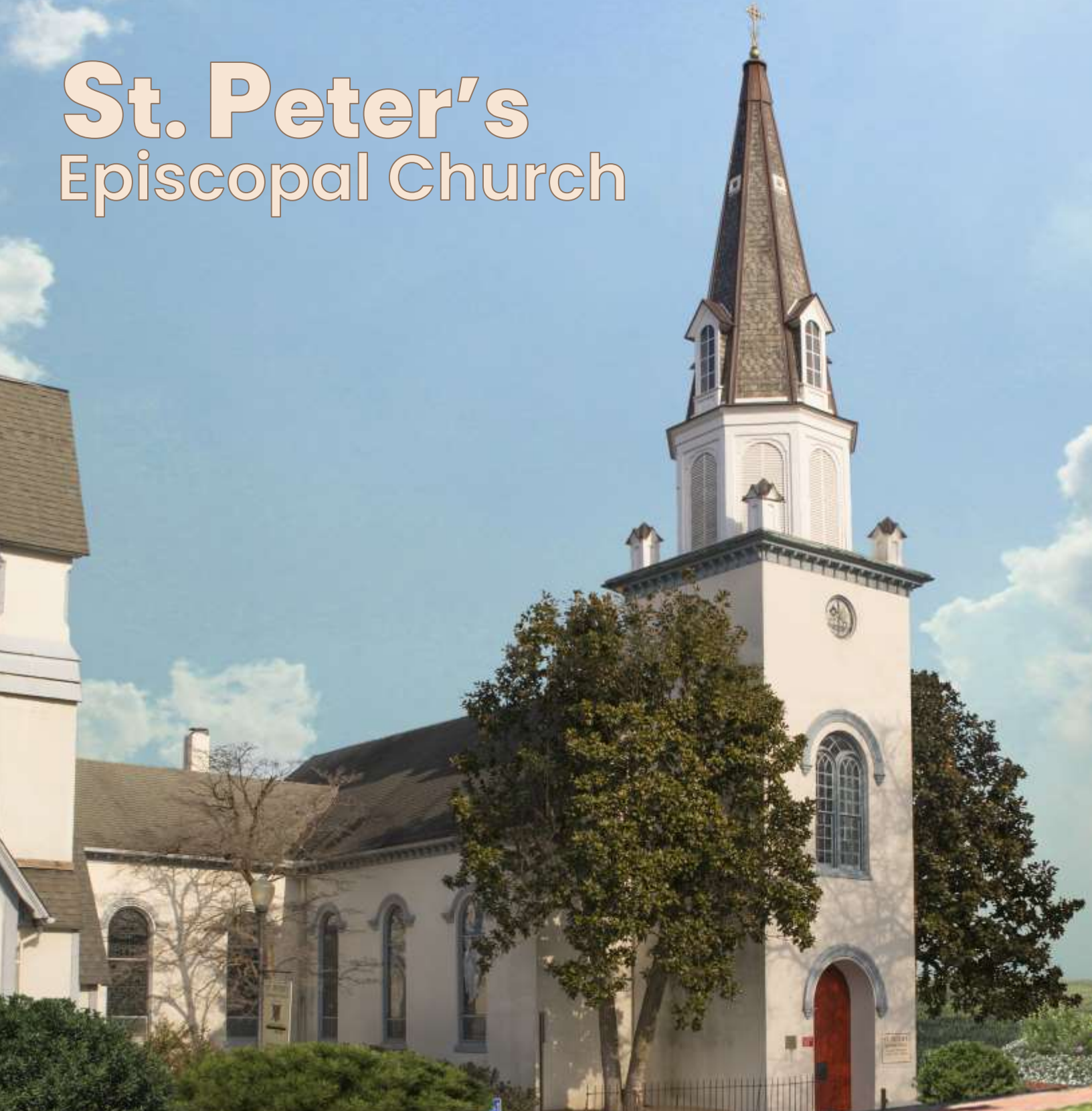


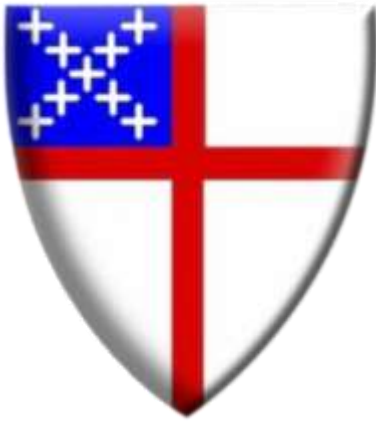
# St. Peter's Episcopal Church



22 N. Union St. Smyrna, DE 19977

(302) 653-9691 [stpeters-smyrna.church](http://stpeters-smyrna.church)





**Dear Friends in Christ,**

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Smyrna, Delaware. We are a parish rooted in a long and faithful history, yet very much alive to the work God continues to do among us today. For nearly three centuries, St. Peter's has sought to follow Jesus with integrity, hospitality, and generosity—serving both our congregation and the wider community with humility and hope.

As we enter this season of discernment, we do so with gratitude for where we have been and openness to where God is leading us next. This parish profile offers a window into our shared life: how we worship, serve, govern, and care for one another. We invite you to read prayerfully and to imagine how your gifts and vocation might join with ours as we seek to grow in faith, deepen relationships, and make God's love more visible in Smyrna and beyond.

With hope and trust in God's guidance,  
**The Search and Discernment Committee**



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# Who We Are

*Rooted in prayer and shaped by centuries of Anglican tradition, St. Peter's is a community where faith is lived authentically, and relationships matter deeply. We honor our history while listening attentively for God's ongoing call among us today.*



St. Peter's Episcopal Church is a historic parish with a living faith, rooted in centuries of Anglican worship and shaped by God's ongoing call in the present day. Founded in 1740, St. Peter's traces its origins to early Anglican gatherings in the Duck Creek area, with worship likely occurring as early as 1706. In 1740, Thomas Green donated one acre of land for a church and graveyard, where a wooden chapel was completed in 1744 and later replaced by a brick church in 1764, named St. Peter's Episcopal Church by the Rev. Charles Inglis.

As Smyrna's center of life shifted south, the Vestry discerned the need for a new church building. In 1827, the Duck Creek church was dismantled, and a new structure—using some of the original bricks—was built on Union Street and consecrated in 1828. That site remains St. Peter's home today, while the original property continues as St. Peter's Cemetery. The parish shared clergy with neighboring congregations until 1850, when the Rev. Samuel T. Carpenter became St. Peter's first rector.

Growth and vitality marked the 19th century, leading to the expansion of the church in 1857 in the Gothic Revival style, the addition of a parish hall in 1872, and a Sunday school wing in 1958. In 1980, St. Peter's was recognized on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Smyrna Historic District.

# Who We Are



Today, St. Peter's is a parish of approximately 76 active members and 38 active participants who are non-members, bringing together long-standing Episcopalians and newer members alike. More than half of the congregation has joined within the last decade, while many others have worshiped here for twenty years or more. This blend of experience and fresh perspective shapes a community that honors tradition while remaining open to renewal.

St. Peter's is known for its warm, informal spirit and strong sense of hospitality. Parishioners greet visitors, offer connections, and invite participation in the life of the church. We strive to reflect Christ's welcome by honoring each person's gifts, providing clear pathways into ministry, and nurturing authentic relationships. We seek to be "the church worth finding" in Smyrna—faithful, generous, and grounded in the hope, peace, and joy found in life with God.





# Whom We Seek

*We seek a Rector who will walk with us in faith—leading with compassion, clarity, and joy.*

*Together, we hope to discern God's call and grow into a hopeful and faithful future.*

St. Peter's seeks a Rector to join our parish family—someone who will lead with faith, joy, and compassion while honoring the strong Episcopal identity and traditions that shape our common life. We desire a priest who is spiritually grounded, pastorally attentive, and relationally engaged: a leader who genuinely enjoys being with people and who inspires confidence and hope for the future of the church. This role is understood as a shared ministry, in which the Rector, Vestry, and congregation work collaboratively to support one another and advance the mission of the parish.

The Rector will serve as the parish's spiritual leader, guiding worship and preaching that is reverent, accessible, and rooted in scripture. Sermons are expected to be engaging, concise, and relatable, helping parishioners connect biblical teaching to their daily lives while consistently affirming God's unconditional love and grace. A strong understanding of Episcopal liturgy and sacramental life is essential, as is a deep respect for the traditions that define St. Peter's worship. At the same time, the parish welcomes thoughtful enrichment of worship that speaks to a broad range of ages without compromising its core identity.

# Whom We Seek

Pastoral care is a central expectation of this ministry. The Rector is called to know the people of the parish not only in moments of crisis, but through regular presence and intentional relationship-building. Visiting the sick, shut-ins, and homebound; offering care during grief, illness, and end-of-life transitions; and providing prayerful support during life's challenges are vital responsibilities. Recognizing the limits of one individual, the Rector will also equip and encourage lay leaders to share in pastoral care, ensuring that no parishioner feels overlooked while maintaining healthy boundaries that support sustainability and prevent burnout.

Strong relationships and community engagement are essential to the health of the parish. The Rector should be visible, approachable, and able to connect easily with children, youth, adults, and seniors alike. A warm personality, genuine empathy, and a sense of humor are highly valued. The parish hopes for a Rector who actively supports parish ministries, including collaboration with the preschool, and who fosters a welcoming, joyful atmosphere in which all feel accepted, valued, and encouraged to grow in faith.



# Whom We Seek



Leadership at St. Peter's is envisioned as collaborative, humble, and grounded in trust. The Rector will work closely with the Vestry, staff, and ministry leaders to guide the parish with clarity, integrity, and mutual respect. Responsibilities include helping articulate a shared vision for the future, supporting responsible stewardship of finances and property, encouraging broad participation in ministry, and partnering with the Diocese in revitalization and long-range planning. Effective delegation, organizational skills, and the ability to motivate and empower others are essential to this role.

St. Peter's understands that a thriving parish depends on shared responsibility. The Vestry and congregation commit to active participation in worship and ministry, shared support for pastoral care through lay involvement, openness to growth and thoughtful change, and prayerful encouragement of the Rector's leadership. Together, the parish seeks to build on its strengths, care faithfully for its people, and grow into a hopeful future grounded in God's love and calling.

## Where We Have Been



## Where We Are Going

*Faithfulness through change has shaped who we are today.  
With gratitude for the past and trust in God's guidance, we  
look ahead with resilience, openness, and hope.*

St. Peter's has been shaped by faithfulness through seasons of change, challenge, and renewal. Recent years—including clergy transitions and the COVID pandemic—called for adaptability, clear communication, and deep trust in God's guidance. Through these experiences, the parish emerged more resilient, more connected, and more aware of its shared calling.

Combined worship services strengthened fellowship, while the development of online worship and enhanced audio-visual capabilities expanded access for homebound parishioners and others unable to attend in person. Throughout every season, outward-facing ministries—especially the Food Pantry, Backpack Drive, fundraising events, and community meals—have remained vital expressions of faith in action.

## Where We Have Been



## Where We Are Going

Looking ahead, St. Peter's seeks to honor its rich traditions while embracing fresh approaches that welcome younger families, newcomers, and the wider community. The parish is committed to a forward-looking spirit marked by intentional hospitality, thoughtful communication, and continued online engagement. Guided by its mission of hospitality, hope, and healing, St. Peter's approaches the future with openness, trust, and anticipation.



# How We Worship

*In Word and Sacrament,  
we gather to encounter God's grace  
and be renewed for lives of faith  
and service. Our worship is  
reverent, welcoming, and  
grounded in the Episcopal tradition.*



Worship at St. Peter's is centered on the Holy Eucharist and grounded in the richness of the Episcopal tradition. Our services emphasize reverence, accessibility, and active participation, inviting worshippers into a rhythm of prayer that extends beyond Sunday into daily life.

During this season of transition, Sunday worship is offered at 9:00 a.m., combining the parish's former Rite I and Rite II services. Music is an integral part of worship and includes organ, piano, choir, and other instruments as appropriate. Vestments, bells, and procession are used in keeping with the liturgical season. Lay ministers play an active role, helping to ensure worship remains welcoming and authentically Episcopal.

Additional offerings include a monthly healing service in the chapel and services that balance preaching with teaching, enriching the spiritual life of the parish and encouraging deeper engagement with faith.





"I like how our church community supports one another in times of joy and sorrow."



"I like the friendliness and respect everyone shows to each other."



# Outreach & Hospitality

*Called to love our neighbors, we seek to serve with generosity and compassion. Our outreach reflects a faith that reaches beyond our walls and into the life of the wider community.*



Outreach and hospitality are core expressions of St. Peter's identity. The parish supports a wide range of outreach efforts, including donations to local food pantries, animal shelters, veterans' homes, and community assistance programs. The annual Backpack Project provides school supplies to students in need and is a visible sign of the parish's commitment to serving children and families.

St. Peter's also supports recovery ministries by hosting weekly AA and NA meetings and maintains a longstanding relationship with the Delaware Home for the Chronically Ill through volunteer service and seasonal outreach.

# Outreach & Hospitality



As a member of the Smyrna-Clayton Ministerium, St. Peter's houses the community food pantry, contributes to emergency assistance, and participates in ecumenical worship services throughout the year. These partnerships reflect a parish committed to collaboration, compassion, and faithful presence in the wider community.

# Parish Life

*Shared life at St. Peter's is marked by fellowship, service, and joy. Through common prayer and mutual care, we grow together as the Body of Christ, strengthened in faith and sent forth in love.*

Parish life at St. Peter's offers meaningful opportunities for connection, service, and spiritual growth. Ministries supporting worship include Altar Guild, Eucharistic Ministers, acolytes, ushers and greeters, choir, and occasional bell choir offerings for major feast days.



Community gatherings play an important role in nurturing relationships and welcoming neighbors. These include a patronal feast block party, seasonal meals and celebrations, homecoming Sunday, and events that honor those who serve the wider community. Together, these ministries and gatherings foster a strong sense of belonging and shared life in Christ.

# Parish Life



# Parish Life



# Parish Life



# Parish Life



# St. Peter's Preschool

*Our preschool is a visible and vital expression of our mission, nurturing young children and their families with care, learning, and Christian values forming strong foundations for faith and community.*



St. Peter's Preschool, established in 1994, is a vital and visible ministry of the parish. Serving up to two dozen three- and four-year-olds, the preschool provides a safe, nurturing environment that supports early spiritual, social, and academic development.

Led by certified and dedicated staff, and grounded in best practices through participation in the Delaware Institute of Excellence in Early Childhood Education, the program uses *The Creative Curriculum* to offer developmentally appropriate learning. Family-centered events and strong community connections make the preschool an integral part of St. Peter's mission and outreach.

# Where We Live

*Smyrna offers small-town warmth, growing opportunity, and a strong sense of community. It is a place where connection, tradition, and quality of life come together.*

St. Peter's is located in historic Smyrna, Delaware, "The First State," a town known for its strong sense of community and collaborative spirit. Set along Duck Creek, Smyrna began as a colonial crossroads and agricultural hub, and its preserved downtown reflects a place that honors its past while looking steadily toward the future.

Now the fifth largest—and one of the fastest growing—municipalities in Delaware, Smyrna is home to more than 13,300 residents. The town's population has grown by more than 25% over the past decade, with continued annual growth rates among the highest in Kent County. This steady expansion draws young families, professionals, and longtime neighbors alike. Smyrna offers smalltown warmth, increasing opportunity, and a deep sense of connection—where tradition and quality of life come together.



# Where We Live



Residents enjoy cultural arts at the Smyrna Opera House, natural beauty at the nearby Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge, and a vibrant calendar of parades, festivals, and community events. A shining example of local investment in learning and community life is the Duck Creek Regional Library, a new 22,000squarefoot facility in downtown Smyrna with expanded spaces for programs, meeting rooms, technology resources, and community gathering. This modern hub strengthens downtown revitalization and reflects Smyrna’s commitment to lifelong learning and connection for all ages.

Though comfortably out of the fray, Smyrna offers easy access to the arts and opportunities of Dover, Philadelphia, and Delaware’s beaches—providing both rootedness and reach.

Within this setting, St. Peter’s shares in the life of a town that values relationships, collaboration, and steady growth. For a Rector drawn to relational ministry in a hopeful and expanding community, Smyrna offers fertile ground—and space to help shape what comes next.

# Church Leadership

*Leadership at St. Peter's is collaborative, prayerful, and rooted in Episcopal polity. Clergy and laity share responsibility for the mission, health, and future of the parish.*



# Governance & Leadership

St. Peter's Episcopal Church is guided by a faithful, collaborative, and prayerful system of governance rooted in Episcopal polity. The Vestry serves as the legal and governing body of the parish, stewarding its mission, property, and financial resources with care, transparency, and accountability. Together with the clergy, the Vestry seeks to discern God's call for the parish and to lead in ways that support worship, pastoral care, and outreach.

The Vestry is composed of nine elected members, along with a Secretary and a Treasurer. Vestry members serve staggered three-year terms and elect officers annually. The Priest-in-Charge serves as the presiding officer of the Vestry, providing spiritual and pastoral leadership in partnership with the Senior and Junior Wardens. This collaborative model reflects the parish's commitment to shared ministry, mutual respect, and clear communication.

The Vestry is responsible for setting policy, overseeing finances and property, and supporting the mission and ministries of the parish. In all things, Vestry members strive to love God and love one another, practicing faithful stewardship, fiscal responsibility, and care for creation.

# Governance & Leadership



Shirley Biddle  
Senior Warden



Wayne Burris  
Junior Warden



Temple Carter  
Treasurer



Lisa Embert  
Secretary



Dawn Adams



Dawn Arnold



Larry Decker



Ray DePhillis



Patty Murray



Harold Warnett

# Committees & Ministries

The life of the parish is supported by a range of standing ministries that sustain worship, hospitality, and care for the church and one another. These include Altar Guild, Ushers and Greeters, Building and Grounds, Fundraising, Stewardship, Outreach, In-reach, and Cemetery Care.



St. Peter's is also intentionally strengthening its governance and ministry structures through the development of additional committees. These include Safety and Security, Finance, Communications, Evangelism, and Pastoral Care. Some of these groups are newly formed or in early stages of development, reflecting a parish that is self-aware, open to growth, and committed to building sustainable systems for the future. There is also a growing recognition of the need to strengthen Worship and Christian Education as part of the parish's ongoing renewal.

# Committees & Ministries



St. Peter's supports our plans and goals through these committees and ministries.

Altar Guild

Animal Ministry

Buildings & Grounds Committee

Communications Committee

Evangelism Committee

Food Pantry

Fundraising Committee

Hospitality Ministry

Music Ministry

Outreach Committee

Prayer Chain Ministry

Safety & Security Committee

Search /Discernment Committee

St. Peter's Preschool

# Financial Highlights

*Faithful stewardship sustains our ministry and supports our mission. St. Peter's approaches its finances with transparency, responsibility, and trust in God's provision.*

## A Parish Positioned for the Future

St. Peter's enters this season of discernment financially stable, resilient, and well-positioned for future growth. Through careful stewardship, transparent leadership, and generous participation by parishioners, the congregation has navigated recent clergy transitions while sustaining ministry vitality and financial health. After closing 2024 at break-even, the parish ended 2025 with a strong operating surplus, offering flexibility and opportunity for the next Priest-in-Charge to lead with vision and confidence.

### 2025 Financial Snapshot

Total Income:	\$286,301
Total Expenses:	\$239,932
Operating Surplus:	\$46,369

This outcome reflects both prudent oversight by parish leadership and a congregation willing to invest in its shared mission, ministries, and future leadership.

# Financial Highlights

## Sources of Support for Ministry

Parish life and ministry are sustained through a balanced and diversified income base that strengthens long-term sustainability and adaptability:

### Contributions & Pledges (49%)

The cornerstone of parish life, reflecting enduring generosity and commitment to shared ministry.

### Fundraising (26%)

Strong participation in parish events highlights a congregation that is engaged, collaborative, and creative.

### Donor-Restricted & Designated Gifts (14%)

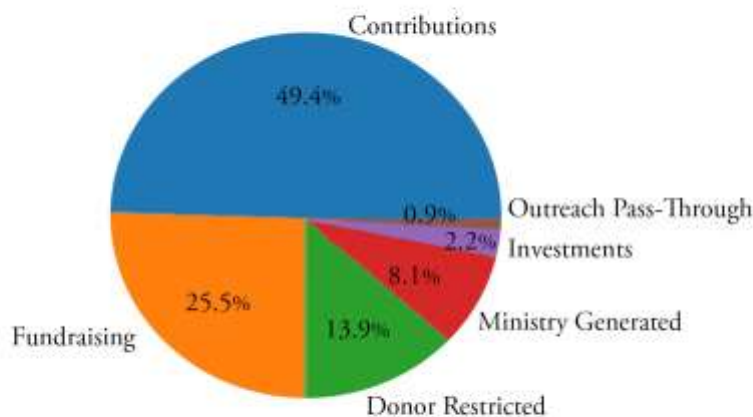
Targeted support for specific ministries, facility care, and the preschool.

### Ministry-Generated Income (8%)

Including preschool operations, facility use, and cemetery ministry—each extending the parish's presence and service in the wider community.

### Investments & Interest (2%)

Providing modest but consistent supplemental income.



# Financial Highlights

## Financial Trends and Context

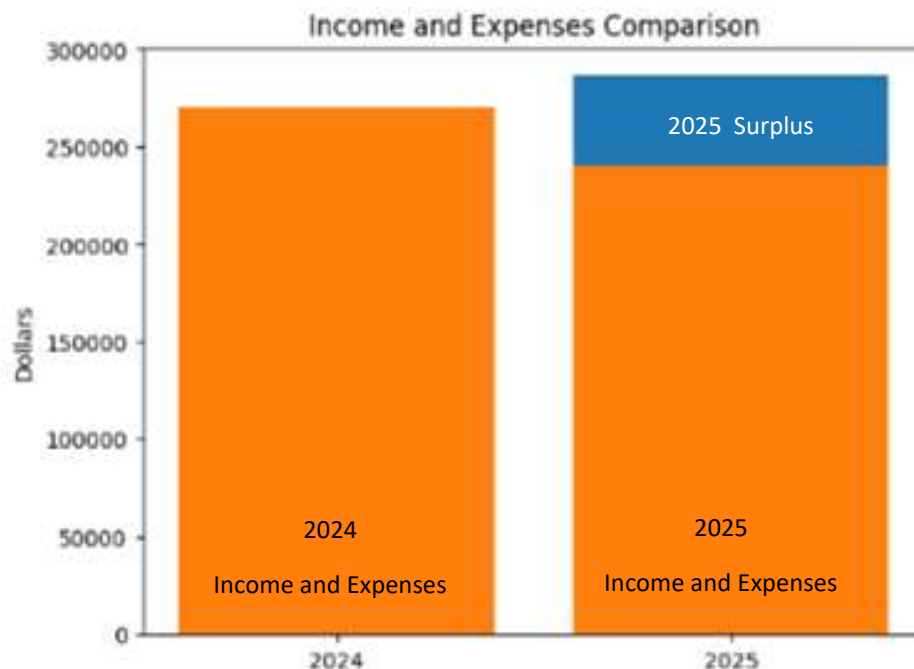
Recent years highlight several important dynamics for incoming leadership:

Pledge income has softened modestly, inviting renewed emphasis on stewardship formation and pastoral engagement.

Fundraising success increased significantly in 2025, reflecting strong lay leadership, creativity, and parish-wide participation.

Personnel costs were reduced during a transition year, contributing to the 2025 surplus.

Facility maintenance and insurance costs continue to rise, underscoring the importance of long-range financial and capital planning.



# Financial Highlights

## How Resources Support the Parish's Calling

Financial resources are stewarded thoughtfully and aligned with the parish's mission and priorities:

### **Fixed Expenses (79%)**

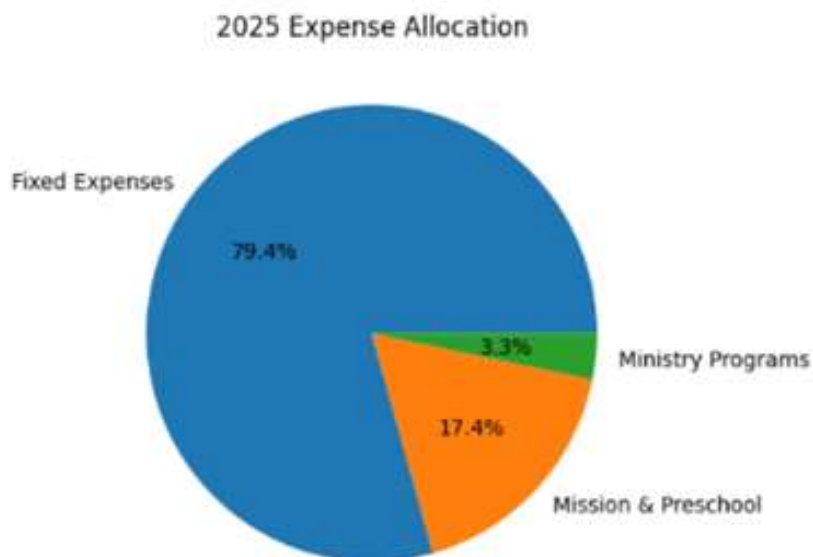
Personnel, diocesan commitments, insurance, utilities, administration, and building care ensure stable, welcoming, and well-supported ministry.

### **Mission & Preschool (17%)**

Investment in outreach partnerships and a vibrant preschool ministry that serves families beyond the congregation.

### **Ministry Programs (4%)**

Worship life, music, Christian formation, hospitality, and parish community-building.



# Financial Goals

**The 2025 operating surplus provides a strong foundation for the parish's next chapter. It offers flexibility to:**

- Rebuild and grow pledge participation
- Strengthen reserves and long-term financial resilience
- Plan responsibly for facilities and capital needs
- Align financial resources with emerging ministry priorities

St. Peter's approaches this transition financially sound, mission-centered, and ready for renewed vision—eager to partner with its next Rector in discerning how God is calling this parish to grow in faith, service, & witness.

# An Invitation

St. Peter's stands at a hopeful threshold—grateful for a rich past, grounded in a faithful present, and open to the future God is unfolding among us. We are a parish that values worship centered on the Eucharist, relationships rooted in care and respect, and shared ministry shaped by trust and collaboration. We seek not perfection, but partnership: a Rector who will walk with us, pray with us, and help us listen together for the Spirit's leading.

If you feel called to a ministry that is relational, grounded, and deeply human where tradition and openness meet, and where joy and care are shared; we invite you to continue discerning with us. May God guide your prayer and reflection, and may we together discover what new life God is calling forth at St. Peter's Episcopal Church.



## **Search and Discernment Committee**

Dawn Adams, Tom Schultz, Mary Theresa Anderson  
Allison Embert, Allison Gallo, Catherine Huidekoper,  
Linda Slicher