 as follows:

- $6400 for programmable thermostats throughout the parish. was recommended to be awarded.
- $4000 for the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem's Ahli Hospital in Gaza, West Bank, Palestine, to do 20 long-postponed ENT surgeries for children.
- $4790 to clean and seal the stones around windows in the Bell Tower
- $3200 to clean, repair, and seal the Narthex stones.
- $800 for a keyboard and stand for Allelu!

Sharing the

Saint James
Church

Welcome All.
Love All.
Serve All.

Visit Us

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Contact Us

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