

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Jackson, Tennessee

Parish Profile

July 2024



Contents

Our Vision...3

Our Strengths...4-5

Our Challenges...6

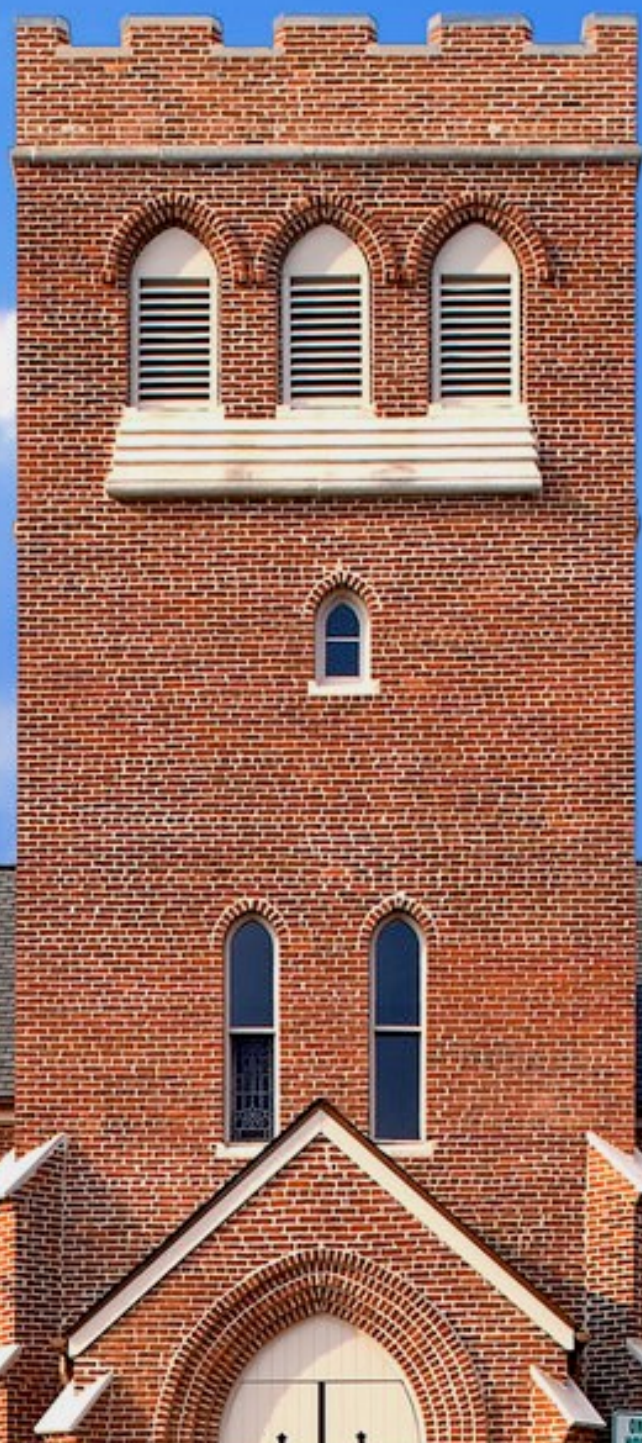
Our Finances...7

Our History...8-9

Our Community...10-11

The Rector We Seek...12

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Interested applicants, please send CV, OTM Portfolio, and links to two sermons to . . .

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Our Vision

St. Luke's strives to love God and neighbor through tradition, prayer, and hospitality.

Our tradition goes back to the early church. We respect the liturgy as it has been handed down to us today in the Book of Common Prayer. Also, we value the Anglican choral tradition, which stretches back more than a millennium but is seen especially in the *via media* approach begun by Thomas Tallis. Our musicians are realizing their goal of becoming the premiere sacred music program in the Mid-South, anticipating that our next rector will complete this journey with us.

Regarding prayer, our tradition uniquely provides us with the Daily Office—liturgies for Morning and Evening Prayer. We currently offer four such services weekly—praying with and for the community of Jackson—and hope to see this ministry expand in the future.

As for hospitality, we are committed to welcoming and including all. This commitment, we realize, is not to be taken lightly and does not come without challenges. We are a downtown church in a community with a conflicted history, continuously learning to partner, collaborate, and live in harmony with our neighbors. In an increasingly polarized society, we want to be known for peace, equity, and justice: for demonstrating Christ's way of love.



Our Strengths

Stability

- *Leadership*: Our Interim Priest-in-Charge, Father Tim True, has helped guide us through the reflection, healing, and dreaming necessary to prepare for the future of our parish. We have also had new and existing members step up to help in multiple roles and committees.
- *Parish Growth*: Our average Sunday attendance of 90 in 2024 has risen dramatically from the previous years (72 in 2023, 56 in 2022). Not only have we been able to offer services after recent challenges, St. Luke's is rebounding and filling the pews with new members.
- *Embracing the Future*: Many of our new and continuing members are young families. In the last two years, we have had 9 baptisms of regularly attending members under 10 years old. Our future is bright and growing!
- *Endowment*: Through the generosity and stewardship of our community, St. Luke's enjoys having a strong endowment to enhance existing ministries.
- *Internal Giving*: In recent months, contributions and member pledges have increased. See the "Our Finances" section for more detail.

Current Ministries

- *ECW and Altar Guild*: Two of our strongest ministries have long been our Episcopal Church Women and our Altar Guild. They help coordinate worship service supplies and preparation as well as helping to organize and volunteer for various receptions or post-service or seasonal events.
- *Daily Office*: We offer services for Morning and Evening prayer multiple days each week with regular attendance.
- *Scholarships*: We offer scholarship opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to embrace and celebrate the growth and future of our members and their families.

Our Strengths

Recent Developments

- *Music ministry*: In 2023, we welcomed a new full-time Organist and Choirmaster who has brought new life and beauty to our music ministry through both a re-energized and semi-professional choir as well as a new youth chorister program. Both groups have brought an awesome beauty to add to our weekly and occasional services. We also have added monthly Evensong services with special musical arrangements.
- *Childcare*: During the pandemic, our ability to hold services and maintain nursery workers during services diminished, but we now have consistent childcare providers at weekly services and church events. Recently, we supplemented the curricular materials for those children.

What's Next?

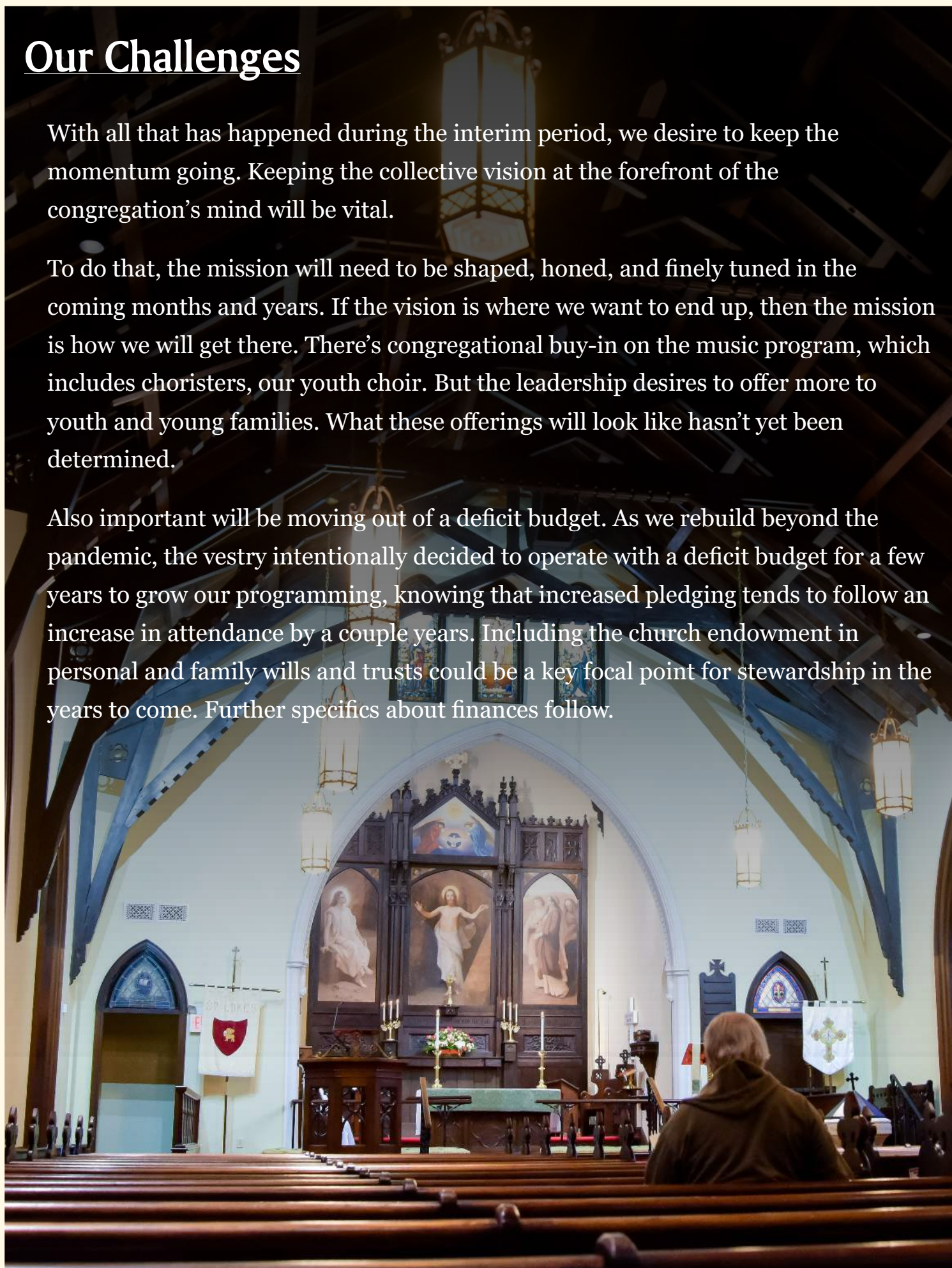
- *Youth Programming*: Knowing we have a rising population of young families and that the nursery services and chorister program have been so helpful, we continue to consider and dream of more formal organization of youth education. We also would love to continue that education with coordination of younger kids in the form of youth group. These additional areas for future growth sound excellent but will require vision and additional human and financial resources.
- *Welcome Committee*: We embrace our identity of sharing the love of Christ with our community and extending hospitality to all who visit St. Luke's, but we might benefit from further formalizing this in the form of a hospitality program that could particularly engage visitors to greet them and explain who we are and how they could see themselves joining our community. We invite creative leadership to guide us along this journey.
- *Volunteer Coordinator*: With continued growth in both services and staff, our human resources are limited and it takes a lot of work and coordination of many congregants for St. Luke's to operate. One area that might benefit the parish is in designating someone to coordinate LEMs, lectors, acolytes, etc.

Our Challenges

With all that has happened during the interim period, we desire to keep the momentum going. Keeping the collective vision at the forefront of the congregation's mind will be vital.

To do that, the mission will need to be shaped, honed, and finely tuned in the coming months and years. If the vision is where we want to end up, then the mission is how we will get there. There's congregational buy-in on the music program, which includes choristers, our youth choir. But the leadership desires to offer more to youth and young families. What these offerings will look like hasn't yet been determined.

Also important will be moving out of a deficit budget. As we rebuild beyond the pandemic, the vestry intentionally decided to operate with a deficit budget for a few years to grow our programming, knowing that increased pledging tends to follow an increase in attendance by a couple years. Including the church endowment in personal and family wills and trusts could be a key focal point for stewardship in the years to come. Further specifics about finances follow.

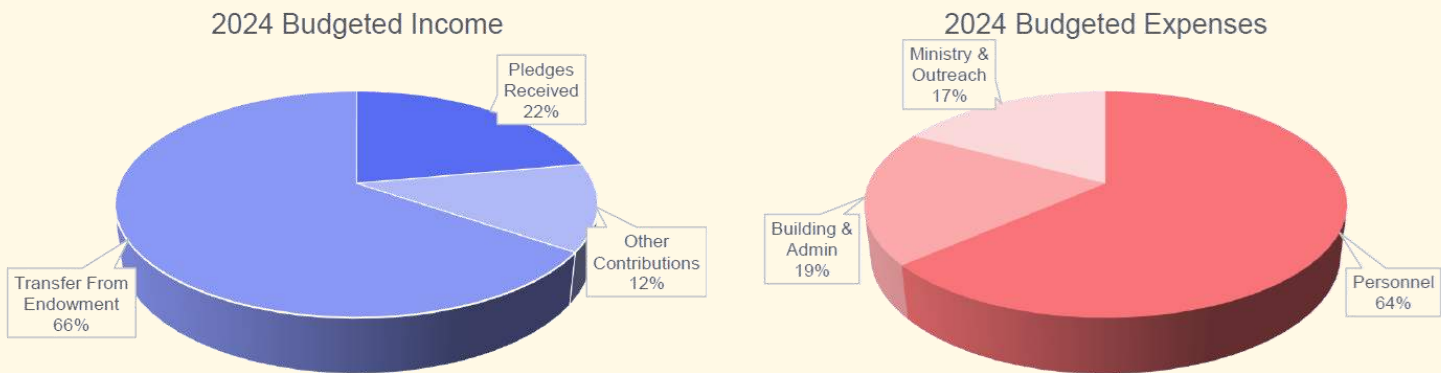
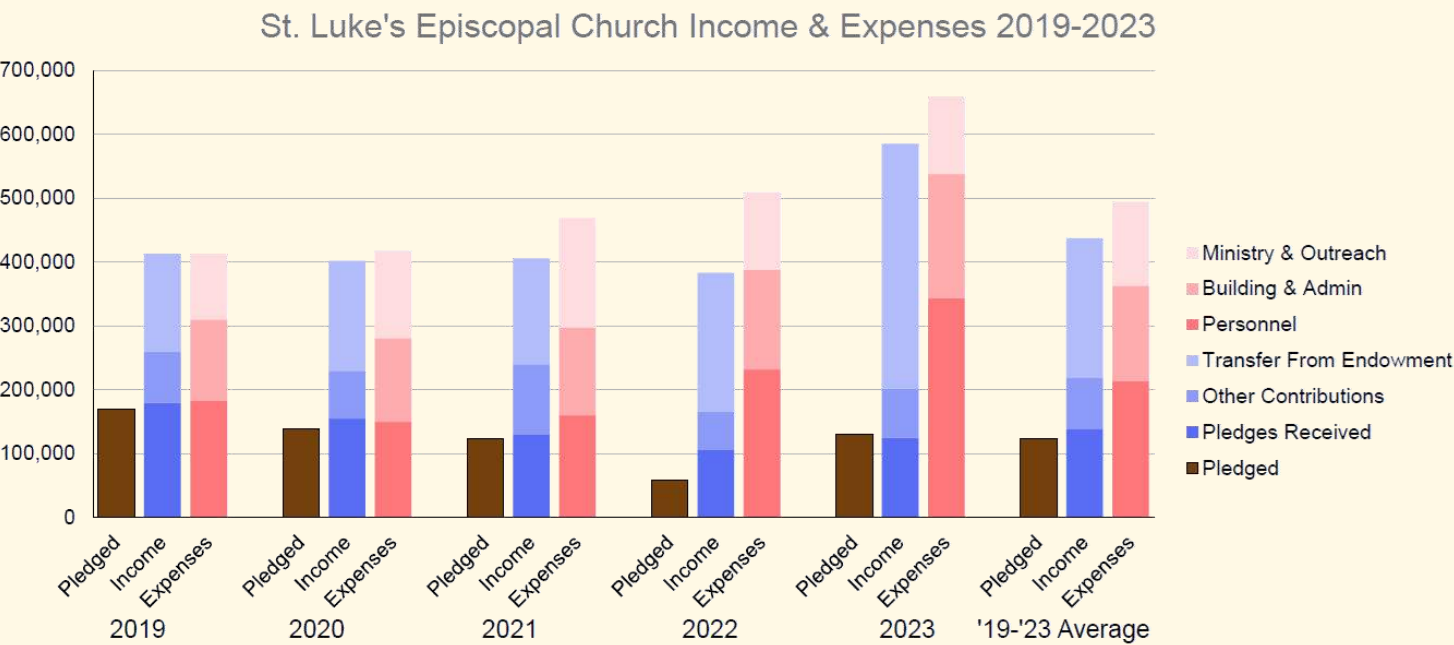


Our Finances

A sizable endowment enables us to do a couple things. First, through our outreach committee, we provide funding to numerous nonprofits in the region. In fact, we are nearing a total giveaway of \$1 million since its inception in 2007—definitely a cause for celebration. Second, it helps cover church operating costs.

In normal years, our practice is to draw only from the interest so that the corpus continues to grow. But in unusual years, like what we’ve experienced recently with COVID, the endowment can be (and has been) a tremendous safety net, allowing us to carry on until we successfully make it to the other side of the desert we’re crossing.

Starting with the 2023 budget, the vestry decided intentionally to approve a deficit budget through 2026. The goal is to stop drawing from the endowment’s corpus for operating costs at that time and, within a year or two beyond that, see the corpus growing once more, so that St. Luke’s will continue to shine Christ’s light to the region for generations to come.



Our History

1832

July 23, 1832
Articles of
Association drawn
up for St. Luke's
Episcopal Parish,
five vestry members
elected; the town of
Jackson named 20
days later.

1837

In January 1837, the
congregation
numbered 6
communicants.

1844

In 1844, the lot on
which St. Luke's
stands was
purchased for \$450.
Part of the present
structure was
erected for \$2,500.

1851

In 1851, eleven
persons confirmed;
congregation
numbered fifty.

1855

In 1855, five-acre lot
was donated for
rectory, built at a
cost of \$3,500,
funds raised by
private subscription.

1862

1862, Tennessee
secedes from the
Union; during the
Civil War, Jackson is
occupied for a year by
Federal troops and
the church building is
used as a hospital.

1883

1883, original
church building
enlarged and
remodeled.

1930

1930, extensive
improvements made
to the church
property, including
the new parish
house, which houses
the church offices
and Commons area
today.



1969

1969, Wicks organ dedicated, considered one of the finest small pipe organs in the region; damaged by a tornado in 2003, the organ is fully restored and moved to the loft.

1984

1984, church added to the National Register of Historic Places.

1997

1997, Parish Hall dedicated; memorial garden begun in the north church yard and columbarium and garden added to south wall and bell tower.

2003

May 2003, church damaged by tornado.

2005

2005, citing matters of human sexuality and ordination, parish endures split; approximately half the membership resigns.

2020

March 2020, COVID pandemic occurs; St. Luke's begins utilizing technology through live streaming and social media.

2022

2022-present, St. Luke's experiences a period of revitalization; confident in its identity, the parish strives to be a resource to like-minded congregations especially in liturgy, music, prayer, and hospitality.



Our Community

“Jackson is a magic blend of urban and small-town life, revitalization and community—an increasingly hip place.”

—Will Shull, parishioner



St. Luke's is located near the heart of highly walkable downtown Jackson, the Hub City of western Tennessee. With a population of more than 68,000 and growing, Jackson is currently experiencing a housing boom with several new industries moving into the area. Jackson has a strong and stable public school system, serving students in GATE-caliber and Montessori settings as well as traditional schools. Jackson is also home to the University of Memphis at Lambuth, Lane College, and Union University, as well as Jackson State Community College and extension facilities for the University of Tennessee at Martin. Medical needs can be met through numerous clinics and services, including Jackson General Hospital, the only tertiary care hospital between Memphis and Nashville.

Jackson has a thriving and expanding arts community. There are community theater opportunities for children, youth, and adults. The Jackson Symphony boasts a full and varied concert season, together with instrumental and vocal opportunities for youth. Visual arts are celebrated in galleries in The Ned, our cultural arts center, featuring a 400-seat, state of the art theater.

Our Community

Jackson and the surrounding area feature numerous celebrations and events yearly: free concerts featuring local bands at the AMP (our outdoor amphitheater next to the Farmer's Market downtown); the Jackson International Food and Art Festival, Jackson Rockabillys Prospect League games; pageants including Miss Teen Volunteer America; PrideFest; Porch Fest; and numerous 5Ks and galas supporting local charitable causes.

Jackson is also within a convenient range of several state parks and historical areas, including Pinson Mounds, Natchez Trace, and Chickasaw. Most recently, the Middle Fork Bottoms Recreational Area has opened just north of the city, with more than 800 acres for walking, fishing, and canoeing.

As the only Episcopal parish in Jackson, St. Luke's is in a unique position to minister to long-time residents as well as new arrivals. St. Luke's helps support many local organizations and charities, and we are part of the bedrock of the Jackson community.



The Rector We Seek

St. Luke's Episcopal Church is a growing downtown parish seeking a rector to shepherd their historic church in the joys and challenges of the 21st century.

We seek someone who will be a/an:

Shepherd: St. Luke's desires someone caring, compassionate, and hospitable with parishioners in their times of need. The rector would also offer guidance and formation for baptism, confirmation, weddings, and other needs as they arise.

Administrator: The rector will act as the church's head of staff, be the chief policy enforcer, and model integrity in the day-to-day business of the church. St. Luke's seeks someone willing to wear many hats. The rector must be highly organized and a good steward of their time and the church's resources.

Communicator: St. Luke's seeks an individual who is emotionally healthy, transparent, and consistent in their interpersonal interactions, someone who demonstrates excellent writing skills, speaking clearly, and listening deeply.

Liturgist: St. Luke's needs someone who knows the liturgies and practices of the Book of Common Prayer. They should have experience with the Daily Office and services of other feast days, not only Sunday morning Holy Eucharist. The rector must share St. Luke's deep commitment to the BCP and the sacred choral tradition. While not necessary, it's a huge plus if you are a musician.

Preacher: We seek someone who is a lifelong learner, has a sense of humor, and will follow the lectionary preaching from the Gospel Text. We value creativity in sermons while maintaining integrity and clarity consistent with the Gospel Text.

Collaborator: As a parish, St. Luke's desires a rector who will be both a leader and a team player. St. Luke's desires someone who demonstrates honesty, integrity, and availability, and someone who will encourage parishioners and staff to share their gifts with the congregation.