

# THE MESSENGER

2023 VOLUME 3



ST. JAMES  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



# MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

The People

## CLERGY

**The Rt. Rev. Shannon Duckworth**  
Bishop

**The Rev. Lynn Hooks**  
Day School

**The Rev. Chris Duncan**  
Rector

**The Rev. Dr. Don White**  
Assisting Priest

**The Rev. Dr. Drew Harmon**  
Senior Associate Rector

**The Rev. Pat Lyle**  
Deacon

## STAFF

**Paul Allman**  
Facilities Manager

**Laurie Gaston**  
Parish Life Coordinator

**Melissa Parmelee**  
Director of Communications

**Samantha Chaney**  
Custodian

**Bridget Henderson**  
Head of School

**Jacques Pourciau**  
Director of Operations

**Austin Clark**  
Associate Organist

**Darell Lee**  
Day Porter

**Lashondra Smith**  
Custodian

**Eydie Comeaux**  
Director of Family Ministries

**Dwight Nichols**  
Sexton

**Shannon Gallier**  
Director of Music

**Cheryl Olinde**  
Director of Finance

## VESTRY

**Third Year**  
Anita Byrne  
Mike Fontenot  
Lolly Martin  
Alan Miller  
Robyn Richards  
Otey White

**Second Year**  
Chetwin Carter  
Ben Dampf  
Ann Holmes  
Bunny Hines  
Mary Pesses  
Lazette Phillips

**First Year**  
Will Benton  
Margaret Boudreaux  
Randy East  
Gary Field  
Alison Rodrigue  
Shirley Young

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# WHY DO WE SEEK TO GROW?

**THE REV. CHRIS DUNCAN**  
RECTOR

An old priest friend once told me, “Chris, every congregation will tell you that they want to grow, but then they will fight you tooth and nail to not grow.” First let me say, this has not been my experience at St. James and is quite frankly a cynical reflection by that priest. However, this statement got me thinking. Why do we seek to grow as a congregation in the first place?

To answer this question, I am immediately drawn to scripture where we find example after example of our call to selflessly reach beyond ourselves in hospitality and evangelism, but no passage is as clear as the Great Commission as found in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus directly ordered his followers, “Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations...” And so, we seek to grow!

Now with this said, we must remember that we do not cause a congregation to grow. Only the Holy Spirit can do that by moving within a person’s life. However, we can and must do our part as participants in this process. In other words, we can assist (or detract) from this possibility through our actions (or inactions). Earlier in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus instructs his disciples that in welcoming others we are in fact welcoming Christ himself. This led me to ponder, “How would our Sundays at St. James change if we had a deep commitment to welcoming everyone that walked through our door, both new and long tenured, as if we were welcoming Christ? Furthermore, how would the world beyond our doors change if we treated strangers or even our enemies in a similar fashion?”

Yes, we at St. James seek to grow, but not out of ego or a desire to increase pledging households. Instead, we seek to grow because the good news we have received from Christ is too good to be kept to ourselves and needs to be shared. We seek to grow because we do not conform to the world’s hate and fear and isolation but rather, we seek to be transformed as we also transform the world through the Holy Spirit with love, grace, and mercy. We seek to grow because Christ is with us always and gives us courage to go and make disciples, even when it makes us uncomfortable. Which leads us back to the questions posed earlier: How would St. James and the world change if we had a deep commitment to welcoming everyone as if we were welcoming Christ? Furthermore, how will you help make this change happen?

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

**Matthew 28:19-20**





# WHY DO WE SEEK TO GROW?

## An Addendum: When will we go back to 9 am and 11 am Sunday Services?

Fr. Joe, the Interim Rector before me, moved St. James Church from four Sunday services (7:30 am, 9 am, 11 am, & 5 pm) down to three (8 am, 10:30 am, & 5 pm). Beginning with my very first Sunday back in July 2018, I have been asked, "When are we going to go back to the old schedule?" The answer is in the math!

When Fr. Joe made this move, it was because there is a lot of research that supported that decision. Psychologically speaking, if the church pews are not consistently 40% or more filled at a principal service (such as 9 am and 11 am), then a person subconsciously asks themselves, *"What is wrong? Why is it so empty?"* On the flip side, when a congregation is consistently 85% or more filled, then a person says to themselves, *"There is no room for me. They don't need me."* These principles apply to both new and long-tenured members alike and neither of these scenarios is good. Therefore, the answer to the question of when we are going back to the old schedule is when we are consistently around 85% full at the 10:30 a.m. service so that we will be at least 40% filled when the services split. Or once again, the answer is in the math!



### In thanksgiving of our new members:

- David and Laura Johnson and family
- John Ryan McGehee
- Liliana Panda
- Kyndra Williams, Thelma Brown, and family

### In thanksgiving for those baptized at St. James:

- Rebecca Jane Boudreaux on June 11
- Andrew Bryan Shivers on July 16
- Nicholas Powers Kosovich on July 30
- 

### In thanksgiving for the birth of:

- Lane Rickey Taylor and Asher Hayes Taylor, grandchildren of Debbie Taylor on May 15.
- Grace Olivia Bomer, granddaughter of Patrick Broderick and Ann Adams and on May 27.
- Madeline Elise Hollingsworth, granddaughter of Pamela and Windy Gladney on June 1.
- Sophie Alexandra Stirling, granddaughter of BB and Chip Stirling on July 10.
- Charli Reese Fauchaux, granddaughter of Gail and Grady Fauchaux on July 11.
- Henry Marshall Povey, grandson of Catherine and Chris Harrell on July 12.
- Richard Harlow Lewis, III, son of Renee and Richard Lewis on July 21.

### In thanksgiving for the marriages of:

- Cammie Heroman, daughter of Rickey and Debbie Heroman, married Ryan DiMaggio, son of Duane and Carol DiMaggio, on July 22.
- Caitlin O'Banion, daughter of Joe and Jana O'Banion, married John Womack, son of John and Rhonda Womack, on July 29.



# MANY HANDS (OF ALL SIZES) MAKE LIGHT WORK: OUTREACH ACROSS GENERATIONS

THE REV. DR. DREW HARMON



One of my first tasks soon after I started at St. James three years ago was to better understand the state and shape of the church's various outreach programs. Through numerous calls and emails, I began to piece together the structure, and more importantly, get to know many who had been (and continue to be) integral in serving our community. I asked lots of questions about what had gone well, what could be improved, and what this next chapter could hold.

Now, this was August 2020, one of the peaks of the pandemic, so those visioning questions were perhaps the most challenging. I got all sorts of responses, like "I don't know" and "that's a great question" and, my personal favorite, "I believe that's what you're supposed to figure out!" All understandable in such a difficult time. But I also heard from people of multiple life stages a common refrain: a longing to have younger members participate in the parish's various outreach ministries. Parents, in particular, expressed a desire to serve alongside their school-aged children.

Much to my excitement, the Outreach Committee shared this desire to facilitate inter-generational opportunities to serve; they sensed its importance on levels both parish and personal. So we started imagining what it might look like for regular outreach opportunities to become more family-friendly. Beyond explicitly inviting families to participate, we shifted the times to serve. Instead of working our food pantry on midweek afternoons, for instance, Saturdays became food bank distribution days. During the seemingly endless season of Covid, dozens of volunteers from 8-to-88 would gather to register guests and hand out non-perishables. When regular programming began to return, the Outreach Committee also coordinated days dedicated to putting faith into action through projects amenable to all ages, and, often, these fell on a Sunday—a day when faith, family, and service were already at the fore.





# OUTREACH ACROSS GENERATIONS

Incredibly, we began to witness children and youth working shoulder-to-shoulder with the adults of the church. Together, they made greeting cards for individuals with developmental disabilities; they filled We Care snack bags to be offered to those in need of daily food; they put on gloves and began to pick up trash around downtown following a Sunday service. And if you ever attended one of St. James's monthly breakfast events, you'll have seen kindergarteners handing out utensils and jelly; third graders working with their parents to distribute groceries to folks who might need it; and high school juniors greeting neighbors experiencing homelessness.

Over the past couple of years at St. James, these sorts of scenes have become commonplace, even expected, but such inter-generational collaboration and connection is rare and coveted across denominations, with countless churches trying to curate the perfect environment for its growth. I am humbled to be able to witness these glorious snapshots of beauty and grace and power. And I pray that we might all come to appreciate each instance, each frozen pat of butter handed out by tiny hands, as a remarkable sign of the Spirit working in the life of that young person, in the life of their family, and in the life of the church.



*"I learned it was very nice to help other people,"*

shared Alexandra, pictured on the right.

The Pollard family volunteers with the Hearty Breakfast.



# ST. JAMES ON PILGRIMAGE



The practice of Christians taking pilgrimages to holy and significant locations to our faith became a common practice during the 4th century. In particular, the original practice began by visiting Jerusalem to connect with the places of Jesus' birth, life, crucifixion, and resurrection. Since then, this practice has expanded to other holy sites. This led a group from St. James Church to jolly ol' England where the foundations of Anglican theology and liturgy have their origins. Even if you are not an Episcopalian, the places visited are significant in the many ways they have impacted the world at large. Through these travels, the group joined their voices with the generations of the faithful that have gone before. In holy places like Canterbury Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, York Minster, Lindisfarne, and more, you can see how the stone steps are literally worn down by the millions of steps taken by the faithful over the years. Enjoy this small sample of pictures from their travels and join St. Joan of Arc on October 4 when Fr. Chris will share a presentation on the trip and each site visited.





# FELLOWSHIP

LAURIE GASTON



Although I have only been working at the church for the last eighteen months, there is one thing that continues to impress me: St. James' fellowship. I have not been a part of such an amazing group of people that truly care about each other and their church. All the fellowship events and groups are well attended and flourishing under the leadership of each group. After attending at least one meeting of each ministry, I am overwhelmed by the members' dedication and diversity of options for all ages. With Covid-19 restrictions lifted, the fellowship at St. James has taken off with increased attendance at events, new events, and renewed energy.

Foyer Groups are back with a vengeance, with over 70 parishioners participating. Foyer Groups gather purely for social purposes to enjoy one another's company, strengthen bonds of community, and meet new church members. There is no agenda or plan, just casual fellowship, and a refreshing meal. Groups consist of a cross-section of the congregation including singles, couples, young people, and retired folks. This year we had the largest number of groups and members that we have had in several years.

The James Gang is comprised of mostly retired individuals in our community who gather monthly for outings to stay active, involved, and build new friendships within the church congregation.

The St. James Bad Girls Book Club is a women's group that meets monthly to read and discuss timely books, enjoy an informal meal, and socialize. This past spring the group had so much fun and enjoyed their discussion to the extent that they continued to meet throughout the summer and have some interesting books coming up in the fall. We are working to create new ministry areas and to bring back ones from the past. The Young Adults group is working to get restarted with renewed interest from new church members and prior attendees of this group. Another new ministry is one for "Empty Nesters" and is slated to kick off with a get-together aimed at this group. More details on these two ministries are to come.

I look forward to seeing you at our events and getting to know each of you a little better.

## GUMBO

In June, the **Gumbo Committee** allocated \$10,000 to in-reach, \$10,000 to outreach, and the remaining was kept for Gumbo 2024.

- **In-Reach:** St. James has ordered new stoles in five of the liturgical colors to complete the sets already purchased.
- **Outreach:** the Outreach Committee has received the funds and will use it to make grants in the community, including a portion of the funds to start a new partnership with Front Yard Bikes

**Gumbo** is St. James' premiere opportunity for fellowship and involvement while we invite our downtown neighbors and day school families into our church home for a gumbo luncheon. Funds raised are dedicated to outreach and special projects of the church. Fifty volunteers are needed at each Gumbo event during Lent to bring our "pop-up" gumbo shop to life. Volunteers answer phones, take orders, serve, cashier, wash dishes, and greet visitors. **Mark your calendars for March 8, 2024**, for the next Gumbo event.



# PARISH LIFE AT ST. JAMES





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# MEET A FEW NEW FACES AT ST. JAMES



## EYDIE COMEAUX

*Director of Family Ministries*

Started June 2023

**Hometown:** New Orleans

## GET TO KNOW EYDIE

Eydie's golden doodle (pictured above), **Margeaux**, is the only girl in her family. They share the same birthday. "She has my heart."

Eydie is the **author** of several books. The one she is most proud of is on children's advocacy.

**Favorite food:** "Italian. I'm a big pasta fan!"

### Goal for this year:

"Create a pool of parishioners to support Christian formation so we can offer two separate classes based on age. I believe this will allow us to design a more exciting Sunday school experience for our children."

### Married to

The Rev. Andrew Comeaux



## GET TO KNOW AUSTIN

Austin has two spoiled long-haired **dachshunds**, Arthur and Tate, and an old cat, Fanny Mendelssohn.

**Married to** Shannon Gallier



### What does Austin enjoy doing while not working?

"I am a lifelong fiber artist and teach traditional knitting, spinning, and weaving. Since moving to Louisiana, my focus is on brown cotton and traditional Acadian textiles through my small shop, The Acadian Weaver. My work has been exhibited at the Hilliard Museum and featured in Garden & Gun magazine."

## AUSTIN CLARK

*Associate Organist*

Started August 2023

**Hometown:**

Jacksonville, Florida





# PROGRAMMING AT A GLANCE

## SNAPSHOT FOR SEPTEMBER

### Sunday, September 10

- Choir Sunday
- Adult Forum
- Children's Sunday School
- Youth Confirmation Class Continues
- Adult Inquirers Continue
- *Organ Recital*: Shannon Gallier

### Thursday, September 7

- EfM Resumes

### Tuesday, September 12

- St. Mary's Group

### Sunday, September 17

- Adult Forum
- Children's Sunday School
- Youth Confirmation Class Continues
- Adult Inquirers Continue

### Monday, September 18

- Bad Girls Book Club

### Tuesday or Wednesday, September 19/20

- The James Gang

### Sunday, September 24

- Episcopal School Sunday
- Community Connections Sunday (Outreach)
- Adult Forum
- Children's Sunday School
- Youth Confirmation Class Concludes
- Adult Inquirers Concludes

### Weekly Ministries:

- Rector's Bible Study on Tuesdays
- Senior Men's Bible Study on Wednesdays

### SNEAK PEAK FOR OCTOBER:

### Wednesday, October 4

- St. Joan of Arc

### Sunday, October 8

- Sunday Book Club

### Sunday, October 15

- Confirmation Sunday with Bishop Duckworth

## MUSIC MINISTRY

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

#### CHOIR SUNDAY

**10:30 a.m.**

As we kick off the program year, the choirs will resume their normal duties at the 10:30 am service after their summer break. Special music will include the beloved anthem "I was glad," by C. Hubert H. Parry (used at every English coronation since 1902). Coffee Hour will be hosted by the choirs, with a special welcome for our new Associate Organist, Austin Clark.

### IN CONCERT: SHANNON GALLIER

**3 p.m.**

Join us at 3 p.m. as Director of Music Shannon Gallier presents an organ recital to celebrate the new choir season, with music of Alain, Finzi, Bach, Price, and Duruflé. Program notes will be read by St. Francis and St. Cecilia Choir members, and a free-will offering will be **taken to help support the Choirs' 2025 residency at Worcester Cathedral. A reception will follow in Coleman Hall.**

### EVENSONG IN OBSERVANCE OF THE FEAST OF ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

**Sunday, October 1**

*5 p.m. with a Pre-service recital at 4:30 p.m. by Holden Miller, Associate Director First United Methodist Church, organist*

The St. James & St. Cecilia Choirs will begin the year by singing the Evening Office, with the music of Whittemore, MacDonald, Aston, alongside the festival cantata "Rejoice in the Lamb," by Benjamin Britten.

### EVENSONG IN OBSERVANCE OF ALL SAINTS'

**Sunday, November 5**

*5 p.m. with a Pre-service recital at 4:30 p.m. by Austin Clark, Associate Organist*

Join us for the second Choral Evensong of the season, as St. James and St. Cecilia Choirs offer music by Near, Sumsion, and Ireland. Special prayers will be said for those who have died since All Saints' last.



# FROM THE VESTRY

ANITA BYRNE  
SR. WARDEN

As this issue of The Messenger arrives, the march towards Fall activities is well-underway.

One fall activity here at St. James is the Vestry nominating and election process. The **Vestry Nominating Committee** was formed during the June and July Vestry meetings and is accepting nominations until August 30 for the 2024 slate. Serving St. James on the Vestry has been a great privilege and honor in my life. I encourage each of you to thoughtfully consider participating in this process by nominating yourself or others for consideration. My thanks to the Vestry Nominating Committee, chaired by Kyle Landrem, for leading this effort.



The **St. James Day School**, the Church's largest ministry, is kicking off a great school year with enrollment, finances, and operations in a strong position. The Vestry approved the new School Board members in the summer months, and Tyler Gray will serve as the chair for this school year. On behalf of the Vestry, thank you to each of you for your service and commitment to the Day School.

In **Capital Campaign** news, the Day School will also return with beautiful new windows in Werlein Hall. The window installation began in May with the summer break with the final installation complete before school began. The insurance settlement for the Ministries Center roof failure has also been negotiated and accepted with guidance from legal counsel. All repairs have been made with the building fully operational. The Historic Tax Credit applications are proceeding through the state process for the Manship Ministries Center and Kilgore Hall. This program is of great financial benefit to the upkeep of the campus.

Last summer, the **Health and Safety Task Force** was created to examine our current practice in comparison to best practices on a variety of fronts. A report of efforts was provided to the Vestry noting the addition of AEDs and first aid kits to multiple locations in the campus, reorganizing the security detail, offering a health and safety training on first response interventions (i.e., Stop the Bleed and hands-only CPR), and updating locks on the church. While the task force has ended, the efforts to ensure the health and safety of the congregation, staff, and school remain an ongoing endeavor.

I look forward to seeing you at one of the many wonderful fall activities in the life of St. James!

## NEW OUTREACH MINISTRIES PARTNER



### MISSION:

Create a safe place for youth to realize their intrinsic worth while FYB helps them to learn, grow & build.







205 N. FOURTH STREET  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70801  
225-387-5141  
CHURCH@STJAMESBR.ORG  
STJAMESBR.ORG

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# WORSHIP WITH US

## SUNDAYS IN-PERSON

8 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I  
10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II  
5 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II

## WEDNESDAYS IN-PERSON

12 p.m. Holy Eucharist II with healing prayer

## SUNDAYS ONLINE

10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II *YouTube*



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