



Office for  
Transition  
Ministry

# Ministry Portfolio

*Full Portfolio (last updated Jan 22, 2020)*

## St. James Church, Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 04/01/20.

[archdeacon@tec-europe.org](mailto:archdeacon@tec-europe.org)

Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA)	Number of Weekend Worship Services	Number of Weekday Worship Services	Number of Other per Month Worship Services
63	2	1	1
Current Annual Compensation	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities
\$45600			
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position	Housing Available for	Pension Plan
	\$55000	5	<b>We're in compliance with CPF requirements.</b>
Healthcare Options	Dental	Housing Equity Allowance in budget	Annual Equity Amount
Full family	Yes		
Vacation Weeks	Vacation Weeks Details	Continuing Education Weeks	Continuing Education Weeks Details
Other	6	Other	1
Continuing Education Funding in budget	Sabbatical Provision	Travel/Auto Account	Other Professional Account
\$1001-\$2000/year	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Generous travel allowance (US twice a year), use of church car, payment into US account possible,*

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Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

This moment is in large part a response to the current interim rector, Fr. Andrew Cooley. He discerned a significant weakness in the recent ability of the parish to raise strong lay leaders, due perhaps to the difficult way in which the previous rector retired from the parish (which included lengthy absences during his final year) and a general sense that the vestry was not empowered to make critical decisions. One consequence: the parish was without wardens for several months at the beginning of 2019. Fr. Cooley's effort to empower the vestry has led to identification both of key and active leaders for the parish (some long-standing members, some of more recent vintage). Thus the vestry is in a much better position to carry out its search for a new leader (priest-in-charge). One essential element has been the use of Bible study and prayer to begin each vestry meeting.

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How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?

St. James offers great potential for the Church of the future. St. James Episcopal Church is a diverse community of faithful Christians with a rich history and on the cusp of a great opportunity for growth and change as we search for a new priest in charge. There is a significant missionary aspect to St. James with respect to language, people, and cultures. We host many worshippers from near and far, as well as a handful of permanent residents. We are not a typical "downtown" parish. We need to deepen our commitment to the community and to the church, and we need to draw everyone in our parish to embrace a new vision for our life together.

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Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

team building, embracing diversity, raising lay leadership, reaching children and youth

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Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services provided by your community.

St. James Church might be characterized as “broad” in its liturgical style. We offer two services on Sundays: a said eucharist at 9:00 a.m. and a sung eucharist (often with choir) at 11:00 a.m. We use the Rite II eucharistic prayers from the Book of Common Prayer. The congregation usually chants a psalm during the sung service, and the president will intone the initial phrases of the eucharistic prayer. The Gospel reading is proclaimed both in English and Italian. Hymns are drawn primarily from The Hymnal 1982. During summer months, the 9:00 a.m. said eucharist is often celebrated in the parish garden. The chancel choir offers music during the 11:00 a.m. sung eucharist, although the parish also welcomes both occasional visiting choirs as well as monthly “Lucrezia’s One Voice” choir, which was founded at St. James over twenty years ago and offers rousing Gospel music sung by a mostly-Italian group of singers. In addition, a contemplative prayer service is offered (currently on Fridays).

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How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

In recent years this has been done rather informally, either by parishioners volunteering or by parish leaders identifying and seeking out potential candidates for specific roles or ministries. The vestry recording secretary, for example, has organized a regular rota of Lay Eucharistic Ministers, readers and ushers for 11:00 a.m. services and, along with some other vestry members, has reached out to parishioners who have an interest in or talent for such roles in the service. Similarly, our long-time volunteer choir director has recruited persons from the congregation whose voices she has heard and believes would contribute to the choir. Persons involved in other parish ministries (such as the Thrift Shop, Children’s Lending Library, Food Bank and Al-Anon) are often not parishioners at all and are generally recruited by word-of-mouth. The Food Bank also frequently has student volunteers. Some parishioners also engage in visitations to the home-bound or members in hospital, for example, but there is currently no organized ministry for this purpose.

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As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

Outside of regular Sunday worship services, there is not a formal program for providing such care in the parish. Each vestry meeting now begins with a Bible study and prayer, initiated by our current interim rector. A few parishioners gather during the week elsewhere in the city for prayer and Bible discussion. The parish occasionally hosts all-parish meals, such as spring and autumn cook-outs, Lenten dinners, and a luncheon after the annual Advent Lessons and Carols service. Generally a formal program is organized only as part of the Lenten dinners.

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How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

Our Thrift Shop, Al-Anon meetings, Children's Lending Library and Food Bank have been important efforts to meet the needs of persons living the larger Florence community, although (as noted elsewhere) the volunteers for these initiatives tend not to be parishioners. In addition, these initiatives all take place within the church property, not in external locations. The parish also provides small grants to local relief organizations and agencies meeting the needs of refugees, disabled persons, low-income residents and others in need in the Florence community; these are given during Advent with organizational representatives giving brief talks about their community initiatives (and receiving a cheque publicly during the service). In addition, the priest-in-charge (currently the interim rector) has a Discretionary Fund that can be used for meeting pastoral needs (such as assisting stranded foreigners or meeting other emergency circumstances). Otherwise, individual parishioners have been involved in programs to provide artworks to local hospitals and to connect local artists with homeless persons in the community.

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Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.

The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe serves as a key resource for St. James. It provides support and guidance, as well as opportunities to engage on a broader level with Episcopalians in Europe. St. James hosted the Convocational Convention in 2013 and our church has hosted various youth and child programs for members across the convocation. St. James vestry members have participated in offsite, overnight retreats with the Academy for Parish Leadership. Members of the parish have been active representatives with groups within the convocation, such as the Council of Advice, the Commission on the Ministry of Baptized, and the Episcopal delegation for the UN Commission on Women. Currently two members of the parish have also been elected as alternative delegates to the 2021 General Convention. In addition, the St. James vestry has held a joint retreat (in 2018) with the vestry of St. Paul's-within-the-Walls Episcopal Church in Rome (our "partner" church in Italy), and it is our intent to repeat this in 2020. Finally, the Convocation plays a key role in providing supply priests when our resident priest is called away from Florence.

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Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?

The Lenten dinner series, which had existed previously, was enhanced about five years ago with three purposes in mind: provide weekly opportunities for fellowship among our diverse parish constituencies; provide an opportunity for different parish groups to prepare special food (African, Sri Lankan, Mexican, "American" among the menus provided); and provide an opportunity for discussion and dialogue in response to a TED talk usually selected by the rector. The dinners attracted audiences of 30-40 people and were enthusiastically received. Although occasional visitors did attend, the majority of participants were from the parish, so this was in many ways an internal rather than external ministry. Both the senior warden (Haswell Beni) and junior warden (Nevin Brown) can be contacted about this activity, which will continue during the Lenten season in 2020.

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What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

Financial stewardship has declined in the parish in recent years. A stewardship campaign is held each November/December, usually begun with a sermon by the rector and brief talks about stewardship from vestry members and/or other parishioners during subsequent Sundays. Pledge cards and envelopes are provided in the Sunday bulletins. Nonetheless, the number of pledges has gone down recently. Time and talent stewardship is evident on the part of many vestry members and a number of other parishioners who provide the bulk of volunteer help for various parish events and ministries during the year, but a strong tradition of stewardship of time, talent and financial resources has yet to take hold at St. James.

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What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

St. James is a community that has tended to avoid public demonstrations of conflict even as significant conflict has happened "out of sight". One example is the conflict between different factions on the parish vestry under the previous rector, some of which was related to divergent views about parish spending and budgetary issues. Wounds from this period are still in the process of healing, aided by the openness of our interim rector as well as relatively stable parish finances at this point in time.

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What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

In many ways, the current process of drafting a parish profile, engaging with diverse parish constituencies, and preparing the parish for new leadership has been our most recent experience in dealing with real change, after having had a rector in place for nearly a decade. Openness and honesty have been our allies in this work, even when it has led to some difficult conversations (some not yet completed). Successful completion of our search for a priest-in-charge will allow us to learn what went well, what might have been improved, and thus a clearer sense of the lessons learned.

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### Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Mark Dunnam	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2009-01	2018-12

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Roger Featherstone	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2004-01	2008-01

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Peter Casparian	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	1996-01	2004-01

*Our Sunday School is currently being revived with six persons serving as teachers on a rotating basis. Student numbers expected to grow during winter and spring 2020.*

Church School		Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School
Monica Sharp (Vestry Secretary)		6	6

Number of Teachers/Leaders for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Students for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Adults School	Number of Students for Adults School
0	0	0	0

Day School	Number of Students for Day School	Number of Teachers for Day School	Number of Total Staff for Day School
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Worshipping Community Web site: [www.stjames.it](http://www.stjames.it)

Media Links:

The Florentine (English language newspaper)

Online References:

Languages Significantly Represented:

English, Hausa, Igbo, Italian

Provide Worship or Classes in:

English

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*Our parish includes persons from many nations in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia, but the primary language we use in worship and communication is English.*

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### References

Bishop:

**Mark Edington**+33 1 53 23 84 06, [mark.edington@tec-europe.org](mailto:mark.edington@tec-europe.org)

Diocesan Transition Minister

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Current Warden/Board Chair

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Previous Warden/Board Chair

**Gail Cocke**+393661290222, [gailcocke@gmail.com](mailto:gailcocke@gmail.com)

Search Chair

**Nevin Brown**+16466529711, [nevincbrown@hotmail.com](mailto:nevincbrown@hotmail.com)

Parish/Institution

**Monica Sharp**+393498260253, [monica.a.sharp@gmail.com](mailto:monica.a.sharp@gmail.com)

Local Community Leader

**Christopher Polillo**[cpolillo@gmail.com](mailto:cpolillo@gmail.com), +39055266951