



My second year of Ministry at St. James has been filled with the glory of God. For in this year, I have witnessed the faithful Disciples of Christ who gather at St. James grow in their faith, reach out into the world in mission, and invite more and more people into a relationship with Jesus. It is my great honor to serve as the Senior Pastor of St. James, and to lead these people in our mission “To know Jesus Christ, and make Him known.”

This year was filled with challenges and opportunities, especially regarding the season our denomination is in, but our diverse congregation is committed to loving each other and the world. Despite what is happening around the denomination, St. James continues to grow. We have seen a major increase in our on-campus worship attendance, as well as growth in all other on-campus ministries. When comparing our attendance this year to the same time last year, our on-campus attendance is up over 20%. When we combine our online and on-campus attendance today, and compare it to our online and on-campus attendance numbers from 2019, we are reaching 400 more people now than we were before the Covid-19 Pandemic. We are having one of the healthiest years financially in our Church history, and have seen our Endowed funds bounce back after a down year. We look forward to a bright future in which new ministries emerge and existing ones are strengthened.

We welcomed a new Executive Director of Finance and Administration to help guide our Church, and we have leveled up in our stewardship. Our Pastors and Lay staff continue to work well together to help our Church grow stronger and bring more people in our community into a relationship with Christ. I am excited for what the future holds throughout our ministry areas.

Our Mission and Caring Ministries continue to thrive. Our Missions team provides food, school supplies, hot meals, clothing, Christmas gifts and more throughout the year. We renewed our in-person partnership with local elementary schools to provide tutoring. We also enjoyed being a flagship partner for Project Transformation this summer. Our Caring Ministries commissioned a new group of lay chaplains after going through a lengthy and faithful training process. These lay chaplains provide powerful care to those in need throughout our community.

In all of this, I know that the future of St. James is bright. God is using this Church to build the Kingdom and I am proud to be a part of it. Our 2024 Stewardship Campaign began on Sunday, October 1st. This year we will be looking at how God is calling us to defy the gravitational pull of money and possessions that so often weighs us down, and claim the freedom that God offers. I know that we can have another record pledge campaign as we offer our hearts in service and generosity to God. We trust in God’s leadership for us and our path forward.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Ben Crismon