



ST. JAMES  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# THE MESSENGER

2026 VOLUME 2



# MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

The People

## CLERGY

The Rt. Rev. Shannon Duckworth Bishop  
The Rev. Chris Duncan Rector  
The Rev. Hillary Peete Associate Rector  
The Rev. Lynn Hooks Associate Rector & Day School Chaplain  
The Rev. Dr. Don White Assisting Priest

## STAFF

Taylor Bravender Director of Communications  
Samantha Chaney Custodian  
Austin Clark Associate Organist  
Shannon Gallier Director of Music  
Laurie Gaston Parish Life Coordinator  
Bridget Henderson Head of School  
Quinetta Jackson Custodian  
Darell Lee Sexton  
Dwight Nichols Facilities Manager  
Cheryl Olinde Director of Finance  
Carrie Grace Potter Director of Family Ministries  
Jacques Pourciau Director of Operations  
LaShondra Smith Custodian  
Andree Williams Day Porter  
Jessica Wilson Receptionist



## VESTRY

### Third Year

Steve Broyles  
Pamela Gladney  
Susie Heroman  
Lindsay Turner  
Jim Van Hook  
Lauren Whatley

### Second Year

Amos Davis  
Barbara Garon  
Suzette Howe  
Nancy Roberts  
Stewart Ross  
Susan White

### First Year

Shannon Hannaman  
Randal Johnson  
George Murrell  
Dorsey Peek  
Chuck Plattsmier  
Matt Saurage



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# Go ye into the world...



## THE REV. CHRIS DUNCAN

As I walk around the St. James campus and look toward the busy streets of downtown Baton Rouge, my mind often returns to my days as a seminarian at Virginia Theological Seminary. Every morning, we gathered for prayer. During the service, my eyes would inevitably rest on the words above the altar on the east wall of the chapel: **"Go ye into the world and preach the Gospel."**

For three years, those words were the backdrop of my formation. These words were not static decoration but a continuous invitation. We were welcomed into the chapel for Morning Prayer and Holy Eucharist. This continuous rhythm of worship within the Episcopal Church tradition grounded us, then immediately oriented us toward the world God created and loves. Today, as your rector, I see those words as the blueprint for our life together at St. James. We are a people both gathered and sent.

Our location is about more than urban planning. Our location is a vocation... a calling. Nestled between the centers of city government and the state capitol building, St. James stands as a "sacred anchor" in our community. I see our parish not as a political bridge weighed down by the world's brokenness, but rather, as a spiritual crossroads or a meeting point where higher callings and deeper peace invite all who pass by to know and share the love of Christ. In Scripture, God often calls people to the "city gates," the intersection where community life unfolds. That is our calling, too.

To seek the "welfare" (*the shalom or peace*) of Baton Rouge means St. James is a faithful, prayerful presence in the heart of the city. We are not a fortress hiding from the world (closed and defensive) nor a political actor (actively seeking power or policy). Instead, we are a sanctuary: a place where the "noise" of the metropolitan center (traffic, legislative sessions, daily grind, etc.) meets the restorative silence of prayer and the radical grace of the Gospel.

# Go ye into the world...

There is a profound joy in serving an urban congregation that functions as a "destination" for many. St. James is what we might call an "attractional church." People do not simply walk here because we are the closest church to their front door. In fact, many of our parishioners live closer to other Episcopal congregations spread throughout the city. Instead, people come because they are drawn to the beauty of our worship, the depth of our community, and the clarity of our mission.

In fact, our database tells an interesting story. Did you know we have only 5 households in our immediate zip code? However, at the same time, parishioners come from 43 different zip codes in the area. Every Sunday, our pews become a microcosm of the Body of Christ and a gathering of people from many different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. In the New Testament, St. Paul reminds us that in Christ, the walls that divide us are broken down. When we gather from across the Baton Rouge area, bringing together different perspectives and beliefs, we reflect the fullness of the kingdom of God.

When we gather at St. James, we are practicing for that Kingdom. We embody the radical hospitality Christ showed throughout his ministry to all people, a hospitality that welcomes both stranger and neighbor. In this way, we recognize the community's evolving needs. Our adaptability, guided by the Spirit, is essential.

It is a profound honor to serve as your rector. St. James, as a "sacred anchor," provides stability and spiritual grounding for our city by drawing the entire region into downtown to worship the living God. We are the place where the prayers of the faithful meet the needs of the world.

As we continue to serve in this significant position, rooted in our identity but responsive to our ever-changing world, let us do so with holy pride and deep humility. We are more than a historical landmark; we are an active community living God's love in action. It is a privilege to stand at this crossroads with you, a place where paths meet, and new journeys begin. We bring people from all over our area together to serve the God who created us, loves us, and sends us out as His hands and feet. Not only do we gather in Christ's name. We also... **"Go ye into the world and preach the Gospel."**



# PASTORAL CARE: BABY BLESSINGS

One of the holy and meaningful ways our Pastoral Care team walks alongside our community is by sharing in the joy of welcoming new life. As families enter a new season, we hold them in prayer each week during the Prayers of the People, remembering expectant mothers.

When a baby is born and the church is notified, our clergy reach out to arrange a visit with the family. During this time, we offer a simple and beautiful liturgy in the home that includes prayers of thanksgiving for a safe delivery, blessings for the child, and prayers for the parents as they begin this new chapter. It is also a time to share a small gift from St. James as a sign of the community's love and support.

If your family is preparing to welcome a new child and you would like to be on the prayer list; or if you would like to receive a visit from one of the clergy to offer prayers for a new family member, we invite you to contact the church office to arrange a visit.



## ST. JAMES FEAST & FISH FRY

Mark your calendars for the Feast of St. James Fish Fry, Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup>. Meet us in Bishops Hall following, the 10:30 a.m. service, for a delicious fried catfish lunch with family and friends in celebration of our namesake, St. James. Kids and kids-at-heart can also enjoy cool games and crafts in a cooler, indoor setting at the back of Bishops Hall. Go fishing for prizes, make a scallop shell necklace, popsicles and more!



# WHAT'S UPCOMING?

## PENTECOST & BAPTISM DAY

Sunday, May 24

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS SUNDAY

Sunday, May 31, June 28, July 26 | 8 A.M.

## FAMILY OUTREACH SUNDAY

Sunday, June 28 | 11:30 A.M.

## ST. JAMES FEAST & FISH FRY

Sunday, July 26 | 11:30 A.M.

## ALL ACOLYTE TRAINING

Sunday, August 9 | 11:45 A.M.

## BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS & BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

Sunday, August 16 | 10:30 A.M. & 11:45 A.M.

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS SUNDAY

## Full Plates, Full Hearts: Stories of Community and Hope

*“As Episcopalians, we promise to seek and serve Christ in all persons and to respect the dignity of every human being. Community Connections Sunday is one of the most tangible ways I know to live that promise out alongside my family in small, meaningful ways.”*  
- Katherine Dampf

The last Sunday of the month is a time of joy, connection, friendship, and service. Community Connections Sunday offers a hot breakfast and bags from the food pantry. But what happens between the members of St. James and the guests we welcome into Bishops Hall goes much deeper. Our volunteers were invited to share why they serve and the moments that stayed with them long after the last biscuit was served.

Community Connections Sunday is a unique opportunity to get to know others from St. James that you might not cross paths with otherwise. Monica Murphy, a regular at the 8:00 am service, has volunteered since this outreach effort began with Nancy Jo Porrier in the months following Hurricane Katrina! She is joined by newcomer Matt Castello, a regular at the 10:30 am service, who has now volunteered for the past two months. Many others have volunteered consistently for the past 5-10 years and new volunteers are welcomed each month.

If you've been curious about what happens during Community Connections Sunday, but hesitant to join, Matt Costello has some words of encouragement: *“My favorite part was how quickly everyone made me feel welcome. I was nervous coming to my first one and sat in my car for a few minutes before going in. But as soon as I arrived people introduced themselves, helped me find where I needed to be, and made it easy to feel comfortable and jump in.”*

*“I always receive more from our guests than I give in service.”* - Suzette Howe

Gratitude is a consistent theme in the stories from our volunteers. Many show up believing they will be of service only to find that the warmth, encouragement, and joy they receive from interactions with our guests far outweigh their efforts.

Randy Saucier shares one of these moments: *“It's the best feeling to connect with guests. Maybe they need to be heard, so I listen. Maybe they want to discuss scripture, so I learn something from them. Maybe they have a favorite superhero, and we can talk about their super powers. Everyone needs help and they truly help me, too. After a morning with our guests, I feel I have received more than I gave – every single time. I leave filled with God's love.”*

Lazette Phillips is struck by the generosity of our guests with each other. *“A few months ago I witnessed one man empty his pockets of change and give it to the man across from him. Touching to say the least. The smiles and gratitude can be overwhelming.”*

Don't be surprised if you make a few new friends! Before too long, there will be faces you recognize. You'll soon learn names and people's stories. While there are some guests that only pass through once, many join us consistently for years.

Bunny Hines remembers a picture she took of her granddaughter, Curry (age 14), who made friends with another regular guest who was around her age.

Heather Owens Watson loves keeping up with a family with 6 kids. *“I always look forward to seeing one of the teenage girls and greeting her with a smile and a hug, and asking what's going on in her life.”*

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS SUNDAY

## Full Plates, Full Hearts: Stories of Community and Hope

Larry Mitchum shares, *“One special lady called Momma comes from time to time. Momma is in her mid 90s and is always smiling and thoroughly enjoys the atmosphere. She said St. James is home to her.”*

It’s easy to be swept up in our busy lives with full calendars and responsibilities. Community Connections Sundays have become an opportunity for St. James members to intentionally set aside time to give back and focus on others.

Katherine Dampf writes, *“Our city has felt so heavy lately. The violence is overwhelming, and my instinct is to insulate myself further into my bubble and decide that the problems are too big. The issues are systemic and complicated, and I struggle to see how I can be part of any solution at that scale. What I can do is something smaller. Community Connections Sunday is one Sunday a month I can give, a way to step outside my bubble, be present with neighbors whose reality is far from my own, and offer what I have. I hope that a sincere, warm greeting and a few minutes of being treated like you belong can ripple outward in ways we will never see.”*

If you are looking for signs of hope in our community, please join us on the last Sunday of the month for Community Connections Sunday from 7:45 a.m. - 9 a.m. in Bishops Hall.

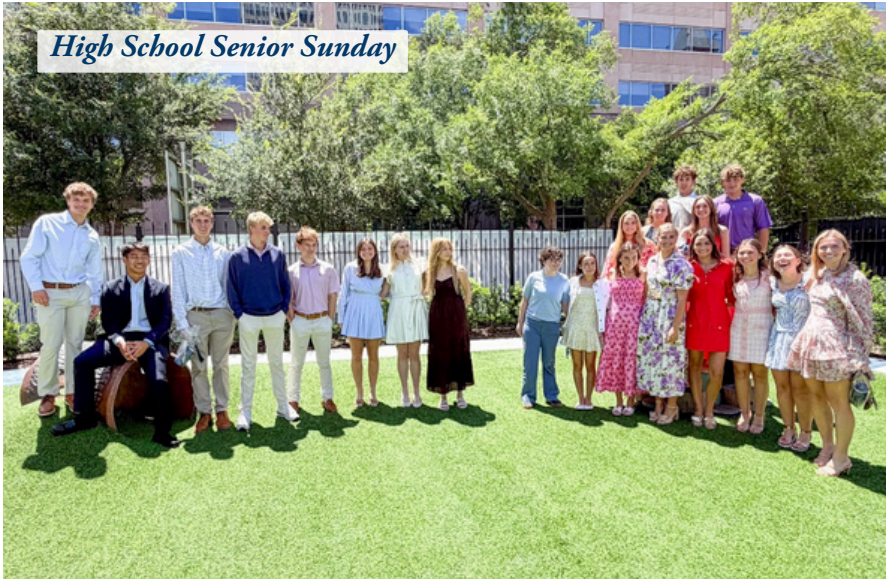
**Meet Our Leaders!** Community Connections Sunday is truly a team effort. But we couldn’t do it without Doug LeBleu and Larry Mitchum.

Doug has faithfully managed the St. James Food Pantry for seven years. He coordinates donation drop-offs with the Baton Rouge Food Bank, manages inventory, and ensures bags are packed and ready to go. When asked about serving, he said, *“This ministry brings purpose to my retired life. I have met some great friends.”*

Larry has volunteered with Community Connections Sunday for thirteen years. He works with Chef on the menus, ordering supplies, and ensuring everything for a hot and hearty breakfast is in place to support our friends. He personally invites you to join! *“It has been a blessing for me spiritually to be able to serve in a small way. I would ask you to join us one Community Connections Sunday to experience a wonderful breakfast and feel the loving spirit of Christ.”*



# PARISH LIFE AT ST. JAMES



*High School Senior Sunday*



*Easter Egg Hunt*



*Young Adults Group*



*Garden Guild Workday*



*Easter Egg Hunt*



*James Gang*



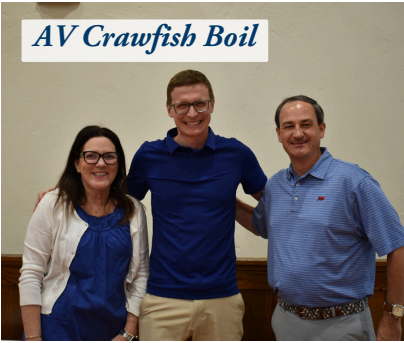
*St. James GUMBO*



*AV Crawfish Boil*

# PARISH LIFE AT ST. JAMES

*AV Crawfish Boil*



*High School Senior Sunday*



*Flowering of the Cross*



*Easter Egg Hunt*



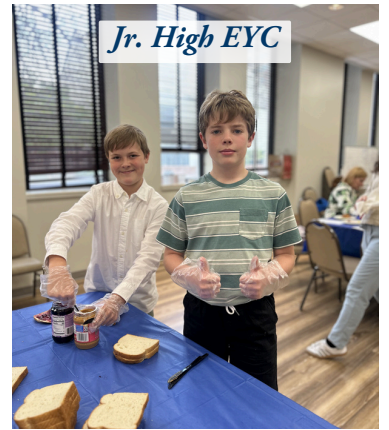
*Garden Guild Workday*



*St. James GUMBO*



*Jr. High EYC*



*Bad Girls Book Club*



*Palm Sunday Choral Evensong*



*James Gang*



# OUR 75<sup>TH</sup> YEAR OF GUMBO



Thank you to everyone who helped make our 75<sup>th</sup> year of Gumbo a success! During Gumbo Dine-In & Take-Out we were able to fulfill well over 400 orders. We are grateful for all of our amazing volunteers, clergy, staff, and congregation for making Gumbo a day the Greater Baton Rouge community can look forward to every year.



# MILESTONES

## *celebrating the blessings of life*

*Milestones submitted from February to April*

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

George Peter Murrell, on April 12, 2026.

*In thanksgiving for the marriages of:*

**Seth Bonnie Osias**, daughter of Sean Osias and Tefanie Beruin, and **Jackson Douglas Weaver**, son of Douglas and Sheryl Weaver, on April 18, 2026.

*In thanksgiving for our new members:*

Laurel Herrington  
Mary Bergeron  
Marian Caillier-Castillo  
Spence & Caroline Taylor  
John Whatley & Aimee Hyatt and family  
Jeanne Z. Barham  
Andrew & Nandi Shenkan

*In thanksgiving for the births of:*

**Caroline James Bourgeois**, daughter of Beau and Victoria Bourgeois, on February 14, 2026.

**Mae Bennett Charland**, daughter of Susanna and Lucien Charland, granddaughter of George Murrell, on March 2, 2026.

**Anastasia Lopez Collet**, granddaughter of Laura and Rod Collet, on April 4, 2026.

*Easter Flower Donations:*

In thanksgiving for George, Kate, Russell, Lucy, and Norah Holmes by Ann & Wendell Holmes.  
In loving memory of her parents, Dr. Emmette Edward McCool & May Elise Street McCool by Liz Carter.  
In thanksgiving of her daughter, Catherine "Nicole" Bearden by Liz Carter.  
In thanksgiving for Bobby, Eliza & Anne Howard by Ben & Katherine Dampf.  
In thanksgiving for my parents, Nye & Joe Dozier by Mary O'Brien.  
In thanksgiving for our family, Virginia Middleton Enright, her husband, Thomas Enright, and grandchildren Ellie, William & Patrick by Linda & Vernon Middleton.  
In loving memory of his mother, Mary Elizabeth Davis, by Amos H. Davis.  
In thanksgiving of our grandchildren, Emory, Owen & Rosemary by Frank & Reggie Rieger.  
In thanksgiving for our parents and children by Susan & Otey White.  
In loving memory of Dr. Sam Irwin & Connie Irwin by Barbara Garon.  
In loving memory of Bill deLaunay & Bill Owens by Will & Yvette Owens.  
In loving memory of Cyril Ann Heroman McBride, Billy and Janet Heroman and Bill and Sue Edrington by Buzzy and Susie Heroman, Pat McBride, Jan McBride, Amy and Christian Kurtz, Todd and Marcie McBride, Robert and Sarah Heroman, and Ben and Adria Heroman.  
In loving memory of our parents, Betty & O.B. Romero and Mary & Richard Taylor by Hayes & Debbie Taylor.  
In loving memory of Julie T & John Lewis, and Ruth & Bill Trask by Martha & Ray Trask.  
In loving memory of Susan Gandy Olds by John Russell Olds & Family.  
In loving memory of Ruth & Archie Helland by Linda & Robert Bowsher.  
In thanksgiving for the children and youth of St. James by Taylor & Carrie Grace Potter.  
In loving memory of Glen & Vera Lee Olds by the Olds Family.  
In loving memory of G. Dupre Litton, Mell Litton, and Gilbert Litton by Nancy Litton.  
In thanksgiving for Mary, Stephan, Summer, Alexis, & Megan by Debbie & Hayes Taylor.  
In loving memory of Rev. Ted Glusman, Mr. & Mrs. Edward F. Glusman, and Mr. & Mrs. Robert Fary by Anya Glusman.



# MILESTONES

*celebrating the blessings of life*



## *Easter Flower Donations Continued:*

In thanksgiving by Cathy McHugh.

In thanksgiving by David & Elizabeth Libbers.

In loving memory of James Gladden Willis by Aza & Tom Walker, Aza Mercer, Ross & Mercer Tuminello, & Dee Dee Walker.

In loving memory of our departed family members by Charles & Sally Plattsmier.

In loving memory of Ann Shuker Olds by Rusty, Beth, Robyn & Courtney Olds.

In loving memory of Glen Hobgood Olds by The Olds Family.

In loving memory of Shirley Wolf LeBlanc by Caroline & Spence Taylor.

In loving memory of Carolyn R. Whitman by Lana Venable.

In loving memory of Linda LeBlanc & Lydia Champagne by Jeremy & Lindsay Perque.

In loving memory of Sterling Melancon by Jeremy & Lindsay Perque.

In thanksgiving of our children, James & Olivia, by Catherine & Jim Van Hook.

In loving memory of Jess & Gwen Gill and Piper Dixon by Jessica McVea.

In loving memory of Jo Bruce by J. Michael Cutshaw.

In loving memory of Mickey Christensen by Jane Christensen.

In loving memory of E.M. "Ned" Clark by Chrissie, Don, Clark, & Bryan Ollson.

In thanksgiving of our children, Sloan, Townes, & Virginia by McKenzie & Andre Hernandez.

In loving memory of our parents, Rufus & Myrtle Prescott Worsley and Billy & Eleanor Rose Flanagan Gooch by Bill & Rene Worsley.

In loving memory of Tressie & Curtis Ogden by Sherry Russell.

In loving memory of our parents: Edward Kent Caldwell, Charles Robert Carter, & Sarah Jane Watson by deSha & Rennie Carter.

In loving memory of Gina Tharp by Stewart, Eliza Douglass, Eloise & Maxwell Tharp.

In loving memory of Mary Jane Kahoa by Warren Kahoa.

In loving memory of her husband, Frank Leonard by Bahin Leonard.

## *Easter Music Donations:*

In loving memory of Ned Clark by Melanie & Russ Chapman.

In thanksgiving for our children and grandchildren by Honey & Randy East.

In thanksgiving for Shannon, Austn & The St. James Choirs by Bill & Helen Campbell.

In thanksgiving for Palmer, Sally, Laura Grace & Virginia Rinehart by Priscilla & John Dale.

In loving memory of Richard Duane Allen by Denise Allen and Clayton & Lauren Allen.

In thanksgiving of our grandchildren, Gabe, John, Max, Charlotte & Chloe by Frank & Copper Alvarez.

In loving memory of Elsie, Bum & Tony Sonnier by Hollis & Lana Venable.

In loving memory of Tony deFrances by Mike & Sherri Lemmi.

In thanksgiving for Ann Holmes and her EfM Ministry by Catherine & Jim Van Hook.

In thanksgiving for our five children and twelve grandchildren by Mimi & Guy Riché.

In thanksgiving for Elisha Brabson and for our grandchildren, Caleb, Rebekah, Joshua, Isaiah, Timothy, Kinley, Dylan, Lane & Asher by Hayes & Debbie Taylor.

In thanksgiving for Shannon, Austin, & the whole St. James Choir by Ralph & Suzette Howe.

In thanksgiving for my daughters, Katie & Megan by Mary O'Brien.

In thanksgiving for our grandchildren, Lily & Jack Little by Charles & Sally Plattsmier.

In loving memory of Charlotte Murrell by The George Murrell family.

In loving memory of Etta & Hampton Obier by J. Michael Cutshaw.

In loving memory of Mary Jane Kahoa by Warren Kahoa.

In thanksgiving for Shannon, Austin & all of our choirs by Anonymous.

In thanksgiving for our dedicated Choir and Organists by Gordon & Lou Ellis.

In loving memory of Sumner Holmes by Ann & Wendell Holmes.

In thanksgiving for our children & grandchildren by Garry & Victoria Schenk.

In loving memory of David Culbert by Mary Sentell.

In thanksgiving for Ryan, Steph, Rachel, Luke & Raphe by Lynn & Michael Hooks.

In thanksgiving for the community of St. James by John & Virginia Noland.

*If you would like to donate toward the flowers as a memorial or offering throughout the year, please contact Laurie Gaston, Parish Life Coordinator at [lgaston@stjamesbr.org](mailto:lgaston@stjamesbr.org).*

# FROM THE VESTRY

SR. WARDEN LINDSAY TURNER

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Dear St. James Family,

As we move through these busy seasons together, I wanted to take a moment to share a few updates—and more importantly, to say thank you. So much of what is happening at St. James right now is only possible because of the steady faith, generosity, and care of this community.

Many of you have noticed the progress in our courtyard, and future site of the expanded columbarium. This space is being created with all of you in mind—a place where we can gather, connect, and also wonderfully remember those dearest to us. We are incredibly grateful to the Property Committee for their vision and support that have made this very thoughtful project a possibility. Keep checking the courtyard area over these next few months as you are sure to see exciting progress.

The Vestry also spent time together at our Vestry retreat the beginning of the year, which was both grounding and encouraging. It gave us the opportunity to step back, listen, and think thoughtfully about where we are and where we are being called to go. I continue to be so thankful for the members of the Vestry who give their time and energy to this work, and for the sense of shared purpose that guides every conversation. The Vestry is also taking some time to review the Church's Policy and Procedures Handbook. We do this every few years as general practice and will be updating a few areas as needed.

And finally, there is a unique and exciting opportunity on the horizon as after careful consideration, countless versions of contracts, and a deep respect for the sacredness of our space, our beautiful church will be featured in an upcoming movie. Filming will last just a few short days at the beginning of May but will not cause any major disruptions to school or church life. We will keep you posted on all of the fun details so you can also check it out once released.

At the end of the day, all of this—every project, every conversation, every step forward—is a reflection of you. Thank you for the ways you show up, for the ways you give, and for the love you have for St. James. It is felt every single day, and we are so grateful.

Senior Warden

*Lindsay Turner*





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*



*High School Senior Sunday*



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