

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Tampa, Florida

Parish Profile

2026

Mission

To be the heart and hands of Christ, so all may know Christ and make Him known.

Vision

By 2029, St. Mary's is a beacon of faith and love where all are empowered to grow and serve.

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Diocese of Southwest Florida



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Welcome from St. Mary's Episcopal Church

St. Mary's Episcopal Church extends a warm and faithful welcome to all who are exploring a call to serve as our next Rector. This parish profile has been developed to offer prospective candidates an honest and hopeful picture of our community — who we are, where we have been, and where we believe God is calling us.

Born from a mission church in 1947, we are a 79-year old congregation rooted in the historic Episcopal tradition, committed to the Eucharist as the center of our common life, and bound together by genuine care for one another and for the wider Tampa community. We stand at a meaningful crossroads: a season of transition that has clarified our priorities and deepened our desire for inspired leadership, renewed energy, and sustainable growth.

We are particularly blessed by our shared campus with St. Mary's Episcopal Day School (SMEDS), which began in 1952 and has grown into one of Tampa's premier independent schools serving Pre-K through 8th grade. This living partnership between church and school represents one of our most distinctive assets and our greatest opportunity for mutual flourishing.

We invite you to read these pages prayerfully and to discern whether God may be calling you to join us in this next chapter of faithful ministry. Our sincere hope is that our next rector will be someone to help build on our strengths while remaining nimble to where the Holy Spirit will lead us.



Our Community: South Tampa

St. Mary's Episcopal Church is located in the heart of South Tampa, one of the most vibrant and desirable neighborhoods in the greater Tampa Bay region. Our campus sits within the Hyde Park/ Palma Ceia corridor — a neighborhood defined by tree-lined streets, young families, strong schools, and a deep sense of community pride.

Tampa is Florida's third-largest city and one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the United States. The greater Tampa Bay region now exceeds three million residents, with significant in-migration of young families and professionals drawn by the economy, climate, and quality of life. South Tampa in particular attracts educated, dual-income households and families who place a high value on faith, community, education, and service.

The neighborhood immediately surrounding St. Mary's has a stable and growing population with above-average household incomes. Survey data from our congregation reflects this: average household income among respondents exceeds \$236,000, and more than 70% hold a college or graduate degree. Three-quarters of our members live within ten miles of the church, underscoring the deeply local character of our congregation.

Tampa is home to a thriving arts and culture scene with ample visual and performance arts opportunities, including live music, festivals, public art, galleries, and museums. For the sports enthusiast, Tampa residents enjoy professional football, hockey, baseball, and soccer franchises, as well as NCAA Division I athletics through the University of South Florida. There are also world-class medical institutions and a nationally recognized restaurant and hospitality industry.

Many outdoor recreation opportunities include biking on county trails, kayaking on area rivers, fishing, and boating, thanks to the beautiful subtropical climate and mild winters.

The city's continued growth creates both opportunity and urgency for a congregation like St. Mary's: there are thousands of families nearby who are searching for an authentic, welcoming Episcopal community.

Tampa Bay at a Glance

Metro Area Population	Over 3.2 million
City of Tampa Population	Approx. 430,000
Tampa Growth Trend	One of the fastest-growing metros in the U.S.
Median Household Income (Metro)	Among the highest in Florida
Major Employers	Health care, finance, technology, education, defense
Notable Institutions	University of Tampa, USF, Tampa General Hospital, Moffitt Cancer Center

Our History

St. Mary's Episcopal Church has been a fixture of South Tampa's spiritual and community life for generations. The parish has grown and evolved through seasons of vitality and challenge, always returning to its core conviction: that the church is called to be the heart and hands of Christ in the world.

A defining chapter in St. Mary's history was the founding of St. Mary's Episcopal Day School (SMEDS) in 1952. What began as a humble parish school has grown into one of Tampa Bay's premier independent schools, enrolling approximately 460 students in Pre-K through 8th grade. The school and church share a single campus, and this co-location has shaped the character of both institutions for seven decades.

The relationship between church and school has not been without complexity. As the school has grown in size, budget, and reputation, the congregation has faced the ongoing challenge of translating the school's remarkable family base into an active church community. This remains one of the most significant strategic opportunities before the next Rector.

In 2023, the parish embarked on a formal strategic planning process called Empowering Saints: Envisioning Tomorrow, which culminated in a five-year plan for 2024–2029. This plan established three goals — Strengthen the Core, Nurture Each Other, and Innovate Outreach — and has provided a shared framework for the congregation as it navigates the current pastoral transition.

The departure of our previous Rector in February 2025, after 2.5 years at St. Mary's, prompted a second HolyCow Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) survey in June 2025, which has given the vestry and search committee clear, data-grounded insight into the congregation's current state and its aspirations for the future. The results of that survey are shared throughout this profile.



Worship

The Holy Eucharist is the center of common life at St. Mary's. We gather each Sunday to be formed, fed, and sent forth as Christ's people in the world. Our liturgical life is shaped by the Book of Common Prayer and enriched by the breadth of the Episcopal tradition — reverent and accessible, rooted in Scripture and sacrament, and alive with the Spirit.

Sunday Services

- Traditional Rite I Eucharist at 8:00 a.m. — a quiet, contemplative spoken service, typically with 20 people in attendance
- Choral Rite II Eucharist at 10:00 a.m. — our principal Sunday gathering, featuring singing and music, typically with 60 people in attendance
- "Alive at 5:00" — a contemporary evening service launched in February 2026 to reach new faces and different schedules, with initial attendance of 20-25 people (Our next rector will help the Vestry determine the future of the 5 PM service.)

Our music program is a source of great congregational pride. Members have consistently affirmed the quality and appropriateness of our musicians, and recent open-ended survey responses praised the talented team and the meaningful blend of contemporary and traditional styles. The 2025 CAT survey showed the Worship and Music Index at 44, an improvement over 2023's score of 37, and reflects genuine momentum in this area.

Liturgical Life and Lay Participation

St. Mary's benefits from a committed corps of lay leaders who serve as acolytes, lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, ushers, greeters, and members of the Altar Guild. Lay participation in worship is a hallmark of our community, and the tradition of shared ministry at the altar reflects our understanding that all the baptized are called to serve.

Special services throughout the liturgical year — Advent, Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Easter, and Pentecost — draw significantly larger attendance and have historically been important connection points for SMEDS families and the wider South Tampa community. Christmas Eve attendance has been notably strong in recent years.



School Musicians playing on Easter Sunday



Blessing of the Pets, Outdoor Columbarium Space



Children's Bible Story during 10 AM Service

Christian Formation and Education

Christian formation is understood at St. Mary's as a lifelong journey. We aspire to offer meaningful opportunities for spiritual growth at every age and stage of life — from the youngest child on the SMEDS campus to the oldest member of our congregation. The 2025 CAT survey identified expanded Christian education and spiritual formation as the fourth highest congregational priority, and the Engagement in Education index — while an area of challenge — reflects significant room to grow.

Children and Youth

Sunday school takes place during the 10 AM worship service two Sundays per month. It is a place where Jesus is alive, and children develop a foundation of Biblical knowledge. Lessons are derived from *Godly Play* curriculum.

The school-church partnership creates a unique context for children's formation at St. Mary's. Chapel services for SMEDS students take place on campus twice per week (Mondays and Wednesdays) and represent a critical touchpoint between the school community and the parish. The next Rector's capacity to connect meaningfully during chapel — and to build relationships with school families — is widely seen as essential to the congregation's growth strategy.

GLOW/CrossFit are two church ministries that meet once per month during the school year for children in grades 2nd through 4th. GLOW is for girls; CrossFit is for boys. Parent volunteers organize relevant topics and coordinate scripture. GLOW culminates in a beloved Father/Daughter dance each year. CrossFit culminates in a Mother/Son outdoor activity such as a kayaking trip.

Vacation Bible School (VBS) has been a summer highlight, recently capped at 25 children and prioritizing church members before opening to the wider community. Re-vamping a youth group and consistent Sunday school programming are aspirational priorities for the congregation, and something that the Vestry is thoughtfully working to advance.

Adult Formation

Adult formation offerings have varied in consistency during the transition period. The congregation values opportunities for Bible study, theological reflection, and small group connection. Last fall, lessons focused on the study of the Saints depicted in St. Mary's stained-glass windows: St. Athanasius, St. Benedict, and Catherine of Sienna. Presently, there is a group discussing Tish Harrison Warren's book *Prayer in the Night*, as well as two different Women's Groups who meet (one meets twice per month and the other meets weekly). One of the Women's Groups is discussing *Don't Give the Enemy a Seat at Your Table* by Louie Giglio, while the other group is studying the book of Hebrews, using N.T. Wright's study guide.

Survey data highlights the desire for formation that fits busy lifestyles — flexible timing, varied formats, and relevance to daily life. The Empowering Saints strategic plan specifically calls for assessing and optimizing spiritual growth opportunities for all generations.

Outreach and Community Engagement

Outreach is woven into the identity of St. Mary's. Our core values include both Faith and Service, and our mission — to be the heart and hands of Christ — explicitly calls us outward. Members are motivated by ministry that connects their faith to tangible care for others, and the congregation has consistently ranked community engagement among its highest aspirations.

Current and Recent Ministries

St. Mary's has supported a range of outreach activities, including:

- Community events and programs hosted on the St. Mary's campus to welcome neighborhood families
- Partnerships with community organizations addressing food insecurity, homelessness, and social needs in the Tampa area
- Seasonal outreach efforts coordinated through the liturgical calendar
- Service connections through SMEDS, including grade-level service-learning initiatives aligned with the school's strategic plan
- Support for diocesan and national Episcopal Church missions and ministries

The Empowering Saints strategic plan sets an ambitious vision for outreach: Goal 3, Innovate Outreach, calls for St. Mary's to be "on fire with faith, compassion, and service in the community" by 2029. Specific strategies include increasing external communications about the church's community impact, hosting meaningful events on campus, and partnering with SMEDS and other organizations to meet community needs.

Strategic Priorities for Outreach

The 2023 and 2025 CAT surveys both rank community renewal — building coalitions with partners that share our vision — as a top-three congregational priority. This consistency across two surveys, and across all age groups, signals a deep and durable appetite for outreach that extends beyond church walls. The next Rector will find a congregation genuinely eager to move from aspiration to action.



Life in Our Parish

St. Mary's is a home to 157 members with an Average Sunday Attendance of 77 people. It is a community where relationships matter deeply. The 2025 CAT survey identified creating meaningful opportunities for people to form lasting friendships as the fifth highest priority among members — a reflection of the warm, relational culture that has long been a hallmark of the congregation.

Fellowship and Community Events

St. Mary's maintains a calendar of fellowship events that bring the congregation together throughout the year:

- Sunday Coffee Hour following the 10:00 a.m. service — a beloved weekly gathering to catch up with one another, welcome a newcomer, congratulate those celebrating, and share a bite
- Church Seniors' Luncheon—meets monthly, sometimes hosted by SMEDS and joined by Saints Ambassador students, is a model of the school-church connection in action
- Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, an annual tradition welcoming all
- "Alive at 5:00" evening service, building a new community of worshipers with a more informal atmosphere
- Vacation Bible School — a summer highlight that welcomes children from within and beyond the congregation
- Women's Retreat – a two-day event aimed at awakening and transforming hearts, includes teaching, music, a Taizé service, and Eucharist
- Seasonal celebrations aligned with the liturgical calendar, like Lenten Prayer Partners (where secret partners reveal their identity to one another on Easter Sunday)



Women's Christmas Dinner hosted on Epiphany 2026

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School: Our Partner in Mission

St. Mary's Episcopal Day School (SMEDS) is one of the defining features of the St. Mary's parish campus and one of its most significant opportunities. Founded as a parish school in 1954 and growing into an independent day school serving approximately 460 students in Pre-K through 8th grade, SMEDS is widely regarded as one of Tampa Bay's premier independent schools.

The School Today

- Enrollment: 467 students (Pre-K through 8th grade), with enrollment contracts for 2026–27 expected to meet or exceed the budgeted goal of 447 students
- Mission: Learn • Love • Lead — "Inspiring curiosity, kindness, and dignity in a caring Christian community"
- Endowment: \$6.2 million as of Fall 2026
- Saints Fund campaign: \$1.4 million committed in 2025–26, with 95% parent participation and a \$500,000 unrestricted annual pledge from one family
- Financial position: healthy surplus for 2025–26, with Amore Plaza (commercial property) generating additional revenue
- High school placement: strong outcomes at Jesuit, Academy of the Holy Names, Berkeley, Plant, and other selective high schools

The Rector leads school chapel services twice per week (Mondays and Wednesdays). The church's nave seats 550 people, and the pews are alive with children, parents, teachers, and administrators during these twice-weekly chapel services. The service is organized and prepared for by the Chapel Coordinator, an employee of the school, who also assists with training the acolytes. Eucharist chapels are held one Wednesday per month during the school year. A Chapel Committee involving the Rector, Head of School, Chapel Coordinator, and a music teacher meets quarterly to plan chapel music, review any special circumstances, and time things according to the liturgical calendar.

The school's 2026 strategic plan (Pathway 2: Community and Culture) explicitly commits to "Preserve the Episcopal Heart and Parish Partnership" — maintaining the school's foundational Episcopal identity while collaborating with the St. Mary's Church Vestry to advance a sustainable model for the parish.



Louise, SMEDS' comfort dog, delights in playing with the children

A Breakthrough in Church-School Sustainability

In March 2026, the SMEDS Board of Trustees Sustainability Working Group issued a landmark recommendation that directly enables St. Mary's to hire a full-time Rector. The proposal:

- Eliminated the dedicated Chaplain role
- Re-imagined religious education with a part-time specialist for Pre-K through 2nd grade and expanded faculty roles in upper grades
- Committed the School to a 2:1 co-investment in the Rector role: the Church continues its current budgeted \$65,000 contribution; the School adds \$130,000
- The School commits to this model for three years, providing the church stability and time to grow
- Total Rector compensation budget: approximately \$195,000 (annual salary \$140k, plus health care, pension, and one-time moving reimbursement which is a pensionable event)

This recommendation was received warmly by the Vestry and represents a genuine turning point in the church's capacity to move forward. The Trustees acknowledged explicitly: "The Working Group and the entire SMEDS Board of Trustees have acknowledged our Episcopal roots and our relationship with St. Mary's Episcopal Church as inviolable aspects of our identity."

For more details about our school, please visit www.smeds.org.

Experience with School Communities: A Key Qualification

Given this unique church-school context, candidates with prior experience serving combined parish-school communities are especially encouraged to apply.

The ability to build authentic relationships with school families, connect meaningfully during chapel services, be a strategic partner to the Head of School, demonstrate strong leadership skills, and navigate the distinct governance structures of a church and an independent school will be essential competencies for the next Rector.



7th Grade Acolytes serve at twice-weekly school chapel services



Main School Building and Turf Field



Aerial View of Church and School Campus

Our Campus and Properties

St. Mary's Episcopal Church and St. Mary's Episcopal Day School share a single campus located in South Tampa — a beautiful, well-maintained property that serves as the anchor of daily community life for hundreds of students, families, faculty, and parishioners.

Church Facilities

- Main Sanctuary: a traditional, beautifully appointed worship space recently enhanced by new carpet installed by the school's Parents' Association in the spring of 2026, with a refurbished interior that reflects the congregation's care for its sacred spaces
- Parish Hall: a versatile gathering space used for fellowship, formation, and community events
- Church offices and administrative spaces
- Outdoor gathering areas and grounds shared with the school

School Facilities

- Main school building housing classrooms Pre-K through 8th grade
- Music Room and specialized learning spaces
- Athletic and outdoor facilities including playground areas currently slated to receive PA-funded improvements
- Amore Plaza: a commercial property asset generating rental income that supports the school's financial sustainability

The Facilities Committee is actively engaged in capital planning, where summer break improvements were addressed, an HVAC evaluation took place, and a broader capital improvement plan is being developed. A long-term Master Site Plan is among the school's strategic commitments for the coming years, with input from all key stakeholders — including the church — anticipated.



Another View of Campus

Leadership

Clergy

- Interim Rector: The Rev. John Hiers
- Bishop of Southwest Florida: The Right Rev. Douglas F. Scharf
- Canon to the Ordinary: The Rev. Canon Richard H. Norman

Vestry

St. Mary's is governed by a Vestry of dedicated lay leaders who have provided steady and thoughtful stewardship through the pastoral transition. The Vestry includes:

- Senior Warden: Carrie Krieger
- Junior Warden: Rick Hampton
- Treasurer: Debra Smietanski
- Vestry members drawn from across the congregation, including representation from the school-church partnership

Search Committee

A Search Committee has been formed and is working in close collaboration with the Diocese of Southwest Florida to identify and call the next Rector. The Committee has been thoughtfully composed of school parents who are also church members, retirees, and working people who represent a good cross-section of our parish. The Committee is committed to a process that is prayerful, thorough, and attentive to the congregation's clearly articulated needs and aspirations.

Key Staff

St. Mary's maintains professional staff support for administration, music, and operations. We employ a part-time Parish Coordinator, as well as paid Nursery Staff for Sundays at 10 AM. The school provides significant financial operational support to the church through a shared campus arrangement, including maintenance, security, and facilities management.



The Rev. John Hiers, Interim Rector



Sr. Warden, Carrie Krieger, with a volunteer at St. Giles Food Pantry



Steve Salvo, Head of School

Parish Finances

St. Mary's is in a period of financial recovery and repositioning. The departure of the previous Rector and a decline in active household participation have contributed to reduced giving. The congregation is honest about this reality and committed to building a sustainable financial foundation for the future.

Financial Summary

Total Church Income (Most Recent)	\$252,186 (YTD)
Total Income One Year Prior	\$398,174
Total Income Two Years Prior	\$233,532
Contribution per Household	\$3,990
Average Household Income (Members)	\$236,328
Average Giving as % of Income	1.69% (Percentile Rank: 23rd)
Givers of Record	61
Number of Households	77
Letters Sent / Responses	70 sent / 49 responded

Context and Trajectory

Church income has declined significantly from the 2023 high of \$530,976 — a drop of more than 50% — reflecting the loss of active households during the transition and a contraction in pledging. At the same time, the average household income among remaining members remains high, and the congregation's generosity index has room to grow substantially as engagement deepens.

The Sustainability Working Group's 2026 recommendation fundamentally changes the financial equation for hiring a Rector. With the school co-investing \$130,000 annually for three years, the church's own contribution of approximately \$65,000 — consistent with its current budget — becomes viable without requiring an immediate major increase in pledging. This arrangement gives the congregation the runway it needs to grow its financial base under new leadership.

Stewardship Opportunity

The 2025 CAT survey ranked "Develop the spiritual generosity of the people to financially support the ministry of the church" as the sixth highest priority — reflecting members' own awareness that deeper engagement with stewardship will be essential. With an average household income well above \$200,000, there is meaningful potential for growth as the congregation reconnects with its mission and vision.

Congregational Assessment: Who We Are

St. Mary's has administered the HolyCow Congregational Assessment Tool twice: in April 2023 and again in June 2025. Together, these surveys provide an unusually rich and honest portrait of the congregation — its strengths, its challenges, and the consistent aspirations that have persisted across two very different seasons of church life.

Key Indicators: 2023 vs. 2025

Respondents	66 (2023) → 49 (2025)
Response Rate	81% of avg. attendance (2023) → 75% (2025)
Overall Satisfaction (Clearly Agree)	49% (2023) → 43% (2025)
Overall Energy (Clearly Disagree = High Energy)	54% (2023) → 40% (2025)
Value of Activity Beyond Worship	68% (2023) → 67% (2025)
Average Sunday Attendance	81 (2023) → 77 (2025)
Attendance Trend (More than 3 yrs ago)	26% more (2023) → 20% more (2025)

The Energy-Satisfaction Map tells the clearest story: in 2023, St. Mary's was positioned in the upper-center of the map — high energy, approaching average satisfaction, consistent with a congregation in transformation. By 2025, the congregation had moved to the lower-left quadrant — lower energy, lower satisfaction — the zone the CAT tool identifies as "recovery." This is a candid finding, and the congregation and Vestry are grateful for the clarity it provides.

Performance Dashboard: 2023 vs. 2025

Performance Index	2023 Score	2025 Score
Spiritual Vitality	87	87
Readiness for Ministry	78	43
Morale	76	35
Conflict Management	75	89
Governance	71	67
Hospitality	68	69
Engagement in Education	61	24
Worship and Music	37	44

The story in this dashboard is nuanced and important. Spiritual Vitality — the measure of how central faith is to members' lives — remains exceptionally strong at 87 across both surveys. This is the bedrock of St. Mary's. Conflict Management has actually improved dramatically to 89, suggesting that the congregation has navigated the transition with notable grace. Hospitality remains steady. Worship and Music categories have improved.

The areas of significant decline — Morale (76 to 35), Readiness for Ministry (78 to 43), and Engagement in Education (61 to 24) — are all responsive to strong clergy leadership. These are not structural failures but rather reflections of a congregation that misses its pastoral center. They represent real opportunity for a gifted Rector.

Congregational Priorities: Consistent Across Two Surveys

Both the 2023 and 2025 surveys identified the same top three priorities:

First	Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.
Second	Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
Third	Work to renew and revitalize the community around the church by building coalitions with partners that share this vision and commitment.

This remarkable consistency across two very different surveys — one conducted under established leadership and one during a transition — speaks to the depth and clarity of what this congregation wants and needs. ***The top three priorities are unified around a single theme: growth, outreach, and connection to the wider community.***



One of 13 Baptisms Performed in 2025/2026

Demographics: Who We Are

Age Distribution (2025 Survey)

Under 35	2%
35–44	26%
45–54	9%
55–64	17%
65 and older	47%

The age profile of our active congregation reflects a pattern common to many mainline Episcopal churches: a majority of members are over 55, with a significant cohort over 65. This is simultaneously a strength — these are committed, experienced, generous members — and a clear strategic challenge. Attracting and retaining younger families is the congregation's single most consistent stated priority, and the SMEDS campus represents the most direct pathway to doing so.

Tenure

Under 2 years	17%
2–4 years	6%
5–10 years	13%
11–15 years	21%
16–20 years	15%
Over 20 years	28%

More than half of our members have been part of St. Mary's for over a decade, reflecting a loyal and rooted congregation. The 17% who have joined within the past two years — during the transition period — is an encouraging sign of continued new-member interest.

Geography, Education, and Diversity

Within 5 miles of church	Approx. 58%
Hold a college or graduate degree	Approximately 70%+
Ethnic background: White/Anglo	91%
Theological diversity	High (relative to peer churches)
Adaptability (Flexible Style Index)	Progressive-Adaptable

St. Mary's is a theologically diverse congregation. The Theological Perspective Index has remained stable across both surveys, reflecting a wide range of views on Scripture, conversion, and historic faith — consistent with the broadly inclusive character of the Episcopal tradition. The congregation is positioned on the Descriptive Map as Progressive-Adaptable, suggesting a genuine openness to change in service of mission.



Palm Sunday Processional



Women's Bible Study, Church Office Library

Our Transition: What the Data Tells Us

The 2025 HolyCow Congregational Survey included a Transition Profile module that asked members directly about their posture during and expectations for the pastoral transition. The results are encouraging for a prospective Rector.

Transition Profile Highlights

Plan to stay the same or increase involvement	83%
Plan to maintain or increase giving	96%
Comfortable with the timing of the transition	56% agree
Exploring other churches during transition	78% disagree (planning to stay)
Open to continuing in the church's recent direction	40% agree, 24% neutral

These results paint a picture of a congregation that is committed, stable, and genuinely ready for new leadership. The vast majority of members intend to remain engaged and to maintain their financial support. More than half are comfortable with the timing of the transition.

Critical Success Factors

The 2025 CAT Survey identified eight significant or important critical success factors — all related to clergy leadership — that have the greatest potential to move the congregation toward satisfaction and energy. These include:

- Clergy articulates a compelling vision
- Clergy communicates with people in a way that keeps the congregation informed and connected
- Clergy makes things happen
- Clergy has a pastoral plan to care for members in times of need
- The spirit of the congregation makes people want to get involved
- Members are supported in their own ministries
- High-quality education that fits diverse lifestyles
- Programs that fit the pace and schedule of members' lives

The concentration of these factors around clergy leadership is striking and clarifying: what St. Mary's needs most is a Rector who leads with vision, communicates with consistency, acts with energy, and cares for people with genuine pastoral attentiveness.

Our Vision for the Future

St. Mary's is a congregation with deep roots, abundant assets, a thriving school partner, and a clear-eyed understanding of both its challenges and its opportunities. We believe this is one of the most compelling calls available in the Diocese of Southwest Florida — a chance to lead a faithful community through a genuine transformation.

The Empowering Saints Strategic Plan: 2024–2029

The congregation's five-year strategic plan provides the framework for the next Rector's ministry. Its three goals are:

Goal 1: Strengthen the Core	Create a vibrant, sustainable future as the church of tomorrow — through staff and resource assessment, financial strategic planning, and a deepened relationship with SMEDS.
Goal 2: Nurture Each Other	Nurture members' spiritual growth, empowering all to serve God, community, and each other — through a welcoming continuum of care, expanded formation, and improved internal communication.
Goal 3: Innovate Outreach	Ignite St. Mary's with faith, compassion, and service in the community — through stronger external communications, campus-based community events, school partnerships, and new ministries.

We invite a Rector who will embrace this plan not as a constraint but as a launchpad, a living document shaped by genuine congregational discernment that provides both direction and flexibility for inspired leadership.



Boys' CrossFit Members

Qualities We Seek in Our Next Rector

Through our CAT survey, open-ended member responses, vestry discernment, and the transition profile, the congregation has offered a clear and consistent picture of the leader they are praying for. The 2025 CAT ranked the following abilities in priority order:

1	Preaching	Capacity to inspire and connect people to God's word in ways that enrich their lives in the world.
2	Strategic Leadership	Capacity to cast a compelling vision and lead the church toward its realization.
3	Change Management	Capacity to lead a congregation through significant and necessary transformation.
4	Teaching/Training	Capacity to deepen understanding, form character, and equip members with new skills.
5	Pastoral Care	Capacity to engage people empathetically and walk with them through times of need.
6	Negotiate/Resolve Conflict	Capacity to help a community navigate difference through training, dialogue, and mediation.
7	Administration	Capacity to manage a church operationally, including facilities, finances, and staff.
8	Community Catalyst	Capacity to function on a larger stage and rally individuals and groups around shared mission.

Additional Characteristics Members Named

- A true leader and visionary — not simply a peacekeeper
- Experience serving in a combined church-school community
- A strategic partner who will complement and collaborate with the Head of School
- Capacity to connect with SMEDS families during chapel and beyond
- A strategy to attract and retain young families
- Ability to communicate with warmth, consistency, and clarity
- Political neutrality and pastoral sensitivity across theological diversity
- Commitment to building a sustainable, growing congregation beyond reliance on a small group of households

How to Apply

If you believe God may be calling you to serve as the next Rector of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Tampa, Florida, we invite you to prayerfully consider the following application process.

Submit Materials To:

The Reverend Canon Richard H. Norman

Canon to the Ordinary

The Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Florida

rnorman@episcopalswfl.org

Materials Required:

- Résumé or curriculum vitae
- A current, updated Vocation Hub profile
- A letter of interest describing how you discern God's call to St. Mary's, how your gifts and experience respond to the needs described in this profile, particularly its partnership with St. Mary's Episcopal Day School

We welcome inquiries from candidates of all backgrounds who feel called to this unique and rewarding ministry in the heart of South Tampa.

Application Deadline: December 9, 2026

Please contact Canon Richard Norman by phone at (941) 556-0315 or by email at rnorman@episcopalswfl.org for further inquiries or assistance.

"By 2029, St. Mary's is a beacon of faith and love where all are empowered to grow and serve."



SMEDS school children