



Annual General Meeting Report 2026



*A vibrant international English-speaking Anglican church
serving the Leiden area, offering a spiritual home
to people of all ages and from all over the world.*

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Chaplain's Report (Matt Thijs)

When I reflect on the past year at St James, I have an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the many ways God has blessed us. The community of St James is characterised by faithful worship and service, generosity, love for each other, hospitality towards outsiders, and a hope-filled spirit. I'm especially grateful for the many active and committed volunteers, without whom there would be no children or youth groups, music, lunches, church services, and most of the other things we do as a church.

One of the big things we did in the past year is move from our 'home' of 46 years at the British School to the Bondsgebouw, our current venue for Sunday services. Needless to say, I was somewhat apprehensive about making a significant change like this, but it has absolutely turned out to be the right move. Not only has it significantly reduced our rental expenses, but it also marks a new phase in the life of St James. And the venue has all we need, from a big, light, worship space to rooms for children & youth and a kitchen. We are very grateful to the Roman Catholic parish for inviting us to use the building.

A new phase and a new building have also brought with it new life: five babies were born within the space of 6 months, and at least two more are on their way. And there have been plenty of other signs of new life: three baptisms, one dedication, two weddings, and one renewal of vows. We've also been blessed to see the congregation grow, especially in the 'under 16s' age bracket. At the same time, we've also said goodbye to people. We gave thanks for the lives of Elsie Markland, and Takamitsu and Keiko Muraoka, and we also saw some longtime members of St James move away, including Sue Kirby and Vera Atlas. They have all left their mark on St James, and we remember them with gratitude.

At last year's Annual Meeting, we launched our new vision statement: St James aspires to be *a Christ-centred community that invites people on a journey of faith, growth, and action*. And over the past year we've seen this become more and more true: courses like Alpha and Freedom in Christ have invited people to start or deepen their journey of faith, alongside sermon series, small groups, and prayer meetings. The Church Weekend and the Evergreens lunches are examples of our investment in community. And our Mission Partners, together with the Mission Team, have continually encouraged us to remain outward focussed. And as we look ahead to 2026 and beyond, we see that the harvest is ripe and our work not yet complete. My hope for this community is that each person would know themselves loved by God and the church, and that this might encourage them to a deeper discipleship with Jesus, and a greater love for the world He so loved.

And lastly, I need to offer my special thanks to a few people. To Peter Stretton, who is stepping down as churchwarden after serving faithfully for five years. To Thérèse Jongsmas who is stepping down as bookkeeper and Brian Routledge as independent auditor. And to the whole Church Council for their faith, support, and hard work throughout the past year. I just deleted a whole list of other people I'm thankful for, as it included almost everyone at St James! Ministry wouldn't be the same without you, so thank you! However, I do need to mention my special appreciation for Lizelle and Ezra, who are always loving and supportive despite often having to share me with the whole church community.

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Churchwarden's Report (Peter Stretton)

2025 started with a new churchwarden. Kwinten Vanwijnsberghe stood up for the role as Fredrik Knoeff had stood down at the end of his tenure.

Firstly, I would like to thank Fredrik for the work he has done as churchwarden. Fredrik has now taken on a new role as church treasurer, he replaced Boaz Kuiper after Boaz discovered 2 small children take up 120% of your available time meaning he was unable to continue as treasurer.

Unfortunately, due to personal reasons Kwinten was unable to continue as churchwarden, Fulco Jongsma took over as warden an interim capacity, the "interim" part is because wardens can only be fully appointed at the AGM. I am really grateful that Fulco took on this role. I would also like to thank Kwinten for stepping up as warden at the start of the year.

For the summer vacation period St James decamped to the Bondsgebouw from the BSN as per usual as the BSN always closes its doors over this time. There was every intention of returning to the BSN in September. For those unaware of the situation, there had been conversations at council about a permanent move to the Bondsgebouw, but no concrete decisions had been made as there were still differences of opinion about the wisdom and timing of such a move. The BSN effectively made the decision for us. There had been an incident during the summer of 2025, fortunately nothing involving anyone within St James and nobody was harmed in any way, but the result was the BSN wanted to have two concierge members as opposed to the normal one we always had in the building every Sunday. The problem was they did not have sufficient concierge on their rota and therefore could not make the hall available to us from the Autumn of 2025, nor were we given any indication when or even if this would change. This pushed us into making the Bondsgebouw our new permanent home and from all accounts it is working well. It was even able to accommodate our Christmas services which was a concern of many, me included. There will be a couple Sundays during the year when the Bondsgebouw is not available to us for our services, for these we normally use the Voorschoten cultural centre.

The church owns two residential properties, Chopinlaan which is the vicarage, home to our vicar Matt and his family Lizelle and Ezra. The other property is in Ambachtspad in the centre of Voorschoten. This is rented out to students following ministry related studies, meaning it earns some income for the church while meeting a missionary purpose of helping people following a ministry path.

Diocesan Synod Report (Liesbeth Kanis)

The Diocesan Synod of Europe is the representative governing body of the diocese responsible for advising the bishop and considering matters placed before it by the General Synod of the Church of England or by archdeaconry synods within the diocese. The Diocesan Synod is made up of clergy, lay members and ex officio members including the bishops.

This was my first time attending the European Diocese Synod. I serve as an elected lay member in the House of Laity, representing the Archdeaconry of North-West Europe. In total, four lay members from our Archdeaconry and three clergy members, each serve a three-year term.

Being part of the Diocesan Synod means you can directly input, provide feedback and vote on matters ranging from budget and finances to societal issues, such as climate justice, racial justice and gender and diversity in the Church of England. You are encouraged to share your thoughts and ideas with me so that I can best represent our diocese. For more information on the Diocesan Synod check the [website](#) or ask me for the full report I shared with the church council.

Archdeaconry Synod Report (Fulco Jongsma, Sue Kirby)

As I (Sue) have now completed my term of office as archdeaconry rep for St James, Fulco and I enjoyed our last, long, (but rather slow) car journey down to the beautiful Oude Abbie, where the synod meets in Drongen, Belgium, chatting about all the events that have occurred during our 6 years in office. This year, the new suffragan bishop, Rt Rev Andrew Norman welcomed us with a talk about plans for the diocese with regard to mission and outreach and asked for prayers for the then new Archbishop of Canterbury, The Right Rev Dame Sarah Mulally.

The most fascinating talk was by Brandon Muilenburg, who gave us real insights into the day-to-day struggles of refugee support at Calais, especially after official rules have got much stricter. This inspired some members to request financial help for this mission. Other talks included updates on work being done around safeguarding, youth work, racial justice, care for creation and financial matters.

As usual, we took part in morning and evening prayer, the annual quiz night, spent time socialising with others from around the diocese and walking in the beautiful grounds of the Abbijsje. Over the years, I have enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about our very varied diocese and to meet some of the interesting and dedicated people working in it.

Click [here](#) to read the full Synod report by Fulco.

Reader Report (Iris Boerhout)

This past year has been a particularly meaningful one for me personally and spiritually, as it marked my licensing as a Reader within our chaplaincy on 21 September. Being licensed into this ministry was a significant moment in my journey of faith. It was both a privilege and a humbling experience to be entrusted with this role of service in the life of our church. I remain deeply grateful for the confidence that was placed in me and for the opportunity to contribute more fully to the worship and ministry of our community.

The licensing service itself was a moment I will not easily forget. Standing before the congregation and committing to serve in this capacity was a powerful reminder that ministry in the Church is never an individual undertaking. It is something we share together as the Body of Christ. I was especially aware in that moment that this calling is sustained not only by personal commitment, but also by the prayers, encouragement, and fellowship of the entire congregation.

Over the past year I have had the privilege of assisting in services, participating in the life of the chaplaincy, and supporting our shared mission in a variety of ways. Each opportunity to read Scripture, lead parts of the liturgy, or assist in worship has reminded me how central our gathered worship is to the life of our community. It has also deepened my appreciation for the many people who quietly and faithfully contribute to the life of the church week by week. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the chaplain, wardens, council members, and to all who serve in visible and less visible ways within the chaplaincy. I am particularly grateful to the congregation for your continued support, encouragement, and prayers throughout this first year. Your kindness and faithfulness have made stepping into this role both joyful and deeply encouraging.

Looking ahead, I hope to continue serving our chaplaincy faithfully and to grow further in this ministry. My prayer is that, together, we may continue to strengthen our life of worship, fellowship, and witness, supporting one another as we seek to follow Christ in our daily lives. Thank you again for the trust you have shown and for the many ways in which you support the ministry of this chaplaincy.

Church Council Report (Matt Thijs)

What is the role of the church council? In 2016, the council produced a statement summarising its role: *“The church council is an elected group that works with the chaplain to seek God’s direction as we build a loving and healthy church together and reach out to others in mission. We do this by generating and implementing actions and policies that are grounded in prayerful reflection.”*

In practice this means that the council takes responsibility (together with the chaplain) for co-leading the church. It does this by helping to make decisions, both large and small, regarding the direction and priorities of the church. It consists of a combination of ex-officio members and elected representatives, with a mixture of spiritual and legal responsibilities.

The Church Council shares with the Chaplain in the decision-making process and met eight times in 2025. A smaller Standing Committee consisting of the chaplain, the churchwardens, and two other council members meets in-between Council meetings to carry out the actions agreed by Council.

The Council is made up of the following members:

- The Chaplain
- Two Churchwardens (elected annually)
- One Licensed Reader
- One Diocesan Synod Representative (ex-officio; elected tri-annually)
- Two Archdeaconry Synod Representatives (elected tri-annually)
- Ten elected lay members-one (one of which is usually treasurer and another secretary)
- In addition, up to two members may be co-opted onto council

In 2025 the following members served on church council:

Matt Thijs (Chaplain), Peter Stretton, Kwinten Vanwijnsberghe-Bolt (until Sep 2025), and Fulco Jongsma (from Sep 2025 in unofficial capacity) (Churchwardens), Iris Boerhout (Licensed Reader), Liesbeth Kanis (Diocesan Synod Representative), Fulco Jongsma (also secretary) and Sue Kirby (Archdeaconry Synod Representatives), Simeon Wentink, Paul Leach, Rhys Whomsley, Jop Gelders, Timothy Hanford, and Rachel Kurian (Council members), The treasurer, Fredrik Knoeff, is not a member of church council.

Warm thanks are extended to the outgoing council members for their devoted service. If you are interested in standing as council member, please visit www.stjames.nl/agm or speak to Matt.

Electoral Roll (Stephan Hinderer)

The Electoral Roll of the Church of St James Voorschoten stands at 93 at the time of the Annual General Meeting of 25th March 2026. In 2025 the number on the Electoral Roll was 86. There were 15 additions and 8 subtractions.

Safeguarding Report (Mattie van der Velden-Kieviet)

Over the course of last year, I took over the role of Safeguarding Officer from Sue Kirby. Sue had managed safeguarding at St James for several years with much dedication, and I benefited from a generous transitional period during which she remained available for advice. At the end of last year, I revised the safeguarding administration. Records of safeguarding checks and trainings were initially spread out over various documents and required some manual upkeep. The new system is easier to maintain and provides a clearer overview of any actions that need to be taken.

The topic of safeguarding was highlighted on Safeguarding Sunday. I was also able to devote a session with the youth to this topic, which was interesting and informative on both sides of the conversation.

The move to the Bondsgebouw has also required some adjustments in light of safeguarding. The hallway where we meet after the service easily gets crowded and especially difficult to manoeuvre for those with mobility issues. Together with the hospitality team, we were able to adjust the setup in a way that allows everyone to move around the space safely. We are currently in the process of revising the safeguarding policy. Over the years, various additions and changes have been made to the policy, leading to some inconsistencies and ambiguities. Some aspects of the policy aren't being followed in practice – often for valid reasons. There were also a few topics not addressed by the policy, such as volunteers under the age of 18 and guidelines for activities with the youth. The revised safeguarding policy will provide clearer guidance on the topics which are currently relevant to St James.

For more on safeguarding at St James, please visit www.stjames.nl/safeguarding

Treasurer's Report (Fredrik Knoeff)

Financial Report 2025

As we look back on 2025, we do so with deep gratitude. The financial result of St James shows a significant surplus. This positive outcome is largely due to two factors. First, we adopted a cautious and conservative budget, anticipating that income might be lower than in 2024 while keeping costs largely stable. In practice, however, income did not decrease as expected. In addition, our salary and related employment costs were lower than anticipated, as Javellah was not replaced by another youth worker during the year. The savings resulting from our move from the BSN to our new location were largely balanced by higher property usage costs. Even so, through careful stewardship and God's provision, we have been able to end the year in a strong position.

At the same time, we are aware of a development that invites our prayerful attention. While our overall income remains stable, the number of church members who give regularly and in a committed way has gradually decreased. Those who give continue to do so generously—often giving more than before—but they are fewer in number. This means that we are becoming more dependent on incidental gifts, which can make long-term planning more uncertain. This challenges us to reflect together on faithful stewardship and on how we can sustainably support the life and ministry of St James.

For this reason, we believe it is wise to continue building financial reserves that will help provide stability and support the church's ministry in the years ahead. In 2026, we will focus on building a reserve for the maintenance of Ambachtspad and Chopinlaan. We will also begin to save to pay off the remaining mortgage, which will reduce our ongoing costs and protect us from future interest rate increases. In addition, we aim to build a reserve of approximately 50% of our annual expenses. This will require ongoing discipline and care, but it is an important step toward ensuring the long-term sustainability of our ministry. Looking ahead, I will begin exploring options for refinancing the remaining mortgage of €75,000. This may involve moving away from the current system of bonds within our church community and returning to working with a financial institution. Our goal is to ensure that our financial structure serves the church well, both now and in the future.

Above all, we recognise that our strong financial position is not something we can take for granted. Compared to many other churches, we are richly blessed. This is only possible because of the faithfulness and generosity of so many within our community. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Thérèse, who has faithfully and diligently cared for our financial administration. Her dedication, precision, and countless hours of service have been an immense blessing to the church. I would also like to thank Boaz, from whom I took over the role of treasurer during the year, for his faithful service. Finally, I look forward to working with Bart Kooij, who will take on Therese's responsibilities in 2026.

We move forward with gratitude, humility, and trust, confident that God will continue to provide for St James and guide us in faithful stewardship of all that He has entrusted to us.

Balance Sheet 2025

BALANCE SHEET 2025	dec-24	dec-25	Variance
Current Assets			
Bank and Cash	49.044	56.648	7.604
Total Current Assets	49.044	56.648	7.604
Current Liabilities			
Creditors	0	0	0
Appeal/donation to be paid	-6.820	-2.370	4.450
Rent deposit	-1.500	-1.500	0
Rent accrual	-4.500	-1.000	3.500
Sundry accruals	0	-573	-573
Costs accruals	-490	-354	136
Saving for property maintenance	0	-2.100	-2.100
Emergency Fund	0	-2.000	-2.000
Total Current Liabilities	-13.310	-9.897	3.413
Current Assets less Liabilities	35.734	46.751	11.017
Fixed Assets			
Buildings	750.000	750.000	0
Total Fixed Assets	750.000	750.000	0
Long Term Liabilities			
Ambachtspad bonds	-75.000	-75.000	0
Total Long Term Liabilities	-75.000	-75.000	0
Total Net Assets	710.734	721.751	11.017

Income & Expenditure 2025

REPORT INCOME - GIVING - EXPENDITURES	BUDGET 2025	2025 ACTUAL	Variance
1. INCOME			
Pledged donations (PGS)	124.207	120.183	-4.024
Non pledged donations	7.105	18.215	11.110
Collections	4.084	6.368	2.284
Rent Ambachtspad	15.000	12.500	-2.500
Other income	447	-87	-534
TOTAL 1	150.843	157.178	6.335
2. GIVING / SUPPORT			
Diocese & Affiliation Contributions	18.465	19.798	-1.333
Planned External Giving - Mission (10% PY)	15.700	15.550	150
TOTAL 2	34.165	35.348	-1.183
3. EXPENDITURES			
a. Buildings & Property	28.761	29.011	-250
Rent Bondsgebouw (previous BSN)	19.743	11.615	8.128
Property operating costs	1.200	6.824	-5.624
Property fund	2.100	2.100	0
Mortgage amortization	0		
Other hall hire	2.718	5.472	-2.754
Bond Interest (Ambachtspad)	3.000	3.000	0
b. Ministry costs	84.732	81.802	2.930
Salaries and on-costs	74.470	74.453	17
Salaries & allowances		67.160	
Internet & telecommunication		546	
Conferences, fees & travels		3.130	
Ministry utensils for services		95	
Equipments		1.784	
Visiting priests		178	
Training	2.000	1.560	440
Outreach, Literature, Conferences, Publicity	3.190	2.111	1.079
Catering		1.351	
Children & youth		388	
Volunteer expenses & claims		295	
Gifts		42	
Outreach		19	
Weekend away			
Courses		18	
Office and Administration	2.483	3.206	-723
Administration		176	
Printing		187	
Licenses		2.843	
Professional Costs, Bank Fees & Insurance	2.589	2.032	557
Cost & bank fees		728	
Insurances		1.703	
Interest received		-400	
TOTAL 3	113.493	110.813	2.680
YEAR RESULT	3.185	11.017	7.832

Budget 2026

FINAL VERSION

	BUDGET 2026	2025 Actual	2024 Actual
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1. INCOME

Pledged donations (PGS)	123.000	120.183	127.407
Non pledged donations	12.500	18.215	7.105
Collections	4.500	6.368	4.084
Rent Ambachtspad	15.000	12.500	18.600
Other income		-87	447
TOTAL 1	155.000	157.178	157.643

2. GIVING / SUPPORT

Diocese & Affiliation Contributions	20.000	19.798	18.465
Planned External Giving - Mission (10% PY)	15.700	15.550	18.740
TOTAL 2	35.700	35.348	37.205

3. EXPENDITURES

a. Buildings & Property	32.600	29.011	28.425
Rent Bondsgebouw (previous BSN)	10.000	11.615	19.743
Property operating costs	7.500	6.824	2.964
Property fund	3.600	2.100	
Mortgage amortization	7.500		
Other hall hire	1.000	5.472	2.718
Bond Interest (Ambachtspad)	3.000	3.000	3.000
b. Ministry costs	86.700	81.802	90.533
Salaries and on-costs	76.600	74.453	82.270
Salaries & allowances	67.200	67.160	
Internet & telecommunication	600	546	
Conferences, fees & travels	3.000	3.130	
Ministry utensils for services	100	95	
Equipments	1.800	1.784	
Visiting priests	400	178	
Training	3.500	1.560	
Outreach, Literature, Conferences, Publicity	2.650	2.111	3.191
Catering	1.400	1.351	
Children & youth	400	388	
Volunteer expenses & claims	300	295	
Gifts	50	42	
Outreach		19	
Weekend away	500		
Courses		18	
Office and Administration	3.300	3.206	2.483
Administration		176	
Printing		187	
Licenses		2.843	
Professional Costs, Bank Fees & Insurance	4.150	2.032	2.589
Cost & bank fees	2.350	728	
Insurances	1.800	1.703	
Interest received		-400	
TOTAL 3	119.300	110.813	118.958
YEAR RESULT	0	11.017	1.480

Independent Examiner's Report (Brian Routledge)

To the Wardens of St James, Voorschoten

Dear Peter and Fulco,

As requested, I have examined and reviewed the 2025 accounts of St James Voorschoten.

I have carried out, to the best of my knowledge and my abilities, an analysis of the 2025 financial records of St James, Voorschoten. It does not represent a full professional audit and, therefore, has a limited scope. However, I regard the accounts and supporting files to represent a true and fair disclosure of the financial state of St James and of its income and expenditure for the year 2025. However, a small number of minor administrative inconsistencies were identified, and these are currently being addressed. These errors do not prejudice, in any manner, my overall conclusion.

My gratitude, especially to Thérèse Jongsma for her clear and organised maintenance and preparation of the accounts as St James has transitioned, over my time as examiner, from traditional record keeping to a digital-based method, and to Boaz and Fredrik for their significant contributions to presenting the documents in a professional manner and accessible manner.

It has been a privilege and honour to serve the community of St James, Voorschoten.

Brian Routledge

Received by email on Thursday 12th March 2026

Ministry to children and youth

Lizelle Thijs (First Steps; ages 0-3)

It continues to be a joy to work with the youngest members of St James. We are blessed with a group of passionate and caring volunteers who faithfully serve in this ministry, and we hope to welcome a few more volunteers in the near future.

Each Sunday we aim to begin with a song of worship, followed by a Bible story and a simple craft. When time allows—and when we have enough toddlers present—we also include a game connected to the theme of the lesson. Our goal is to provide a warm, joyful space where our youngest children can begin learning about God's love.

One ongoing challenge is that our older First Steps children do not always attend church regularly, which can make planning difficult. At times there may be only one toddler present. On such occasions we sometimes join with St J's Club so that the children can still enjoy fellowship and activities together.

We are also looking forward to welcoming some of the newest members of our church family. We hope that, in time, parents of the new babies will feel comfortable leaving their little ones in our care during the service.

To help make the space more comfortable and inviting for families with young babies, we have proposed to the church council the purchase of a changing station and a playpen.

Above all, we continue to pray for the parents of our toddlers—that they may see the value of regular church attendance, not only for the spiritual growth of their children but also for their own.

We thank God for the opportunity to serve these young families and look forward to another year of growing together.

Shirley Wentink-de Beer (St Js Club; ages 4-10)

St. J's club has grown in the last months of 2025! We have 13 children in the group at the moment and about 8-10 children present every Sunday. After the summer we started with a new learning method. We first used the UK method Energize, which costs us a couple of hundred euros a year and it suited our group no longer because it's written from a UK perspective. We now use the Dutch method Bijbelbasics, made by the Vlaams-Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap. The method is free to use, and it matches our group better. The lessons are written in Dutch, but they are working on translating every lesson in English. We are very happy with Bijbelbasics, because it is easy to use and each lesson has parts for different ages in it. For example: a lesson has two or three crafts in it, for 4-6 years old and for 7-10 years old. Almost all children in St. J's club speak Dutch, therefore we teach in Dutch, and the second volunteers translates in English (if needed). Bijbelbasics has a year programme with all the lessons planned forward, so we exactly know what we're going to teach every Sunday ahead. During every lesson we do a bible story and a game or craft and we pray. We play children's worship during the craft, or we sing worship with the children.

We are still struggling in finding a way with the large age gap we're dealing with. We have children just turned four, can't read or write yet, and we have children of ten years old, who are on a whole different level. We do our best to make a lesson that fits for every child, but it really is a challenge.

We have 9 volunteers at the moment. We are very thankful that we get our rota filled now. In an ideal world, we would have more volunteers so that we could split our group into 4-6 years old and 7-10 years old and make our lessons a real good fit, but that's something we could only dream of right now. For 2026, we're looking forward to continuing with Bijbelbasics and a lot more children to join us!

Julia Vanwijnsberghe-Bolt (Youth; ages 11+)

The St James Youth ministry aims to support our youth in the age of 11 to 18. Currently, we count 18 young people that join the youth program that consist of three main focus areas: Sunday sessions during the service, periodic social events on Friday evening, and participation of youth in the worship through music.

The Sunday sessions are held 2 to 3 times per month depending on the availability of sufficient youth volunteers. During the session we take time to connect, pray and discuss a theme or topic making use of materials from Energize, Youth Alpha, different books or material developed by the youth leader/volunteer. We often try to follow along with the theme discussed in the service and make use of "the serendipity Bible" which provides questions and remarks related to Bible verses. Usually, between 3 and 8 youth participate. Depending on youth and volunteers present, the youth sessions are in Dutch or English and where needed, translation is provided. Most youth speak Dutch, around 15 of the 18, while around 3 of them only speak English, so we make sure at least one Dutch speaking volunteer is present at a youth session. Fun fact, many of our youth also speak German, 8 of them. We have also had joined sessions with the other churches in Voorschoten, we had a speaker from drugspastoraat Amsterdam and it was very well received by our youth.

On a periodic basis social events are organized; we feel this as an important part of the program to better get to know the youth and allow for connections to be made among the youth. The social events usually take place on Friday evening and are hosted at someone's home or at an event. Examples of social events that took place are a summer BBQ and game nights. In the past year, we have continued our collaboration with the youth ministry of ICL (International Church Leiden), we had game nights together, several joined sessions were organized that were well appreciated by the youth and the volunteers. We have also had a game night in collaboration with the protestant and catholic churches in Voorschoten. In the past year, we have organized less socials then before and we would like to start organizing them more often again, at least once every 1-2 months.

In the past year we have encouraged participation of the youth in the service through music. The youth is being included as part of the regular worship team, especially for all age services they have been invited to play and sing along and we want to continue doing so.

In the past year the organization and leadership of the Youth ministry has been supported by our volunteer and growing up ministry coordinator Julia, with vital support of a group of youth volunteers. In total there are now 7 youth volunteers. Usually Rob, Linda, Mattie or Julia prepares and leads the Sunday sessions, supported by Hélène, Mandy and Stephan for sharing of Christian life experience (and safeguarding). Without them, the youth sessions and socials wouldn't be possible. Also thanks to the music team for being willing to include youth in the band!

Liesbeth Kanis & Logan Liut (Racial Justice)

Last year 4-8 December, Logan and Liesbeth attended the Racial Justice Conference, which was held in Berlin, Germany. A full report was given to council with key recommendations for implementation, which is available upon request.

The theme was: “Hopemakers: Moving from Hostility to Hospitality”. The central contribution of the Berlin gathering in our view was its emphasis on “hope making”. Rather than viewing this as a passive sentiment, hope making must be seen as an active, transformative practice rooted in radical Christian hospitality. Hospitality understood in this deeper sense challenges exclusionary tendencies and insists on welcoming, protecting and empowering those pushed to the margins in our society today.

By outlining practical pathways of hope making, the Berlin conference reaffirmed the responsibility of our Diocese, and of all the church universal throughout the world, to confront racism both inside our communities and outside of them, and in so doing, to become model communities of genuine inclusion and dignity for all of Christ's people.

Logan was part of the young people's panel to give his feedback and input.

The question posed to the young people's panel was how we move from “I” to “We.” Distilled down, youth emphasised the need for both autonomy and inclusion in decision-making. Several youth contributions also underlined that moving from “I” to “We” requires genuine relational belonging: young people are more likely to remain engaged where they are known personally, trusted, and given meaningful responsibility. Where young people are asked to contribute, there needs to be clarity on how their input is received, how it shapes decisions, and how the Church will follow through. In short: youth participation is strengthened by real voice, real responsibility, and real visibility.

Following on from the conference we held Racial Justice Sunday on 15 February in which our mission partners Rahman and Nelleke Yakubu shared on their work of Frontiers and on the powerful theme of ‘Loving your neighbour: moving from hostility to hospitality.’ This called attention to discrimination and racism that still permeates our societies and our churches and we can address these issues together as a community.

Rachel Kurian (Evergreens)

The Evergreens and Community lunches in 2025 celebrated, as previously, the four seasons, with relevant Bible readings and songs reflecting the significance of these different periods for our spiritual understanding and growth. Some 25-30 persons came together to enjoy a meal together- current members as well as people with past/present links to St James. These lunches continued to take place at De Boschbloem, a local neighbourhood centre near the British School, which allows St James to use their facilities. In addition to our inspiring Chaplain Matt Thijs, we also have important talks by Matthew Payne and Logan Liut – all of which were highly appreciated. They also organised some Bible quizzes – as requested by some of our members and these were also fun.

There have been some changes over the year. Two of our earliest and most regular participants, Takamitsu and Keiko Muraoka, participants have passed away. They always emphasised the importance of these lunches for them, and we miss them very much. Vera Atlas and Sue Kirby, who have been helping with the food and transport, have now moved permanently to the UK. We would like to acknowledge and thank them for their hard work, fun ideas and other contributions to these lunches. They too will be missed but we hope to see them again during their visits to The Netherlands. At the same time, we have been joined by two new and volunteers Yeong Sim and Anja de Reus, both amazing cooks and supporters in so many ways. We are very grateful for their hard work, care and compassion. Finally, we

are happy with the encouragement we get from the Evergreens and St James community, who make it all a joyful and heart-warming event.

Rachel – on behalf also of Vera Atlas, Sue Kirby, Diana and Steve Hanford, Sara Pelger, Yeong Sim and Anja de Reus.

Logan Liut (Ministry Experience Scheme Intern)

It has been and remains a joy and a privilege to serve as a Ministry Experience Scheme (MES) Intern here at St James's. I began serving in this role in September of 2025, and spent my first term as a shared intern with the chaplaincy of St John and St Philip in The Hague. Over the past few months, I have had the honour to get to know many of you as I discern my vocation going forward, as well as assisting our chaplain, Matt, in weekly services and initiatives. Some highlights for me have been running the Advent/Christmastide Evergreens Community Lunch this December and representing St James's in some of our wider diocesan events and programs, such as being a panellist at the Racial Justice Conference in Berlin (with Liesbeth Kanis) and taking part in the diocesan MES pilgrimage to the island of Cyprus. Your hospitality as a community has been nothing short of incredible, and I am thankful for the generous support of my ministry as a participant in the MES by our church council and our wider church community. I am, in particular, inspired by the diversity of people and ideas that exist within St James's, which have been an inspiration and a great source of enrichment for me these past few months. As someone of the catholic tradition on the Anglican way, it has been a joy to share a new perspective with you all and to (I hope) deepen the conversations around faith, liturgy, and our responsibility as people of faith to help repair the world. I look forward to even deeper engagement with St James's these next few months as I continue as an intern, and to walking with you as a community to fulfil the vows of our baptism in devoting ourselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers (Acts 2:42).

Poornima Whomsley (Mission Support Team)

Sharing the love of Jesus beyond the church is something we seek do together and individually as a church family. The Mission Team's role is to encourage, equip, and support St James' as we take part in God's mission in the world.

Over the past year we have seen this happen in a number of ways. Together with five local churches members of St James' helped run the Alpha Course, welcoming 35 English- and Dutch-speaking participants to explore the Christian faith. As a church we have also supported practical initiatives such as the Christmas Shoebox appeals for Schoenendoosactie and the Mission to Seafarers, Harvest Collections for the Voorschoten Foodbank, and sending warm clothing to Ukraine.

We also love being inspired through testimonies of how the Lord is at work as we live out our faith during the week. Prayer for 5 and the monthly "This Time Tomorrow" slot in the Sunday service give us glimpses of everyday mission and encourage us to pray for the people around us. More recently, we have begun partnering with an English church to learn together about Faith in the Workplace.

Alongside this, we continue to support and learn from our Mission Partners: Phil and Diane Gottschalk in Romania; Rahman and Nelleke Yakubu with Tyndale and Frontiers in the Netherlands; and Betty Sari working with international students in Leiden and The Hague.

We are also encouraging members of St James', young and old, who would like to explore opportunities for short-term mission through sponsorship and a potential mission trip- more information to come!

If you would like to know more, share an idea, or get involved, please speak to Matt, Steven, Diana, or Rina. Why not explore further how God might use you as part of His mission through St James'?

Poornima Whomsley (Prayer & Enablement)

Just as oxygen sustains the body, our connection with God through prayer sustains the Body of Christ. Our vision at St James' is to cultivate a culture of prayer that helps us deepen our communion with the Lord and join in what He is doing among us.

Our bi-weekly online prayer gatherings provide space to pray for the leadership and ministries of St James'. As we seek God together, we have seen Him guide, shape, and answer our prayers. We are very grateful to those who submit prayer requests and to everyone who joins these gatherings or supports the ministry through faithful prayer at home.

We are also exploring new ways to gather the church in prayer and would welcome ideas as we continue to grow together in this vital ministry.

Sharing the love of God for those in need remains at the heart of this ministry. Our prayer chain faithfully intercedes for requests sent to prayer@stjames.nl, and our prayer ministry team is available to pray with anyone during communion services. It has been a joy to witness many answers to prayer and lives touched and transformed by God's grace. We are deeply thankful to the Lord and to all who participate in this ministry.

We also seek to help people grow deeper in their relationship with God. Last year we piloted the Freedom in Christ course to help people experience greater freedom in their spiritual lives. Those who participated found it transformative, and we look forward to running the course regularly from April this year.

If you would like to know more, or would like someone to pray with you, please feel free to speak to Matt or Poornima.