

ST. GEORGE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

NEW ORLEANS



Parish overview

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**ST. GEORGE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
NEW ORLEANS**

4600 St. Charles Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70115

Collect & Prayer

Collect for our search

Blessed Lord, you have given us our parish home so that we may serve you together. Grant us your spirit of discernment as we identify ourselves as a community, and search for a Rector who will lead us in our ministries in the service of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever, AMEN.

A Letter to our New Rector

We can't wait to have you join our congregation and would like to introduce ourselves.

You can arrive to the front door of St. George's Episcopal Church by foot, bicycle, vintage streetcar, or car (if it's not Mardi Gras or marathon season, when the city has other traffic priorities). While we live throughout the Greater New Orleans area, all of us at St. George's love our beautiful urban church on our city's most famous thoroughfare.

We aren't much invested in the prestige of our address on St. Charles Avenue. What we love about being in the heart of the city is that it opens us up to encounters with unexpected others the Spirit sends our way. These occur frequently at St. George's—from newcomers in our pews, to guests coming for a hot breakfast at our Sunday-morning Dragon Café feeding ministry, to out-of-town visitors during our signature Mardi Gras Spirits fundraiser who step in for a clean bathroom, a snack or a drink, and a rest from the Carnival parades passing by just a few blocks away.

Indeed, several parishioners mentioned in our discernment process that one thing they love about St. George's is its inclusive and relaxed feeling, and the simple pleasure of meeting people here that you might not meet otherwise and knowing that you are truly welcome. You will find that this is the kind of thing that happens in New Orleans, a city where strangers hail each other on the street and newcomers are generally welcome to join in everywhere, particularly for meals and festivities.

We are grateful to be another inclusive, friendly place in a friendly city. Liturgically this means that we want to make room for everyone to worship and to be involved in a way that inspires them. Some of us seek a more intimate Rite I service at the high altar in the cool of the morning and would also like to return in the evening for prayer and evensong if we could make that happen. Others like a larger Rite II service at 10:30 around our ground-level altar amidst the pews, with ample room for surprises and variations on the theme of global Anglican worship in both the liturgy and the music. All of us like to get together in the undercroft after church for coffee, treats, lunch with the occasional glass of champagne, and for an annual "George Goes to..." dinner where we choose a cuisine, plan a party, and raise money for our church.

We humbly submit that we have the most beautiful sanctuary in a city with many churches. But we also like to move the furniture around to make space for children, for Dr. Donna Clavijo and our choir to sing in different parts of the church, and to share our home with guests for weddings and concerts by groups like the “Electric Y’at Quartet” (we’ll teach you what that means when you get here).

We do not have the most beautiful undercroft in New Orleans but know that much of our most important work happens there. This is where our children and youth gather with James Post for Sunday school and summer camp, and where our former youth minister and future seminarian (and now ordained member of the clergy) Lindsey Ardrey led us through a series of conversations on racial reconciliation. It is where our Vestry met to guide us back from Hurricane Katrina and through our current pandemic. It is also where our busy kitchen has served breakfast uninterruptedly to hungry neighbors and visitors every Sunday since Hurricane Katrina. And where more recently we have welcomed a group called “NOLA Grannies” to make lunches for the asylum seekers passing through our city as they navigate a hostile immigration system in search of life and safety. This is also where your office will be.

What are we hoping for from you? First of all, that you will feel comfortable being exactly who you are, as we encourage each other to be. We want to be a church where the words “all are welcome here” is lived out in its most radical and transformational meaning. That starts with you, and we want you to know that you are beloved no matter your race, gender, or other identity, or who you love. All we ask is that you commit to teaching us to be all-inclusive in our own love; to sharing your gifts for leadership and management of the practical affairs of a 100+ year-old church that wants to be a part of the 21st century “Jesus Movement;” and at all times to asking us to take responsibility for our church, for each other, and for the world beyond St. George’s.

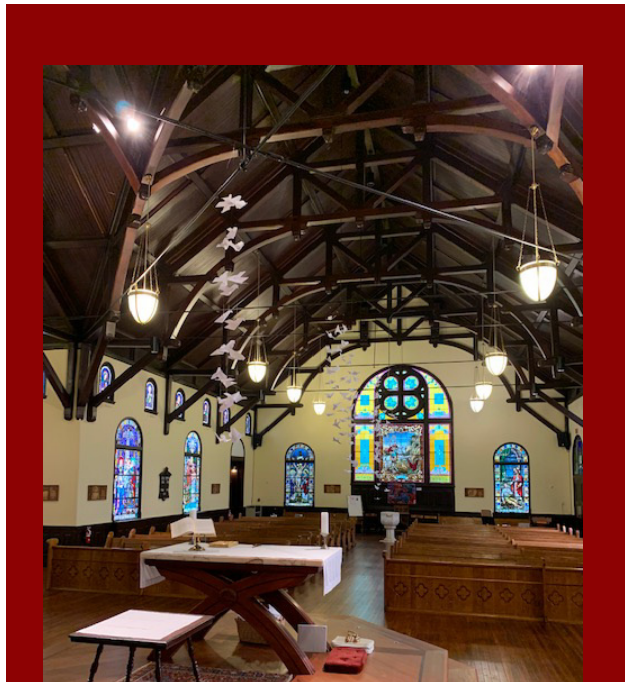
You will have gathered by now that we consider ourselves to be pretty friendly, but we know we need to be challenged in more ways to fully contribute to the building up of Christ in New Orleans and the world. New Orleans can be a joyful place, but we also know it is one of the most unequal cities in our country and that our neighbors are suffering. We open our doors to them for Dragon Café and the NOLA Grannies, but we can and must do more than that. We also know both from bitter experience during Hurricane Katrina and from the inspiring words of Deacon Joey Clavijo, a leader in our parish and diocese, that our city exists in an extremely vulnerable environment in a vulnerable world, and that creation care is our responsibility.

Finally, we know that greater diversity in our congregation is the way the Spirit helps us see the many things we are blind to. We understand that inclusion demands more than simply welcoming others to come in and share in what we have always done, whether it be liturgy or music or outreach. It also means being open to new ways of doing everything and sharing responsibility for doing it. We cannot promise that we will always be easy to lead in new directions, but we do give you permission to remind us, when necessary, that we said what we most liked about St. George’s was that it’s a place where we can be surprised by the Spirit. We look forward to walking (and sometimes second-lining) down that path with you.

History of St. George's

In 1859, the Louisiana diocese established the Emmanuel mission in what was then Jefferson City, a suburb of New Orleans. By 1874, the mission had merged with the congregation of St. Mark's to create St. George's, which met in a wooden church building in the same neighborhood, now incorporated as part of New Orleans. By 1899, having outgrown that location, the cornerstone of the present church was laid nearby at the corner of St Charles and Cadiz Street. Part of the wood from the earlier church was used to construct the present rectory. The first official service was held in the new church on February 4, 1900. The local Times-Picayune newspaper said the new church "while in its exterior very plain, is in the interior one of the finest in the city." Its interior decoration was said to be "rich and splendid while not at all gaudy," a description we like to think is still apt today. While the "modern" lighting and heating systems of the new church that the newspaper particularly singled out for praise may not be as young as they once were, the stained glass windows are still beautiful, and the sound of the bells in the tower is still, as it was described in 1900: "on a bright Sunday morning elevating and exalting."

The work of maintaining a historical building is not always easy but we are inspired to do so by the way previous congregations have used this lovely, centrally located church as a base of operations for serving New Orleans. It was in the undercroft where the first classes were held for the newly established St George's school in 1969. In 1973, the Revd. William P. Richardson held a small prayer service in the church for the 32 victims of arson at the UpStairs Lounge. Despite being admonished by the Bishop and some members of the vestry, he continued to advocate for the LGBTQ community in New Orleans, and his activism earned him a place of civic recognition in the community. It is from our historic church that we hope to continue in the future to serve the New Orleans community in these and in new ways, through projects for racial reconciliation, community-building and welcoming all who seek to build up the body of Christ in New Orleans and the world.



Staff



The Revd. Julia Rusling
Interim Rector

The Rev. Joseph M. Clavijo
Diocesan Deacon

Mr. James Post
Children's & Youth Minister

Dr. Donna Clavijo
Director of Sacred Music

Mr. Jerry Montalbano
Parish Administrator

Mr. Chip Duncan
Manager of the Dragon Cafe

Ms. Claudia Denson
Sexton

Vestry

Martin Davies
Senior Warden

Harvey Wier
Junior Warden

William Gillespie
Treasurer

Inge Fink
Clerk

Amy Reggio
Heather McArthur
Jake Weixler
George Bond
Melanie Christenson

Ministries

Worship Services

Here, as is in everyone's life over the last year or so, COVID has turned so many things upside down. St George's has responded creatively, using emails, Facebook pages, and Zoom meetings to bring church members together to worship and to support one another. Although envisioned at first as emergency measures, the use of these technologies has proven to be more uniting and more enlightening than we had thought they would be. As we move forward, we hope to use newfound skills in these areas to enhance and expand our traditional worship opportunities.

Sundays

8:00 am Rite I service, in person

9:30 am Family Eucharist, Rite II (on hiatus)

10:30 Rite II service, online and in-person

Tuesdays

7:30 am Centering prayer on Zoom



Music Ministry

Under music director Donna Clavijo, over the last 14 years, the Sacred Music department at St. Georges has offered a variety of programs to the parish, leading the congregation in singing from the 1982 Hymnal, as well as from Lift Every Voice and Sing II. Before COVID, the Adult Choir was in full attendance, not only at all 10:30 Sunday services but also at all major Feast days and liturgical Seasons—Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Pentecost, and Christmas, which included Lessons and Carols and Christmas Eve. The music offerings for children have varied over the years depending on the number of young families within our church. We have had children's choirs and even a small handbell group for older kids. St George's also has an active choral intern program that has enriched our Sunday musical offerings and supported at least two college musicians a year in our community. The choral interns have also directed the children's choir in special programs of music for Sunday services.

The music director has introduced a variety of concerts for the community as well, drawing on local musicians to present in our beautiful sanctuary everything from opera to tango to traditional jazz.

Dragon Café: A ministry of food and fellowship

The Dragon Café was started after Hurricane Katrina to feed those without kitchens and many first responders and relief workers in New Orleans immediately following the hurricane. In the beginning, it was serving up to 10,000 meals a year – mostly on Thursday and Friday nights. As the Church and City recovered from Katrina, St. George's opted to make one meal a week, Sunday breakfast, to give those in need a hearty start to their day. "No one leaves hungry," is the motto. The guests can stay for seconds, and the Café volunteers treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Presently, the Café serves the homeless and working poor, as well as persons suffering from mental illness and substance abuse. On average prior to Covid-19, we served 70 to 100 meals between 8:30 and 9:30 am every Sunday morning. Thaddeus Azore, a New Orleans deputy constable who has worked security at the Café since its outset, calls the breakfast a "lifeline," and said he's positive it has kept people alive during rough times.

Before Covid-19 hit, Dragon Café was "going green". With a donation from the 4th graders at St. George's Episcopal School, we purchased a commercial grade dish washer as well as dinner and silver ware from a local restaurant that was closing so we could limit our use of paper and plastic products and provide a more pleasant dining experience for our guests.



Dragon Café has not missed serving a meal since its inception after Hurricane Katrina. Our volunteers have walked through flooded streets and ignored police curfews in order to serve our guests every Sunday morning.

Environmental Stewardship and Creation Care

God has entrusted us as caretakers of his creation. Our Eco-stewardship program seeks to harmonize the practices of our parish with the desire for a healthy and sustainable habitat for all God's creatures. This ministry at St. George's has representatives in the Diocesan Environmental Commission and has provided input for a month-long celebration called "The Season of Creation." Each Sunday will focus on a different theme: Planet Earth, Humankind, Sky, Mountain, and St. Francis Day and will relate to all elements of worship—readings, prayers, music, preaching, and Eucharistic Liturgy (shaped by St. George's own Melanie Christenson.) Working closely with the Buildings and Grounds Committee and with Master Gardeners among the congregation, this program hopes in future to bring in native species of plants to our small garden and patio areas and to redesign the children's play area. A hydroponic system where vegetables and other plants could be raised has also been suggested.



Brave Hearts

This is a new ministry formed by the Vestry that works towards racial healing, as well as towards bringing new and former congregants to the church, in both in-person and on-line services. As we try to move forward from the Covid crisis, Brave Hearts wants to develop mission and vision statements and to continue to work and grow through discussion and reading groups.

The Hospitality Committee

Known as the Noble Order of St. Martha—in honor of the (unfairly) chastised Bethany hostess in Luke's gospel—we "Marthians" believe that the way to many a parishioner's heart leads through the stomach. In the spirit of our fair city's legendary hospitality, we provide food and drink for parish functions great and small, and we welcome anyone who shares our philosophy to join our ranks.

Children's and Youth Ministry

While the Children's and Youth Ministry at St. George's has changed over the years, the mission has remained the same. That is, to foster spaces where the young people of St. George's experience the life-giving and liberating Love of God. Currently we are living into this congregational ministry through at-home activity baskets and services, outdoor youth group events, and special events for all families. These programs, as well as the ministry in general, are developed, implemented, and powered by an incredible team of adult youth ministers, as well as the youth themselves. As we continue to move forward and evolve, we strive to meet our young people where they are, engage the whole family, and offer opportunities for the community to support itself in these programs. We are continually challenging ourselves to be more engaging, sustainable, and useful in this ministry. Some of our most recent events have included "Canoe-Charist" for Middle and High School where we joined with youth groups from around the city for a shoreside eucharist, time out on the water, and a wonderful afternoon. And "Take a Sky Break and Shout!" which provided instructions for kids and their families to participate in our Season of Creation series. Although we could not be together that Sunday because of a hurricane, all kids needed were themselves, a Bible, a camera and a place to lie down and look at the sky, wherever their families might have ended up that weekend.



St George's School

The Chapel program at St. George's Episcopal School has also been through a similar evolution while remaining focused on its mission: to foster space where the school community can gather to reflect on, learn about, and experience the Love of God. The rector serves as an Ex-Officio member of the Board of Trustees and officiates annual School liturgies including the Opening Service, Thanksgiving Service, and Christmas Service. Each division of the school has a weekly chapel service, and additionally, each Lower School Homeroom and Middle School Advisory has a monthly check-in. Currently these are developed and implemented by the Children's and Youth Minister and appropriate Division Head from the School.



Vital Statistics

Demographics and Membership

St. George's is located in the historic Uptown neighborhood of New Orleans but draws its members from many different parts of the city and the surrounding suburbs. As of the end of 2020, according to the Parochial Report, St. George's had 255 active members—163 adult communicants in good standing and 62 youth (under 16 years of age.) The average Sunday attendance for 2020 was 74, down through the period of the pandemic from 171 in 2019.

Financial Health

Balance Sheet

St. George's is blessed with a strong financial and asset base. It owns and is sited on two lots in the Uptown neighborhood of New Orleans, with the church edifice facing the well-known St. Charles Avenue and its streetcar line. This 1899 building is owned by the parish free from any mortgage or encumbrance. Likewise owned by the parish on the adjacent lot behind the church is the rectory, which is the same age as the church and is available either for the use of the rector or to provide rental income.

St. George's holds cash and invested assets in the four funds its books utilize for accounting purposes. The cash and investment balances in these funds, as of December 31, 2020, are as follows:

Operating Fund	\$67,120
Capital Fund	68,608
Endowment Fund	963,037
Feeding Ministry	54,691
Giving total cash and investments	\$1,153,456

Operating Income and Expense

Given here are actual numbers for the calendar year ending December 31, 2020, and budgeted numbers for the year 2021.

Income	2020	2021 Budget
Pledge	\$236,281	\$199,112
Non-pledge and plate	58,166	50,000
Other Income (including rents)	70,142	97,845
Total Income	\$364,589	\$346,957
Expense		
Building and Grounds	\$116,759	\$141,045
Diocesan Assessment	43,000	32,839
Office Expenses	21,749	23,325
Payroll Expenses	218,346	224,372
Outreach and Program	16,623	13,090
Total Expense	\$416,477	\$434,671
Net Income (Loss)	(\$51,888)	(\$87,714)

Year to Date, July 31, 2021

As with other parishes, St. George's continues to suffer from periodic uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic that affect attendance, giving, and other contributions. Given here are actual numbers for the first seven months of 2021, along with budgeted numbers for the same period.

	Year to Date Actual 7/31/21	Year to Date Budget 7/31/21
Income	\$204,002	\$185,681
Expenses	242,730	246,223
Year to Date Actual/Budgeted Loss	(\$38,728)	(\$60,542)

Financial Administration

St. George's has a Parish Administrator, with over a decade of experience in the position, who handles the basic bookkeeping of the parish. Our CPA, who has been contracted by the parish for over two decades, visits monthly to reconcile the bank accounts and review the books. ACS software is used. Payroll is outsourced to a service.

The parish currently has a Budget and a newly established Finance committee which meets periodically to review the financial position and progress of the parish and reports its findings to the vestry.

Fundraisers

MARDI GRAS SPIRITS is our largest annual fundraiser. We cook and serve jambalaya, red beans & rice, burgers, hotdogs, etc. as well as beer, soft drinks and a few mixed drinks as well. In addition, we offer a “free place to pee” and a gathering spot for families to rest or just to get out of the rain if it’s inclement. We are open every day/night that the Uptown parades roll. It can be an exhausting time as we meet to cook in advance, and then on the weekends the kitchens are staffed from 7am to midnight at times. We struggle with attracting enough workers so that we don’t burn out our regulars. It is at times exhilarating, and crazy, and fun and also overwhelming. It does take a village but we are working on ways that we spread the load a bit. While Mardi Gras was cancelled in 2021 due to Covid, in 2020 we brought in \$30,490.

GEORGE GOES TO... DINNERS. These bi-annual events, unfortunately on hold due to Covid, are also great fundraising events. Each dinner for 50 is set with a theme that the dinner and drinks are all built around. George is a major world traveler, as we’ve gone to France, to Vietnam, to Mexico, Spain and Scandinavia, among others in the last 15 years. The cooking, serving, & cleaning is all done with a small group of dedicated parishioners. Other “entertainment” is a silent auction of items from weekend holidays, sailing on the Lake, wine, kitchen items and miscellaneous other goodies. Our last dinner brought in \$4,200.

The **ECW** holds biannual collections as well as a Pancake Breakfast once a year. The funds raised helped support our own Lindsey Ardrey while she was in seminary.

Hurricane Ida Recovery

Although the structure of the church sustained some damage in Hurricane Ida, the present outlook is rather more positive than was first feared. The position is not yet clear, and will remain uncertain for a while yet, but the present expectation is that necessary repairs will be completed relatively soon, perhaps within a few months. The financial impact is largely uncertain, as it will depend very much on what is discovered during the process of remediation and repair. No matter what, there will be a drain on the resources of the church, but the size of that drain remains unknown at present until we receive the report from the structural engineer. The vestry is concerned about the impact that the combination of the pandemic and the hurricane has had on our fellowship and engagement with one another, and is working on regenerating a feeling of community among our congregation. The interim Rector has been very impressed with how effective the vestry has been during this time of crisis.



Conclusion & Thank you

Thank you for your interest in the position of rector at St George's Episcopal Church in Orleans Parish. If you wish to apply for this position, please send the following documents in electronic form to The Reverend Canon Shannon Duckworth, The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana, at sduckworth@edola.org and to Birgit Haylock and Chip Duncan, Search Committee co-chairs, at: behaylock@gmail.com and eduncan@duncansevin.com

- Current Office of Transitions Ministry (OTM) portfolio. This is from the Episcopal Church website and must be completed in full.
- Resume. A one-page statement outlining your skills.
- A list of three references, at least two of which are to be lay people, one of whom must be related to your current place of ministry. Please add contact information for each.
- A one-paragraph statement as to why you are interested in leaving your current call.
- A one-paragraph statement as to why you are seeking a call in Orleans Parish, Louisiana.
- A two-paragraph statement as to your understanding of priesthood in the Episcopal Church

You are encouraged to contact the Search Committee co-Chairs, Birgit Haylock and Chip Duncan.

Birgit Haylock • behaylock@gmail.com • Cell: 504-453-1969

Chip Duncan • eduncan@duncansevin.com • Cell: 504-450-8168

The Diocese and/or St George's Search Committee will respond as quickly as possible to all communications. The committee will begin reviewing and screening as soon as the candidate's materials are received. Zoom interviews will be scheduled after the screening process. Thank you for your interest in St George's Episcopal Church. We are looking forward to getting to know you!

Search Committee Members

Chip Duncan, Co-Chair

Birgit Haylock, Co-Chair

George Bond, Vestry

Tanner Broughton

Melanie Christenson, Vestry

Lauren Dunn

Nancy Kirkeby

Meg Mitchell

John Morris

Brian Reid

Patricia Schoenbrun



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