



ST. JAMES
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE MESSENGER

2023 VOLUME 4

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

Cheryl Olinde
Director of Finance

Samantha Chaney
Custodian

Bridget Henderson
Head of School

Melissa Parmelee
Director of Communications

Austin Clark
Associate Organist

Darell Lee
Day Porter

Jacques Pourciau
Director of Operations

Eydie Comeaux
Director of Family Ministries

Alleaha Lopez
Family Ministries Intern

Rece Silcox
Communications Intern

Jaslyn Evans
Receptionist

Dwight Nichols
Sexton

Shannon Gallier
Director of Music

Ty'ree Montgomery
Custodian

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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WILL IT BE ADVENT 4 OR CHRISTMAS EVE?

THE REV. CHRIS DUNCAN

When looking at the church calendar this year, December 24th lands on a Sunday. Therefore, do we celebrate Advent IV or Christmas Eve on December 24? The answer is "Yes!" but I will return to the Advent IV/Christmas Eve question. First, I have to admit that the Church calendar can get confusing. The confusion is quickly evident anytime you try to figure out the date of Easter in any given year without googling it. By the way, page 880 in the *Book of Common Prayer* reveals the formula:



"Easter Day is always the Sunday after the full moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox on March 21, a date which is fixed in accordance with an ancient ecclesiastical computation, and which does not always correspond to the astronomical equinox. This full moon may happen on any date between March 21 and April 18 inclusive. If the full moon falls on a Sunday, Easter Day is the Sunday following. But Easter Day cannot be earlier than March 22 or later than April 25."^[i]

The formula shared above is not used in the Jewish calculation for Passover, nor is the same formula used by the Orthodox Church in their calculation for setting Easter. Yet, there is a reason why we do what we do within the Church. For instance, the convoluted formula listed above for finding the date of Easter was to ensure that the holiday fell on a Sunday during early spring.

Now, we come back to the question posed in the title of this article. Specifically, in 2023, December 24 falls on a Sunday. Therefore, this year, is December 24 Advent 4 or Christmas Eve? And the answer is, "Yes!" It is both. While everyone knows Christmas Eve, what is Advent all about? According to an Episcopal Dictionary of the

Church on the National Church's website,

"[Advent is the] first season of the church year, beginning with the fourth Sunday before Christmas and continuing through the day before Christmas. The name derives from a Latin word for "coming." The season is a time of preparation and expectation for the coming celebration of our Lord's nativity and for the final coming of Christ in power and glory."^[ii]





FROM THE RECTOR

This Advent IV/Christmas Eve convergence naturally leads to the question, *"How will St. James handle this?"*

Sunday, December 24

8 a.m. We will be celebrating Advent 4 only. This service will be a spoken Rite I service, as we would do on any other Sunday. In other words, this is not a Christmas celebration (no "Silent Night" or "Joy to the World") but allows the important Advent season to come to a graceful conclusion.

10:30 a.m. This will be the Christmas Pageant service, just as we have done the past several years on Advent 4. While we will start the service with the familiar Advent hymn of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel," we will officially switch to the Christmas celebration with the pageant and sing many favorite Christmas carols within the service. Look for more details to come regarding the pageant.

5 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. We will have our beloved Christmas Eve services at 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. with the full choir and guest musicians. We will also have a Carol Sing that starts at 4:30 p.m. before the 5 p.m. service.

Sunday, December 25

10:30 a.m. Once the presents are open and breakfast is consumed, join us at 10:30 a.m. on Christmas morning. Don't worry about dressing up, but rather join this small, intimate service for carols and lessons to ring in the Christmas Day celebration.

Finding the right balance can get tricky when the calendar has Advent IV and Christmas Eve sharing a day. However, we hope that this schedule will allow the good people of St. James to fully celebrate the Advent season while also lifting your voices in song and praise as together we declare,

"Joy to the World, the Lord is come. Let earth receive her King..."

[i] Book of Common Prayer, 1979, p. 880.

[ii] <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/advent/>

Advent & Christmas



DECEMBER

- 2 Advent Quiet Day
- 3 Advent Wreath Making
- 3 Advent Lessons & Carols
- 10 St. Nicholas Day
- 17 Christmas Feast
- 17 Christmas Pilgrimage
- 24 Children's Nativity Pageant
- 24 Christmas Eve Services
- 25 Christmas Day Service

CHRISTMAS EVE

Sunday, December 24

10:30 a.m.* Children's Nativity Pageant

5 p.m.* Festal Eucharist with organ, brass, and choir

7:30 p.m. Choral Eucharist with organ, brass, and choir

*Livestream on YouTube



FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION: TRAINING THE MUSICAL LEADERS OF TOMORROW

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC SHANNON GALLIER

One of the defining characteristics of the Music Ministry at St. James is our emphasis on the musical education of children. This emphasis can be seen in our use of the curriculum, ethos, and philosophy of the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM), an international organization that seeks to instill a love of singing and of great music. We aim to teach children not only how to sing, but why they should sing.

Every summer, the RSCM offers training courses around the country, where young musicians gather to experience working with some of the biggest names in sacred music. St. James has a history of our younger choristers attending these courses, and below we hear from Kaitlyn and Caroline Kelly, two veteran course-goers.

“The Royal School of Church Music has been a key part of my life since I was 14 years old. I was first introduced to the RSCM Gulf Coast Summer Course through the St. James Treble Choir in 2016. The musical impact this course has had on our lives is enormous. We have always loved being a part of choirs, but after attending RSCM, there was a new spark there, and we knew it was something we wanted to continue forever!

Over the years at RSCM, I have met many other choristers from across the country. Many of whom, I met in middle school, and I am still very close friends with as a senior in college! When my younger sister, Caroline, was finally able to attend the course, she quickly understood everything I had shared with her about RSCM. After her first year, she fell in love with the traditions and fun as well! After attending the course as a chorister for 6 years, I became a counselor for the 2022 course.



LEADERS OF TOMORROW

The experience of the shift from chorister to counselor was incredibly rewarding; I grew up going to the course and loving my proctors, so I love having the ability to serve in that leadership role for our choristers now! The connections and friendships made at these courses are unlike any other, because of the common love for choral music shared through the week by every single person involved. Caroline has formed her own friendships after attending two summer courses and one winter course. We spent the week learning musical repertoire, singing several choral evensongs, and engaging in countless hours of fun activities!

After a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, seeing my friends, being back in Houston, and jumping right back into the busy schedule of RSCM week in 2021 was the highlight of my year, and continues to be each and every year! Although our experiences at RSCM vary, my sister and I share many of the core memories and connections to this wonderful organization. RSCM has been one of the greatest experiences of our lives, and we are forever grateful for the St. James Treble Choir that first introduced us to this life-changing course and our lifelong friends!

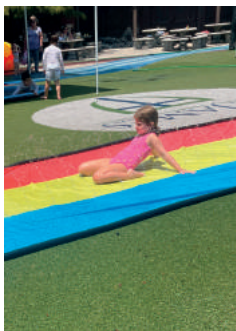
Kaitlyn Kelly with sister Caroline Kelly

”





PARISH LIFE AT ST. JAMES



MILESTONES



In thanksgiving for the birth of:

Aida Bellis Graf, great granddaughter of Mary and Michael Williams on October 8.
Brenton Legendre, great-nephew of Suzette and Ralph Howe on October 9.

In thanksgiving for those baptized at St. James:

Adriana Faith Possa on September 10
Asher Joseph Possa on September 10
David Joseph Saccardi on October 15
Alayna Susilia Williamson on October 15
Ethan Rohan Williamson on October 15
Reese Caccavo on November 3
Azaria Rochelle Domingue on November 3
Thatcher Pilot Giuffre on November 3
Grey Pierce Giuffre on November 3
Charlotte Mary Holmgren on November 5
Katherine Grace Baucom on November 5
Luke William Saccardi on November 5

In thanksgiving of our new members:

Luke and CC Bullock and family
Andrew and Eydie Comeaux and family
Amy Couvillion
Chris and Bess Decuir
Will and Rachel Folse and family
Naomi "Vee" Morrow
Madeleine Murrell
Madeleine Naquin
Richard Nicholas
Connor Schmolke
Tommy and Carly Terry and family
Charles Williamson and family

In thanksgiving for those received on October 15:

Deborah Pense Baucom
Paul Stephen Fitzmorris
Charles Williamson Jr.

In thanksgiving for those reaffirmed on October 15:

Nancy Joan Litton

In thanksgiving for those confirmed on October 15:

Anthony Andrew Comeaux
Kathleen Barbara Foil
Aubrey Lange Ghre
Harper Mae Inzer
Kara Alyce Johnson
Anna Renee Kurz
Joseph Pace Rabalais
Lions Mayer Ray

Charlotte Beauvais Richards
Frances Emma Roberts
Claire Lauren Saccardi
David Joseph Saccardi
Margaret Devereux Trimble
Kyndra Williams-Brown



IT IS TO THESE THAT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BELONGS

DIRECTOR OF FAMILY MINISTRIES EYDIE COMEAUX

"I feel that I learned a lot more about being an Episcopalian. I feel really locked in. I want to be a part of this church."

Those are the words of Kara Johnson, a junior in high school who was confirmed on October 15. That seed is planted in the Children's Chapel and Sunday school and is the measure of success we seek in Family Ministries.

Childhood is such an incredible time of growth, curiosity, magical thinking, and learning to trust. The church plays an important role in being present in this process by providing a firm foundation for our children's faith. Kara feels she belongs and is loved here. The sacrament of confirmation lit a fire in her to want to do more and "lock in" to her adult role within our church.



Kara Johnson with Randy East and Shirley Young volunteering at Community Connections Sunday.



St. James Episcopal Church is blessed to have vibrant children's programs that welcome and embrace children of all ages into the arms of the church community. What we pour into today's children is the promise of the future of St. James.

As you look at all the pictures of the children, notice the overwhelming joy and emotion that serve to stabilize the foundation of their faith. In June we enjoyed the **Feast of St. James** with over 200 of the congregation in attendance with games and activities for the children. Not only did our youngest join in our meal, but they got messy at the sand table and fished for prizes—fun images of a vibrant and healthy church. August's **Back to School Bash** reminded over 100 of our children they are loved through the symbol of the cross and prayer keychain for their backpacks. We continued with **Episcopal School Sunday** in September where kids of all ages wore their school uniforms to represent their school!



KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

During our recent confirmation class, we were privileged to witness the fruits of working with our youths for confirmation in October. All 10 attended a two-day retreat, several classes with Fr. Chris, a community service project, and had face time with the bishop. Events like these continue to strengthen the welcome St. James provides to the congregation and community.

We had a Dads Night Out in September where fathers got to meet and build relationships with other fathers over a sports game and much-needed time out. Moms had their turn in October as we met and relaxed with other moms over craft pizza, beautiful artwork, and maybe a few sips of signature wine! Self-care is a form of spirituality that tells us to take time to refill our cups.

As your new Director of Family Ministries, I look forward to working alongside you and the children as we craft Advent Wreaths, put together the Nativity Pageant, bury the 'alleluias' in Lent, and egg hunt at Easter. Thank you for your hospitality —I am excited about all that the coming months hold!

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES

We interviewed a few of our children to ask them what they liked best about Sunday School and Children's Chapel. Enjoy their answers!



**They also ALL love coffee hour.
It's all about the snacks.**



Payton

Children's Chapel has fewer people, and we don't talk about adult stuff. We have more fun stuff to do up here.



Charlie

The adults talk too much and up here we still learn about God, but we get to play games too.



Henry

To learn the stories about Jesus.



Carter

I liked building the Temple. They even wrote my name on it!



James

I like that Sunday school has two groups now and I am not with my brother.



Rose

I like Sunday school with my sisters. They are fun.



PARISH LIFE AT ST. JAMES





PARISH LIFE AT ST. JAMES





PARISH LIFE AT ST. JAMES



GOING SOLAR AT THE MINISTRIES CENTER?

During the October meeting, the Vestry received an initial \$50k gift to begin exploring the possibility of installing solar panels. Conversations have begun to ask the right questions about the feasibility of this project regarding engineering, estimated costs, long-term savings, etc. This effort is born out of conversations on how St. James can diversify revenue sources and relieve potential future expenses. For instance, the third floor of the Ministries Center brings in nearly \$3,200 a month, with an additional amount being reserved for future revenue if the space is unoccupied. Similarly, the newly renovated parking lot is bringing in double the previous totals, with a projected income of over \$60k in 2023. This solar panel project can potentially offset the budget's electricity expenses in a significant way, as this cost has been one of the fastest growing over the past five years. Stay tuned for more information in the months ahead as the Vestry explores this possibility.

FROM THE VESTRY

SR. WARDEN ANITA BYRNE

Greetings St. James! It has been a wonderful and busy third quarter of 2023 in the life of St. James with the school year back in full swing, several events on the calendar, and holidays approaching. As the stewardship season ends, I am again struck with gratitude for this congregation and how the concept of stewardship in time, talent, and treasure is honored. We have much to be grateful for and to be excited about!

In Vestry news, the Vestry continues to meet monthly. The recent agendas have included updates to the Policy and Procedures manual to reflect best practices in financial management. The Vestry has also received updates from a variety of parish ministries showcasing the robust life of the parish.

The Diocese of Louisiana held the 186th Annual Convention at the end of October at St. Martin's Episcopal School. It was good to connect with Episcopalians from across the Diocese and hear the great work the Diocese is doing. The convention documents are available on the Diocese website if you would like more information. Many thanks to the St. James convention delegates – Denise Allen, Renee Amar, Catherine Harrell, Randall Johnson – and St. James clergy for attending!



**Applications for the
2024-2025 school year
are LIVE!**

Schedule your tour today
and see what makes

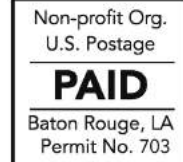
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WORSHIP WITH US

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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