THE PROFILE

The Parish Profile

Who St. James is, where this ministry happens, and what the congregation seeks in its next rector — the narrative portion of our search materials.

THE Episcopal CHURCH

AN INTRODUCTION

St. James Episcopal Church

Wichita, Kansas — the parish, its worship, its ministries, and how it is organized

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH

Welcome to St. James

A century-old Wichita parish — established, generous, and carried by its lay leaders

"Whoever you are and wherever you find yourself on your journey of faith, you are welcome here."

"St. James will meet you where you are."

The parish at a glance

Founded: organized in 1920 and rooted in College Hill ever since; the parish celebrated its centennial in 2020.

Where: 3750 E. Douglas Ave., Wichita, in the walkable College Hill neighborhood — the church building and campus follow on the next page.

Worship: Holy Eucharist on Saturday evening and twice on Sunday morning, with Christian education between the Sunday services. The latter service is livestreamed.

Size and resources: a congregation of long-tenured and generous members, an operating budget over $580,000, and an endowment over $1.5 million that has distributed some $2.2 million since 1992.

Clergy and staff

An associated priest and a deacon share worship, welcome, and pastoral care, with a small paid staff for music, formation, bookkeeper, and parish life. An Associate Rector has shared this work in the past.

Lay leadership

Dozens of active ministries are run by parish volunteers — lay leadership has long been the working engine of St. James.

Beyond the parish

The Diocese of Kansas, seated at Grace Cathedral in Topeka, and the Wichita Minster — a cluster of area parishes that share clergy coverage and joint ministry.

For a candidate: *St. James is an established, financially stable, deeply lay-led parish that knows who it is and is inviting others into its next chapter.*

Our Church Home

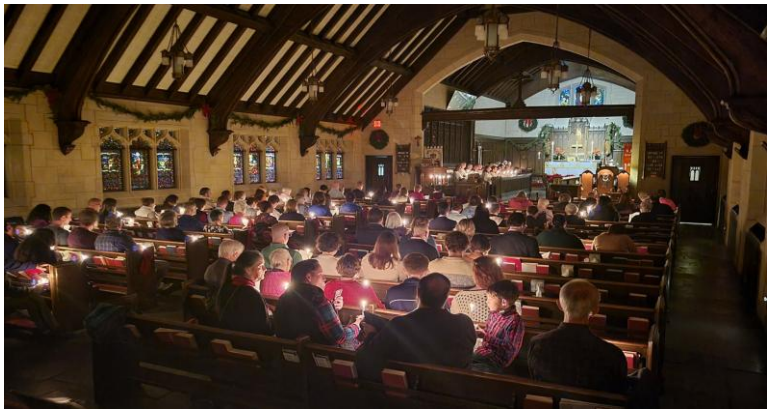
A 1925 landmark in College Hill neighborhood, listed on the National Register of Historic Places

The building

Built: 1925, in an early English style combining Gothic and Norman, with an exterior of Silverdale and Bedford stone from Kansas and Indiana.

Size: 28,000 square feet over two floors plus 5,800 in the basement — Nave, chapel, Guild Hall A and B with a stage, kitchen, choir and parish offices, nursery, and lounge.

Light: the Nave and Guild Hall are oriented to catch the morning and evening sun through the stained glass windows.



Arrival and grounds

A drive-through porte cochere on the east side gives newcomers an easy way into the Grand Lobby. A memorial garden and playground sit on landscaped grounds, amid tree-lined bungalow streets, with a fine city park nearby.

Accessibility today

A railed ramp links the Nave to the education wing, restrooms are fully accessible, and wheelchair spaces sit in the center of the Nave — welcome made physical. A new elevator serves the south basement with a second going in upstairs by 2027.

> *"Our sanctuary is beautiful; looking at the stained glass I can feel God's presence."*

For a candidate: *The parish has invested steadily in its home — a well-kept, accessible, historic campus that arrives as an asset to build on rather than a burden to manage.*

Worship and Music

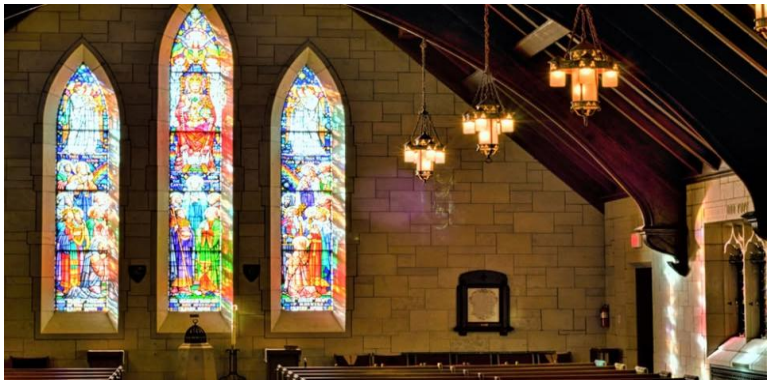
Prayer Book liturgy in a traditional Episcopal idiom, with a strong music program

The pattern of worship

Weekly liturgies: three weekend Eucharists, the later Sunday service being the principal choral liturgy — Prayer Book worship offered with reverence and care in a beautiful setting.

Sacraments and seasons: the full round of the Church year, baptisms, confirmations, weddings, burials, and the sacramental life of the Book of Common Prayer, with Evensong marking major occasions.

Online: the principal Sunday service is livestreamed on the parish YouTube channel — often a seeker's first welcome, before ever arriving.



Music

An adult choir with paid section leaders and a handbell choir sing under a Director of Music, drawing on the 1982 Hymnal and the wider Episcopal hymn tradition. Sacred choral music is central here, and the choirs are where newcomers connect and belong.

Formation

Adult formation, youth and children's ministry, a nursery, Vacation Bible School, and spiritual direction — plus Social Justice and Creation Care groups that connect study to action.

> *"This isn't a concert where Jesus is the star - it's more introspective and personal."*

> *"Choir and music are great conduits to belonging."*

For a candidate: *Worship here is traditional and well-resourced; the parish values dignified liturgy and good music, and expects its rector to preside with confidence and to give strong support to its music ministry.*

Ministry and Outreach

How the parish serves its members, its city, and its ecumenical partners

Serving the city

Breakthrough Episcopal Social Services: the Episcopal agency walking with neighbors facing poverty and mental illness for over forty years; our associated priest serves as its CEO.

Saint Francis Ministries: the Kansas-born Episcopal agency for children and families, a partner of the parish since its earliest years.

Justice Together: a multi-faith organization of Sedgwick County congregations pressing local officials on housing, health, and safety.

Children and youth: sustained support for the Wichita Children's Home, Kansas Children's Service League, and the Pando Initiative in USD 259 schools.

Hands-on and hospitable: pantry and shelter support, Sandwich Saturday, and ShowerUp ICT with the Wichita Minster.

Pocket Change and drives

Small change, gathered continually, has sent more than $36,000 to community charities since 2016 — Breakthrough ESS, the Wichita Children's Home, Kansas Children's Service League, and the Pando Initiative, among others.

Five product drives each year: hygiene supplies, school supplies, blankets, Christmas food and gifts, and diapers.

Youth ministry

Sunday School, a youth group, and an ecumenical Vacation Bible School with neighboring congregations form the parish's youngest members.

St. James also charters a Scouting America unit, and a number of young families have recently joined the parish.

Prison ministry

Parishioners supply greeting cards to men at the Winfield Correctional Facility so they can keep in touch with family and friends. The parish has also advocated for and given toward a Spiritual Life Center on the grounds.

For a candidate: *Outreach at St. James is public, long-running, and largely volunteer-run — the rector convenes and blesses the work rather than inventing it.*

Parish Life and Fellowship

How the parish gathers, forms, and welcomes — and how it shows up in the city

Gathering and hospitality

The Olde English Tea, held since 1921 and often called Kansas' biggest tea party, fills the parish hall on the first Saturday in May with silver service, homemade sweets, an English marketplace, and music.

Breakfast Sundays, shared dinners, and movie nights keep the table set the rest of the year.

Shoulder to shoulder

The Shrove Tuesday Oyster Dinner began in 1959 as the men's supper and opened to the whole community in 1979. Volunteers serve an all-you-can-eat meal, raising funds to support the Wichita Children's Home, and newcomers are seated and served like guests.

The same good humor turns out for Altar Guild, the lawn crew, and Creation Care, among others — fellowship that often wears work gloves.

Formation and the arts

The Guild Hall Players, a community theater company at home in Guild Hall, stage a season each year with parishioners and Wichitans on stage together.

Christian education meets between the Sunday services for every age, with adult forum and study groups alongside the children's classes with faith that attending becomes belonging.

> *"If someone comes to our door, we listen and try to help."*

> *"You can just be here."*

Invite Welcome Connect: since 2024 the parish has been implementing this Episcopal ministry of evangelism, hospitality, and belonging — laity-led work to turn a warm greeting into lasting connection.

For a candidate: *parish life at St. James is lay-built and outward-facing; these gatherings are where the parish is most itself, and where a new rector will meet the most people.*

Our People

An honest look at the congregation that will call the next rector

Long-tenured

membership often measured in decades

Young families

a small number, and growing

Faithfully giving

a broad, steady pledging base

A deeply rooted core

The congregation is largely long-tenured, stretching from newer members through legacy and lifelong families. That means deep institutional memory, real loyalty, and the stability to support a new rector well.

Welcoming the next generation

St. James is actively welcoming a steadily growing number of new young families and wants them to find a real home here — building on this momentum is work the next rector is being called to supplement and amplify.

For a candidate: *a stable, loyal, generous base ready to invest, paired with a clear-eyed call to welcome the next generation and help them belong.*

Strengths, Challenges, and Aspirations

What the congregation said about itself, in its own words

Our strengths

Genuine community: a warm welcome and real relationships, named again and again as our greatest strength.

Mutual congregation support: a parish that notices and tends to one another.

Reverent worship and music: well-led liturgy that anchors parish life.

Committed lay leadership: generous giving and a strong core of talented volunteers.

Our challenges

Growth and newcomers: sharing our faith and passion to help visitors become members, and members become friends — with particular attention to young families.

Pastoral care: the most-named skill priority is recognized and acknowledged as we actively build our capacity.

Formation for all ages: harnessing momentum and energy to expand programs for children, youth, and adults.

Sustaining volunteers: recognize; celebrate; recruit

Our aspirations

Support and grow all generations: help newcomers and young families find a lasting place here.

Deepen faith: connect to richer formation and discipleship at every age and stage.

Reach outward: celebrate and multiply visible service to the Wichita community.

Lead together: cultivate the talent around us to broaden and continue the legacy of lay leaders sharing the ministry.

For a candidate: *these are not weaknesses the parish is hiding — they are the work the congregation of St. James, in its own words, is calling a rector to help lead.*

What We Seek in Our Next Rector

Drawn directly from what parishioners ranked in the listening sessions

In ministry

Pastoral care: the parish already cares for its own — a rector who strengthens that work rather than carrying it alone.

Worship and preaching: reverent liturgy and preaching that feeds a congregation that values both.

Growth and formation: church growth alongside ministry with youth, young adults, children, and families.

Community and belonging: widening the circle with Invite Welcome, Connect, with the rector's presence felt in each part of that ministry.

In leadership

Collaborative: by far the most-selected leadership skill — a partner to work with, not a top-down director.

Adaptive to change: leading a rooted parish through real change without losing its heart.

Congregational development: helping the parish grow in number and in depth.

Developing leaders: inviting and sustaining the lay leaders who carry parish life.

In a sentence: St. James seeks a pastoral, collaborative, adaptable rector whose first gift is presence — a preacher and liturgist who will lead a beloved, rooted parish toward the next generation alongside its lay leaders.

For a candidate: *the congregation is quite clear about what it wants – a partner: a rector who leads from relationships will find the structure and the goodwill already in place.*

WHERE THIS MINISTRY HAPPENS

Wichita, Kansas

The city St. James calls home — what a prospective rector and family would find in the community, its churches, and its common life.

THE Episcopal CHURCH

Welcome to Wichita, Kansas

The city St. James calls home, and what it offers a new rector and family

A real city, at an unusual cost of living

Wichita is Kansas's largest city — about 400,000 residents in a metro of 650,000 — with the institutions of a much larger place and a cost of living below the national average.

Long the Air Capital of the World, it has one of the nation's most diverse manufacturing bases — Textron Aviation, Boeing, Koch Industries, strong local banks, and multiple major medical centers with university collaboration — with incubators and low operating costs drawing new ventures.

Getting around

Most commutes run about twenty minutes, and the airport has direct flights to major hubs. Kansas City is about 3 hours away; Tulsa and Oklahoma City about 2½.

Schools and study

Wichita Public Schools is the state's largest district, alongside parochial, private, and suburban options — plus Wichita State, Friends, and Newman universities.

Options for leisure

Parks and riverfront trails, kayaking, public golf, the Keeper of the Plains, the Sedgwick County Zoo, Exploration Place, Botanica, minor league baseball and pro hockey, and Old Town dining.

In short: *a mid-sized city where a rector's household can afford a home and find good schools, and still reach a concert, a play, a ballgame, or a gallery opening on a weeknight.*

The Wider Church at Work in Wichita

Episcopal ministries in the city, and the wider network of faith-rooted partners alongside them

Episcopal life in Wichita

Four parishes in the city: St. James, Good Shepherd, St. John's, and St. Stephen's — with St. Andrew's in Derby, St. Matthew's in Newton, and St. Jude's in Wellington close by.

The Diocese of Kansas: seated at Grace Cathedral in Topeka, supporting congregational development, formation, and youth ministry.

Episcopal Social Services: including Breakthrough, a clubhouse community for adults living with serious mental illness.

Saint Francis Ministries: begun in Kansas as an Episcopal ministry to children, now a major regional child-welfare agency.

Shelter and housing

HumanKind Ministries, Union Rescue Mission, The Salvation Army, and Catholic Charities' Harbor House carry the emergency shelter work; Breakthrough, Habitat for Humanity, and Mennonite Housing move people toward stable homes.

Hunger and basic needs

The Lord's Diner serves a hot meal 365 nights a year, United Methodist Open Door has met basic needs since 1965, and the Kansas Food Bank supplies pantries across 85 counties.

Interfaith and civic

HumanKind Ministries convenes congregations across traditions, United Way of the Plains runs the 211 helpline, and Justice Together unites some 40 congregations — St. James among them — to press officials on local needs.

What this means for a rector: *Episcopal ministries here are real and staffed, and the ecumenical partnerships around them are already built — outreach rarely has to start from scratch.*

Arts, Humanities, and Life Outside the Office

Professional companies, groups to join, and the events that mark the Wichita year

A performing-arts scene above its weight

The Wichita Symphony Orchestra, Wichita Grand Opera, Ballet Wichita, and Music Theatre Wichita — a nationally known summer company — perform here, with Broadway tours and touring artists at Century II, the Orpheum and INTRUST Bank Arena.

Most of it sits within a few blocks downtown — an easy evening out rather than an expedition.

Museums and galleries

The Wichita Art Museum holds a notable American collection, the Ulrich Museum anchors a large outdoor sculpture collection at Wichita State, and Final Friday opens downtown studios and the Fisch Haus artists' space monthly.

Groups to join

Mark Arts runs studio classes for all ages, while the Wichita Chamber Chorale and community stages — Wichita Community Theatre, ICT Theater, Kechi Playhouse, and the Guild Hall Players at St. James — welcome capable amateurs.

The annual rhythm

Wichita Riverfest fills the riverbank each spring, Shakespeare plays the parks in summer, and the Tallgrass Film Festival brings independent film downtown each autumn.

Worth saying plainly: *candidates ask what an ordinary Tuesday evening looks like here. It can look like a rehearsal, a gallery crawl, a ballpark, or a seat in the concert hall.*

Where to Look Next

Links for a candidate — and a candidate's family — to research Wichita firsthand

Church and diocese

Episcopal Diocese of Kansas
Find a parish in Kansas
Episcopal Social Services, Wichita
Saint Francis Ministries in Kansas

Community and service

Catholic Charities · HumanKind Ministries
Union Rescue Mission · The Salvation Army
Breakthrough Wichita · Mennonite Housing
Habitat for Humanity · UM Open Door
Kansas Food Bank · The Lord's Diner
United Way of the Plains · Justice Together

Arts and humanities

Wichita Art Museum
Wichita Symphony Orchestra
Music Theatre Wichita
Wichita Grand Opera · Ballet Wichita
Mark Arts studio classes
Ulrich Museum of Art
Wichita Chamber Chorale · Orpheum Theatre
Wichita Riverfest
Tallgrass Film Festival

For a family moving here

Wichita Public Schools (USD 259)
Wichita State University
Sedgwick County Zoo
Exploration Place
Botanica, the Wichita Gardens
Housing market research (WSU)
Visit Wichita, things to do