



# Candidate Essay Responses

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- 1. The Apostle Paul writes that “there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord” (1 Corinthians 12:4–5). The Diocese of Long Island encompasses remarkable diversity—geographic (from Brooklyn to the Hamptons), cultural (multiple languages and traditions), socioeconomic, and theological. Yet we are called to be one Body of Christ. Describe a time when you have led or participated in ministry that brought together diverse communities while honoring their distinct gifts and identities. How did you navigate the tension between unity and particularity? What theological and practical approaches guide your understanding of how the Church can be both authentically diverse and genuinely unified?**

The third Saturday of each month has become a wonderful opportunity for St. James to intersect with the lives of so many in our community. What began as an effort to meet the challenges of food insecurity during the height of COVID-19 has grown into one of the cornerstone ministries of our congregation. Each month, on that Saturday, St. James partners with the Brookhaven Free Library to support the work of Lighthouse Mission — one of the largest and most impactful outreach ministries in Suffolk County.

This partnership is a true example of collaboration in action. Lighthouse Mission provides a van to collect donations, while the Brookhaven Free Library promotes the initiative and gathers items during the week. Members of the greater community drive up and drop off items. Together, we receive a wide variety of essential goods — food, clothing, cleaning supplies, toiletries, diapers, and other everyday necessities that many of us may take for granted.

This established event in the heart of the hamlet of Brookhaven is now the foundation for other opportunities to serve the community. Twice a year the library arranges for the shredding of sensitive documents and the collection of electronic waste at the Essential Items Drive. Members of the community have additional sense of security, declutter responsibly, and protect the environment. The Suffolk County Police Department Fifth Precinct also participates in these efforts, collecting solid prescriptions to ensure a safe and proper disposal method.

Through these shared endeavors, we have witnessed something truly special: a convergence of people and distinct and separate organizations, committed to common values, despite perceived differences. Secular and faith-based groups come together in shared purpose — caring for God’s creation and serving our neighbors. Although Lighthouse Mission’s expression of the Christian faith may differ from ours, we recognize and celebrate the fruit of their ministry: being the living presence of Christ to those in need. A powerful moment has been praying with the team from Lighthouse when they dropped off the van. Members of the community who attend other churches — or no church at all —

come to our campus and experience Christian fellowship in new and welcoming ways. These moments of connection often plant seeds of faith, compassion, and curiosity that extend far beyond the day's events.

As 1 Corinthians 12:21 reminds us, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you.'" These monthly gatherings are a visible sign of that truth — that every person, every organization, and every act of service plays a vital role in the body of Christ. When we come together for the common good, we affirm our connectedness and our calling. God continues to use us — with all our unique gifts, perspectives, and differences — to bring hope, healing, and love into the world.

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- 2. Jesus said, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (Matthew 13:52). The Episcopal Church is rooted in ancient tradition—Scripture, sacraments, and the historic episcopate—yet we live in a rapidly changing world that requires fresh expressions of timeless truths. Reflect on a situation where you helped a Christian community honor its foundational traditions while adapting to contemporary challenges or opportunities. How do you discern when change serves faithfulness and when it undermines it? What is your vision for how the Church can be both deeply rooted and creatively responsive in our current cultural moment?**

COVID-19 fundamentally changed both the world and the church. At St. James, we transitioned from in-person services to hosting a Zoom service in just 48 hours. Like many, we weren't entirely sure how to navigate this new territory. What we did know, however, was that staying connected with people was crucial. It was truly amazing to see how many individuals joined our church community during this time—many of whom had never physically stepped foot inside of St. James. They found out about us through others and connected via Zoom.

As the initial fear and uncertainty began to subside, the number of online visitors also decreased. Nevertheless, we continue to offer Zoom services, and now, we've installed a screen in the church so those participating remotely can still be part of the community. For our smaller congregation, this platform has been invaluable in fostering a sense of togetherness.

In the early days of the pandemic, we also launched "Pop-Up Prayers." I would film brief, one-minute prayers in various public locations—outside schools, hospitals, restaurants, or other community spaces—and post them on social media. This was our way of reminding people that the church is not confined to a building, but is present with them wherever they are. These prayers, often taken from the Book of Common Prayer 1979 or other resources from the Anglican Communion, also served as an introduction to our Anglican identity. The response was overwhelming—people didn't just "like" the posts; they shared them. These simple prayers were a powerful reminder of God's presence and helped draw people into deeper relationship with God.

As we move forward, we need to explore other expressions of liturgy beyond Sunday mornings. At St. James, we've experimented with a First Saturday service at 5 PM, designed to offer a worship opportunity for those who find Sunday mornings difficult. This service is paired with a social element—a meal, a movie, or a faith formation activity with a fun twist. We've also adapted our liturgy during the Summer to fit the more relaxed pace, offering "brunch church" where the service happens in the parish hall while fellowship is integrated into the experience.

I believe deeply in the communal discernment of our actions. Discussion and reflection is important as changes are made and equally important is the reflection as you proceed. Community response is key as it tells us what is working, what can we improve on, and what may need to lay fallow or be shared with another congregation somewhere else. The questions I continue to ask are:

- What’s happening in our communities that we, as a faith community, should respond to?
- Is there a moment in which a prayerful, liturgical response is needed?
- Are we willing to express and practice our faith outside the four walls of the church and beyond Sunday morning services?

We can't simply replicate what worked in the past or elsewhere and expect it to work here and now. It's vital to discern what truly reflects the needs and character of our community.

I encourage any initiatives within the broad framework of our Anglican tradition that help people connect with Christ and grow in discipleship. It's okay to experiment—try new things, pray, reflect and, if it doesn't work the first time, try again. What matters is that we stay open to how God is calling us to engage with our community and one another in meaningful ways.

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- 3. Moses learned from his father-in-law Jethro that effective leadership requires both personal attention to individuals and systematic organization of the community (Exodus 18:13–26). Episcopal ministry demands both tender pastoral care and sophisticated institutional stewardship, especially in a complex diocese with multiple corporations, schools, and ministries. Describe your experience balancing hands-on pastoral ministry with strategic organizational leadership. How have you maintained spiritual groundedness while exercising administrative responsibility? Share a specific example of how you have integrated prayer and discernment with practical decision-making in a leadership role. What sustains you spiritually in the demands of institutional ministry?**

Being a priest is ministry of both great joy and significant responsibility. This is especially true when one is the only clergy person at a congregation. This role requires attentiveness to many details while remaining centered in prayer and purpose. I have learned that maintaining balance in ministry demands intentional delegation. In consultation with the leadership of the congregation, we regularly review our shared responsibilities so that the division of labor is clear and collaborative. Our leaders know that while much of the daily work of ministry is shared, there are moments that require the priest's attention and pastoral presence—and they bring those matters forward with care and discernment.

At the beginning of 2023, St. James faced a projected deficit of \$19,000—a significant amount for a congregation of our size. We knew there were no easy solutions. At the January meeting of the Bishop's Committee, I invited us into a season of prayerful discernment to consider how best to respond. I asked our leadership to pray intentionally for our ministry and for God's guidance. A letter was sent to the congregation explaining our financial situation and inviting their prayers and participation in discerning the way forward.

When we met again, I posed three guiding questions: What do we absolutely need to sustain our ministry? What additional responsibilities can we invite volunteers to take on? How can we faithfully

and creatively work to overcome our deficit? When the difficult decision was made to eliminate staff and to suspend the search for an organist, volunteers stepped forward to fill in the gaps. As we were celebrating the 150th year of our Episcopal presence in Brookhaven, we launched the “150 Friends × \$150 in 150 Days” campaign, aiming to raise \$22,500. While we did not fully reach that goal, we raised enough to eliminate the deficit—an outcome that renewed our hope, connection to our community, and more importantly, deepened our trust in God’s provision.

Throughout this journey, I have remained grounded by my prayer life. I pray the Daily Office faithfully and meet regularly with my spiritual director. I am also deeply grateful for monthly conversations with two seminary colleagues who serve outside the diocese. Their perspectives help me situate our local ministry within the broader life of the Church, offering both encouragement and accountability.

I have also grown in the practice of self-care. Daily walks—whether outdoors, surrounded by God’s creation, or indoors on a walking pad—help me maintain both physical and spiritual health. In 2024, I was finally able to take a long-delayed sabbatical - a period of rest, refreshment, and retooling. That time away reminded me of the deep need for renewal and the importance of intentionally planning for future periods of rest. During the sabbatical, I even set aside time to schedule my next extended time away, ensuring that balance remains a priority in my ongoing ministry. This rhythm of prayer, rest, and reflection allows me to recharge and better serve the congregation and cherish the time I spend with my family.

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4. **The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14–30) teaches both gratitude for God’s gifts and accountability for their use. The Diocese of Long Island has been blessed with significant financial resources, talented people, and institutional assets, yet faces real challenges including declining membership and aging infrastructure in some areas. Reflect on a time when you helped a community or organization move from scarcity-thinking to abundance-thinking, or vice versa—when you helped address complacency about resources. How do you approach the tension between celebrating gifts and addressing genuine challenges? What does faithful stewardship look like when resources are both significant and limited? How do you inspire generosity while ensuring sustainability?**

Like many of our congregations, St. James expanded its Parish Hall in the 1960s. In the 1980s, five classrooms were added to the lower level. Over time, the space became underutilized and eventually turned into a storage area, with three rooms filled with items for our Spring and Fall Yard Sales. Every year, on what were almost always beautiful Saturdays, we’d haul everything out onto the front lawn, hoping for a successful sale. At the end of the day, anything that wasn’t sold was packed away and returned to the basement.

While the yard sales served as a subtle form of evangelism, drawing people onto our church property, the effort became labor-intensive and didn’t make the best use of our parishioners’ time or talents. Some were attached to the tradition—“We’ve always done the Yard Sale.” But others recognized that, with just a small increase in monthly giving, we could easily surpass the amount raised at these sales. In 2022, the decision was made to hold one final yard sale. What remained was posted on social media and given away for free. By Sunday afternoon, everything was gone. Not only did people receive much-needed items, but a couple made financial donations to the church. More importantly, the leadership saw the potential in the four classrooms and the open space that had been hidden by

the clutter. With the help of Episcopal Real Estate of Long Island, this newly available space is now generating income and providing program space for a group supporting neurodivergent adults—a much-needed and worthwhile endeavor.

Our response to God's blessings is always one of gratitude, and that gratitude should guide our approach to faithful stewardship. We also must not shy away from acknowledging financial challenges when they arise. I believe that the majority of our parishioners are doing their best in these demanding times, and it's important to recognize and appreciate their generosity. Several times during the year, be it in homilies, announcements, or general conversation, I encourage us all to consider increasing our proportional giving.

In conversations within St. James and with leaders across the Deanery, I try to emphasize that faithful stewardship involves more than just managing finances—it requires a holistic view of all our resources and using them to further the mission of the church. Just as important is to remember that just as God gave Joseph the gift of interpreting Pharaoh's dream, we are called to be wise stewards of our resources. Joseph's story teaches us the importance of saving during times of plenty, so that we can have a cushion in leaner times. As Chair of the Department of Stewardship, I encouraged congregations to embrace this approach and connected them with professionals who could assist them in achieving these goals.

We should also look for opportunities to collaborate with neighboring congregations, pooling resources and sharing costs strategically. Additionally, being mindful of our environmental stewardship is essential—using energy-efficient fixtures and appliances, avoiding single-use items, and finding other ways to care for the world God has entrusted to us.

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- 5. Jesus prayed “that they may all be one” (John 17:21), yet he also sent disciples out “two by two” (Mark 6:7) to serve in their particular contexts. The Diocese of Long Island includes parishes that are geographically distant and culturally distinct, each with unique ministries and challenges, yet all called to be part of one diocesan family. Describe your experience building connection and collaboration across differences—whether geographic, cultural, theological, or institutional. How have you strengthened relationships while respecting autonomy? Share a specific example of how you have helped separate communities or organizations discover a shared mission, without losing their distinctive identities. What practices or principles guide you in fostering both unity and local empowerment?**

Over the past several years, congregations of the Great South Bay Deanery have come together to celebrate the Triduum as one community of faith—worshiping across different buildings, yet united in spirit and purpose. This shared worship experience did not emerge overnight; it was the fruit of prayer, patience, and a growing trust among our communities. Participation has always been voluntary, yet warmly encouraged, and through it, we have discovered a profound sense of belonging to something larger than ourselves.

We began our journey of shared worship with the Great Vigil of Easter. In 2017, we discovered that one of our congregations had never experienced the Vigil, took a leap of faith, and asked if they could host the service. Their yes led to five churches and the local Lutheran congregation participating. I was filled with great hope and inspired to propose that we share in the full Triduum the following year.

Some of my colleagues were hesitant. To ease the burden, I offered to preach at all of the Triduum services so that they could focus fully on the liturgies they would host. Thankfully, one colleague stepped forward and preached on Maundy Thursday, recognizing the mutual effort required for this kind of partnership.

The pandemic forced us to adapt and create a virtual experience for Good Friday and the Easter Vigil in 2020. The following years were marked by post COVID-19 uncertainty, clergy transitions, and the desire for congregations to reconnect and reunite in the local congregation. This delayed our joint effort until 2024.

Of course, any act of sharing and unity requires sacrifice of oneself for the sake of the greater good of body of Christ. Rotating the services among our congregations means that my preferred liturgy may not be held at my congregation. The host congregation is honored in that their space and community provides its unique context in sharing our sacred story, and by worshiping together in those varied settings, we are continually reminded that the body of Christ - the Church- is not a single place, but a living body.

These celebrations have deepened the bonds of affection among our congregations. We've gained fresh insights into our diverse liturgical traditions and discovered unity in the midst of difference: in how we pray, how we serve, and even in the ways we incorporate new elements. Last year, for example, we added a Spanish-language component to our joint worship, a small but meaningful step toward reflecting the diversity of God's people in our region.

Our joinery together has expanded beyond the Triduum. Together, we've celebrated feast days, supported one another's outreach ministries and fundraising efforts, hosted movie nights and formation opportunities. These experiences have opened new possibilities for dreaming together about what more we might do together to advance the Gospel and be the incarnate presence of Christ.

I am convinced that this is the direction the Church is being called to pursue: toward greater collaboration, deeper relationship, and mutual support; and away from competition or isolation. The Spirit is inviting us to rediscover the joy of being one Body with many members—each gifted differently, yet united in love and mission.