St. James
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

St. James the Apostle

PASO ROBLES, CALIFORNIA

Wherever You Are on Your Journey,

You Are Welcome Here

Welcome to St. James Episcopal Church in Paso Robles, California. Thank you for your interest in our parish.

Since our founding in 1891, we have been integral to the city and surrounding communities of our beautiful central coast wine county, and have been at the same location in the city for over 130 years.

Our parish is composed of a vibrant, diverse group of devoted people who are dedicated to both St. James and the surrounding community. Our Priest recently retired after 10 years of faithful service and leadership to our parish. We now seek a full time Rector as our spiritual partner and leader.

We look forward to meeting with candidates interested in St. James. This profile reflects the combined efforts of lay leadership, diocese and the congregation.

Who We Are

St. James Deacon and Vestry (missing Chuck and Mark)

Our parish recently spent reflection time with the Bishop to identify our values, which are represented in the word map below. These values are not merely written or said, but are values we live and practice throughout the year. The strength of our parish is the people, the fellowship, and relationships we have developed, nurtured by God's boundless love.

At this moment, we are evolving into a multigenerational and more ethnically diverse congregation. By reaching beyond boundaries, we are growing our influence within the Paso Robles community. Our community connections include preparing meals for the homeless (in conjunction with ECHO, El Camino Homeless Organization) and holding fundraisers for the Center for Family Strengthening.

St. James has developed and led several first communion classes taught by our Parish Administrator. Our strong lay leadership includes individuals licensed in preaching, service, and pastoral care, along with members engaged in many other areas of ministry and service.

Worship is at the heart of our life as a parish community. The liturgical depth and beauty of the Episcopal tradition nourishes us daily and weekly, through our Sunday and weekday services, which include bilingual elements. The framework of scripture, tradition and reason guide us as we celebrate the openness, courage, and diversity of the Episcopal church.

"St. James is a community centered on the love of Jesus, focusing on inclusion, spiritual growth, and service."

https://.saintjamespr.org

Who We Seek

Members and friends enjoy new outdoor fellowship area

At St. James, we are not just looking for a Rector. We are looking for a partner in Christ, someone with whom to share the joys, challenges, teaching, and calling of our common life.

We envision our new leader and companion in Christ as having a grounded spiritual life and a calm, compassionate presence. The dignified, engaging worship experience that centers our congregation's life together will be nourished by the strength and uniqueness of what you bring to it. We look forward to hearing you preach with clarity and meaning. We ask you to trust us with the vulnerability of sharing at times from your personal experience, and to join us in the daily work of growing in faith. We invite you to walk alongside us as our spiritual companion and guide. And even in those inevitable human moments that stretch people, we hope you will value loving personal engagement above any political or theological differences, so that each and every one of us can continue to grow in love as Christ loves us. We also hope you will enjoy the simple conviviality of shared meals, honest conversations, laughter, and serving our neighbors.

The priest who is at home here at St. James will also value a welcoming, inclusive Episcopal community.

We anticipate that you'll enjoy shared leadership and creative problem-solving, and will help us explore new ways to serve together. As much as we cherish the traditions that shape us and take pride in our building and history, we welcome the growth and new ideas that your presence among us will stimulate.

If you are someone who leads with love, lives with hope, and finds joy in the beauty of a growing and evolving parish life, we would be honored to begin this journey with you.

View from a local winery

Paso Robles Community Profile

Welcome to Wine Country! Paso Robles has successfully grafted a world-class winery and high-end tourism scene onto a long and proud rural tradition of cattle, crops and self-reliance. St. James is a three-block walk from Downtown City Park, a vibrant public square of green surrounded by shops, restaurants and wineries.

The Paso Robles climate is Mediterranean: hot days and cool nights, sometimes with daily temperature swings of 40 degrees or more. We dress in layers and never have to shovel snow. Summer evenings are glorious for outdoor dining or sipping wine with friends. Rainfall occurs almost exclusively between November and May. Fresh produce from area farms is bountiful and varied.

Paso Robles is the northernmost of 7 cities in San Luis Obispo (SLO) County, located halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles, 30 minutes from the Pacific Ocean.

Paso Robles is a friendly community of roughly 31,000 people, of which over a third are Latino/Hispanic and 22% speak Spanish at home. Nearly 28% of residents are seniors and 8% are veterans. Paso Robles is a politically diverse community, and St. James reflects this attribute.

Paso Robles was incorporated in 1889 and operates under the Council-Manager form of government. The City is a full-service city including emergency services, infrastructure, parks, a library, and a municipal general aviation airport aiming to become a horizontal spaceport, supported by a regional airport in neighboring San Luis Obispo.

Outdoor recreation is abundant, including road cycling, golf, horseback riding, mountain biking, and a water park, with Lake Nacimiento nearby. Each summer, the California Mid State Fair offers everything from Garth Brooks to Future Farmers of America auctioning their cattle, sheep and goats.

Award-winning Cuesta Community College has a satellite campus in Paso Robles, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo consistently ranks among the top public undergraduate universities in the West. Paso Robles High School ranks near the upper third of high schools nationally.

Community July 4th Celebration at a City Park

Concerts in the Park, Downtown City Park

For younger students, the school district offers transitional kindergarten and a well-respected dual language immersion program.

Paso Robles is now experiencing a growth surge with several new housing developments. These projects, currently in planning or construction, will add over 2,000 diverse new housing opportunities.

The congregation of St. James has 131 communicants in good standing, attending from Paso Robles and nearby communities. It is estimated to have an average age of 65 years with 22 under 16 years old. We are a majority white congregation actively seeking to better reflect our community's ethnic and generational diversity.

Average Sunday attendance is 62 persons (58 in person and 4 people online). Average weekday service attendance has been 11 (6 in person; 5 online). Facebook Live recordings of our Sunday services receive an average of 30 additional views in the following week.

History

St. James Episcopal Church, Paso Robles - Est. 1892

Our beloved, historic church has served the Paso Robles area since 1892. We continue to celebrate services in the original church building, which is decorated throughout with dedicated stained glass windows. The separate guild hall, built in 1891, was expanded in the 1940's adding the classrooms and offices of today's parish hall.

William Stevens Organ (sanctuary) - Built 1862, Installed here in the 1920's

Our sanctuary is home to the 1862 Williams Stevens organ, the oldest continuously used church organ on the "Pacific Coast of the Americas". Originally played in San Francisco, its move to St. James was overseen by the Very Rev. Charles Thackeray in the 1920's. As with many an elderly parishioner, the organ is both cherished and a little temperamental.

Pioneer Days Float

St. James has been integral to the growth of the community of Paso Robles. We've been feeding our community since Rev. Thackeray oversaw the launch of a soup kitchen during the Great Depression. Thackeray was also instrumental in starting the first Pioneer Days celebration–a civic festival first aimed at unifying farmers and "townies" that continues in the same spirit to this day.

In 1944, St. James was granted full parish status. Beginning during WWII, St. James hosted the "teen canteen" for youth in the area to enjoy fellowship in our parish hall. During the 1980's our then rector saw a community need for a food pantry and distribution that began at St. James and evolved into Loaves & Fishes, a local non-profit food bank.

Labyrinth, Outdoor Altar and Reconstructed Columbarium (2023)

From its inception, the St. James parish has been a champion for social justice, tolerance, and respect for human dignity in both congregation and community. As a 21st century church, our rectors have all exhibited these traits and have been our partners and leaders in a continued journey together in Christian fellowship.

The parish emerged from the COVID crisis with a renewed sense of purpose. The sheer joy of worshipping together again even on patchy grass inspired a parish initiative to create the new outdoor altar, labyrinth and reconstructed columbarium, among other other facility improvements.

"Thank you. I feel that I am home again"

Alice Bertrum, age 90, at our first outdoor worship during COVID

Education and Our Expanding Community

Active education programs for both children and adults are integral to our work in Christian formation and evangelism.

Children's Programs

Our ministries to children have been growing in a way that both serves and expands our parish community and ministry in important ways. A few years back, our Parish Administrator discovered a family seeking religious training for their children to receive first communion. We welcomed them and developed a curriculum that serves a growing number of students each year. Our congregation's numbers are growing as these new families actively participate in after-service social gatherings, serving as acolytes and crucifers, while becoming more integral members of our parish.

As a maturing congregation, we feel blessed by these new members and are strongly invested in continuing to form and empower the next generation to carry our mission forward.

New First Communicants and their sponsors enter the church

Sylvia, our parish administrator, teaching children

Adult Education Programs

In addition to weekly Zoom meetings to study scripture, we have adult continuing education courses that deepen our understanding of Jesus' words and actions. We recently gathered a group to read two books by Amy-Jill Levine, The Difficult Words of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to His Most Perplexing Teachings, and Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week. Our world religions class has focused recently on studying Judaism.

WORSHIP AND OUTREACH

Our community life springs from our worship in liturgy throughout the year. We have two Sunday Eucharistic services: one at 8:00 AM, Rite 1 without music, and another at 10:00 AM, Rite 2, which has a larger attendance, with Gospel and music in both English and Spanish. It is at this later service that we celebrate special days, including baptisms, first communions, and confirmations. This service typically draws a range of 45 to 65 congregants, while on holidays or special occasions, we are blessed to have standing-room-only gatherings. Congregational singing is accompanied on piano or organ by our part-time church musician, supplemented occasionally by a soloist, small choir, or instruments. The sounds of children are also music to our ears.

Our services are conducted almost exclusively in English, but several active families who first participated at St. James through the parish's First Communion classes speak Spanish as the primary language at home. Our bulletins routinely include text in Spanish for key elements such as the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. Lay Spanish-speakers (mostly non-Hispanic) take turns proclaiming the Gospel in Spanish each Sunday after the Deacon proclaims it in English. We are also expanding our repertoire of service music that the entire congregation sings in both Spanish and English.

From our 19th century beginnings, our prayer life and reflection have brought us to a commitment to outreach and serving those in need in the community. We work with other community charitable organizations in different ways, including feeding the homeless (~250 meals a month) and housing a community adult day care center in our rectory building.

We value building strong relationships with neighboring churches through outreach, education and worship. Recent collaborations with the Congregational Church next to us include quarterly Blood Drives and a joint presentation followed by a sensitive dialogue among fellow Christians of divergent political positions. We also share a liturgy and procession on Palm Sunday from the Paso Robles City Park to our churches.

Parish musician on piano

The altar is ready for you to preside

Palm Sunday procession pauses next door for prayer

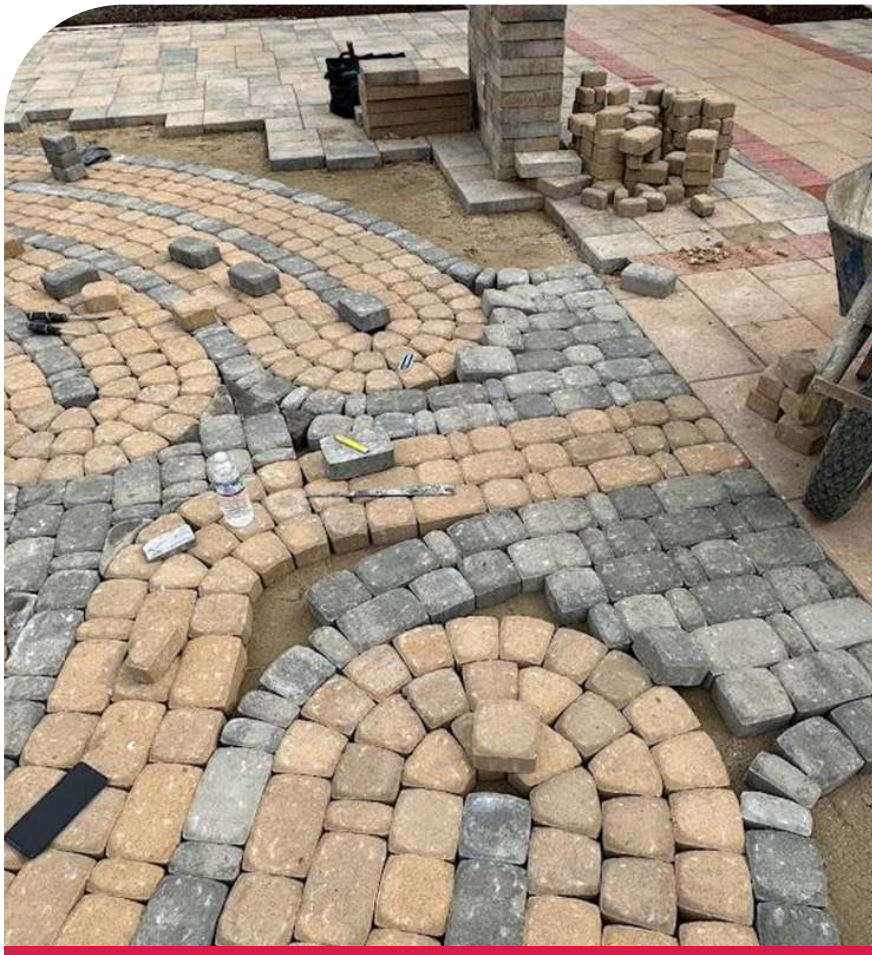
STEWARDSHIP

For any community to thrive, each generation makes the tradition their own by bringing in their own experiences, talents, and charisma, thoughtfully reinterpreting tradition, and then in turn passing it along to the next generation.

Thanks to this attentive stewardship, St. James continues to thrive despite past challenges. The original building (cornerstone set in 1892) was damaged after several natural disasters. This inspired our community to rally and regroup, repairing not only the building but addressing disaster-caused difficulties in the community at large. The Church building itself requires a vigilant eye to anticipate and identify any potential maintenance issues. Our community has supported this work through financial and skilled support, so future generations can experience and enjoy life in the Episcopal tradition.

The church recently completed a much needed update of our columbarium and grounds. The grounds now include an area which combines an altar for outdoor worship, the columbarium where we honor our dead, and a patio area complete with a labyrinth for prayer, reflection, and celebrations. We offer this space for events for both St. James and the general community of Paso Robles. We envision this as an area for all Paso Roblans to gather whether in joy or sorrow, fulfilling our mission to witness in the world Christ's love.

Outdoor altar



New Labryinth under construction (2023)

Financial Status

St. James Church is financially sound, with no ongoing debt, a modest endowment, and prudent cash reserves to cover fluctuations in revenues or unexpected expenses. Typical budgets are lean, but include a full-time priest, a part-time musician and a parish administrator, plus contracts for bookkeeping and janitorial services. Fundraising supports mission work as well as ongoing expenses. As evidenced with the recent pledge statistics below, our church continues to grow in both numbers of members and the average pledge per parishioner.

A financial summary chart included below shows current information, but these periods are not typical – they reflect adjustments for the prior rector's requested ¾ status and the rector's planned retirement after Easter in 2025. Specifically, the current FY 2025 budget includes compensation for a parish administrator, part-time musician, and a supply priest serving as interim coverage for the remaining period of our rector's part time status and retirement this year. The budget was also adjusted in January to what the remaining expenditures would be for the ¾ time position for the year on the "Rector Salary and Benefits" line item. The fiscal year 2026 and all future budgets will have funding for a full time Priest-In Charge, with all the related benefits.

The St. James Church Endowment and Investment Fund, while not included in the operating budget or financial statements, provides additional support when needed.

The financial statements and records are regularly examined by a diocesan reviewer who has consistently confirmed that our financial statements are accurately stated and that our accounting procedures are sound. Monthly financial reports are prepared by a professional bookkeeping service specializing in nonprofit and church accounting.

	Budget Estimate for FYE 12/31/2026	Budget for FYE 12/31/2025	Actual YTD as of 6/30/2025	Actual for FYE 12/31/2024
Revenues:				
Plate Income	$ 11,000	$ 9,000	$ 5,206	$ 16,744
Pledge Income	177,378	162,394	91,239	151,460
Facility Income	25,000	24,592	11,409	22,815
Fundraising (Net)	9,000	9,000	1,000	9,994
Other	4,000	4,500	3,360	6,130
Total Revenue	$ 226,378	$ 209,486	$ 112,214	$ 207,143
			-	
Expenses				
Rector Salary and Benefits *	$ 102,973	$ 35,368	$ 34,224	$ 95,288
Office and Musician Salary, Deacon Stipend	44,095	40,004	18,398	33,152
Office and Administration	18,770	12,714	6,324	14,567
Programs and Outreach	6,125	18,306	4,933	6,664
Insurance	9,975	9,500	5,227	8,359
Fairshare	19,740	17,118	7,200	20,751
Utilities	14,300	13,300	6,946	9,604
Buildings and Grounds	12,350	12,350	6,851	9,670
Other Exp	4,050	4,045	2,596	5,127
Total Expense	226,378	$ 162,704	$ 92,699	$ 203,183
Net Income	$ (0)	$ 46,781	$ 19,515	$ 3,960
			-	
Pledge History:				
Number of Pledges		45		42
Total Amount Pledged		$ 170,940		$ 152,920
Average Pledge		$ 3,799		$ 3,641

*** Footnote to Financials: Rector Salary and Benefits include Salary, Housing Allowance, Mileage Reimbursement, Pension, Insurance, and Continuing Education. The budget for FY 12/31/2025 reflects the planned status of rector, as well as their early retirement.**

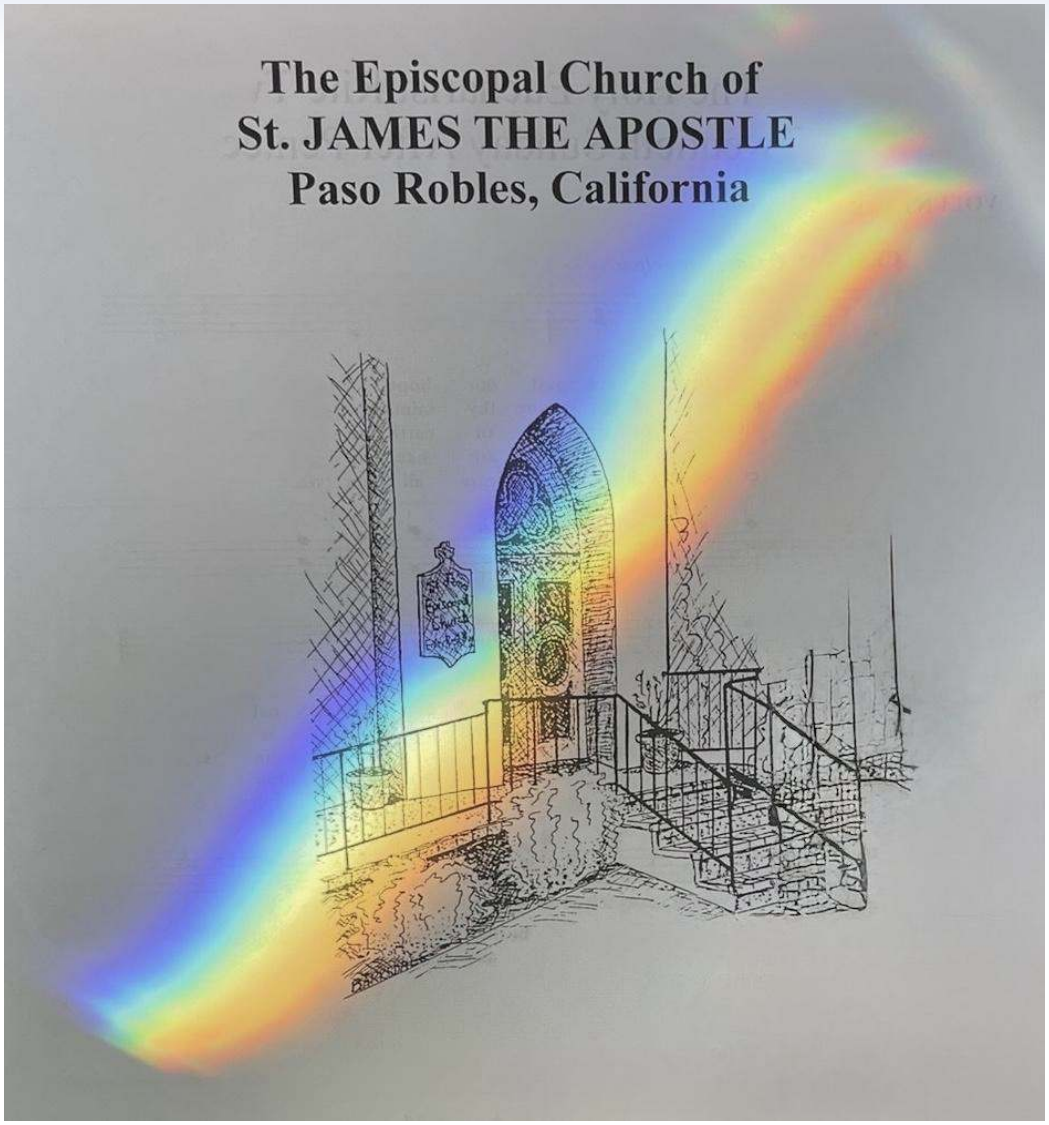
The budget estimate for FY 12/31/26 includes salary and benefits funding a full time rector.

Thank You

We thank you for your interest in St. James Episcopal Church of Paso Robles. We hope you will consider making all of us at St. James your new partners in ministry, as together we live into the mystery, work and joy of God's boundless grace and unstoppable love.

How to Apply

To apply, please send cover letter, CV and transition ministry profile to Bishop Lucinda Ashby, bishoplucinda@realepiscopal.org



514 14th Street, Paso Robles, CA 93446

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