Cathedral Church of St. Paul

Parish Profile 2026

Fond du Lac, WI

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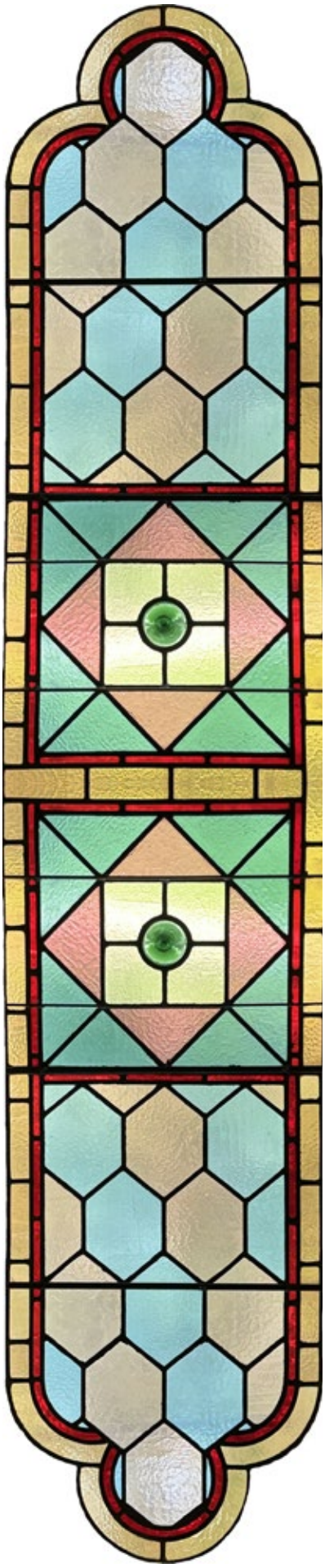
Welcome to the Cathedral Church of St. Paul

St. Paul's Cathedral is an Episcopal congregation with a long history of Anglo-Catholic heritage in the former Diocese of Fond du Lac and the Fond du Lac surrounding community. For over 150 years, St. Paul's has provided a beautiful place for people to worship and serve the Lord. Worshipping God in the beauty of holiness is at the heart of who we are at the Cathedral; and faith, love, and service are at our core.

As members of the Episcopal Church, it is our mission to lovingly serve God through worship, fellowship, education, and ministry. We strive to live out this mission as we welcome all who come through our doors each Sunday to join our faith community. We have people from many walks of life and a variety of professions. While many are life-long Episcopalians, we have seen a recent growth in new members, young and old alike, and are excited to welcome new families with young children. With the growing diversity in Fond du Lac, we too hope to grow and connect more with our demographically diverse neighborhood, to share God's grace and compassion.

We are a growing faith community, excited about the future God has in store for us at St. Paul's Cathedral, and we are ready to call a new priest who will work together with us to love and serve the Lord through our love and service to others.



Our Vision

We are a welcoming, Christ-centered community sharing his love and compassion with others through sacramental worship, fellowship, and service.

Our Mission

The Cathedral congregation will share the love and compassion of Jesus Christ by offering:

1. Meaningful and authentic worship opportunities to an ever-increasing circle of people.
2. Service to the neighborhood and wider community through programs and space which meet specific needs, e.g., nutrition, ex-offenders, AA.
3. Fellowship opportunities for members and others throughout the year.

Areas of Focus

In our discernment workshop, members of the Cathedral identified the following priorities:

◊ Connect with the wider community both in growth and service

◊ Develop Christian formation for all ages (we now have younger families with children!)

◊ Broaden lay participation and leadership

Our Search

We seek a rector/dean who is relational and approachable, someone who makes connections easily. We seek someone who inspires us spiritually through preaching and teaching, helping us draw deeper into the relationship with God through Christ and with one another and connecting daily life and the Christian journey. It is important to us that our next priest is grounded in and values our Anglo-Catholic tradition.

We seek someone with a pastor's heart who will love us and walk with us through life's journey.

We seek someone who is collaborative in their leadership style; a servant leader who will teach and empower others to serve; someone who will help us navigate change when we are unsure or apprehensive. In addition to these leadership qualities, we also seek an individual who will bring ministry skills in congregational growth, with particular emphasis on young families; as we are experiencing an upward trend in growth, we are looking to our next priest to guide, support, and teach us how to continue to grow and make more intentional connections with our demographically diverse neighborhood. As we strive to welcome and serve all in Christ, it is important that our rector/dean embraces diversity and is inclusive of others.

We are, first and foremost, looking to call a good and faithful parish priest. As one of the three historic cathedrals in the diocese, though, that person would also be the dean and be expected to collaborate with the Bishop and the other two deans on diocesan events and ways the cathedrals can support the mission and ministry of the diocese.

"The beauty of the Cathedral has always impressed me, but the congregation has made me feel welcome."

Worship

Worshipping God in the beauty of holiness is at the heart of who we are at the Cathedral. The liturgical style at St. Paul's centers on participatory Anglo-Catholic worship. We offer two weekly services: mass on Sunday morning and a healing mass on Wednesday evening. Using Rite II of the Book of Common Prayer, our services are meditative and reverential, with Sunday mass often including incense, Sanctus bells, music from the hymnal, and some chanting. A very personal, spoken healing mass is offered in St. Joseph's Chapel on Wednesday evenings, with laying-on of hands and unction.

Our parishioners value the quality of the liturgy here and the sense of community that is created as the service draws us together to listen to the word, pray, break bread, and share fellowship with one another. The liturgy, along with our church community, fulfills, renews, and restores us each week to -

"Go in peace to love and serve the Lord with gladness and singleness of heart."

Ministries & Activities

Through the years, St. Paul's Cathedral and its people have undertaken a variety of ministries, including many of which have been outreach to the community and beyond. We have been known as 'the church that doesn't say no'.

We support a number of ministries and community activities, such as annual concerts by the South Shore Chorale and Orchestra, as well as the Fond du Lac Symphonic Band, Fond du Lac High School Choir, and summer organ recitals. Our facilities are made available on a regular basis to AA and NA groups. We annually host an Easter egg hunt on the Cathedral grounds for children in the neighborhood as well as the blessing of animals in October. Our location downtown also brings a steady stream of people needing assistance, so we serve as an informal referral site. The Cathedral partners with Hope on the Block, providing use of the kitchen for volunteers to prepare and distribute 80-100 free hot meals every Friday.

"St. Paul's Cathedral has been a pillar of our community, and always given back."

Broken Bread Food Pantry

Broken Bread Food Pantry is a low-barrier pantry offering free, fresh, nutritious food to anyone experiencing food insecurity. Begun in 1992, this mission of the Cathedral serves an average of 175-220 families each week, benefiting over 30,000 individuals yearly. Under the leadership of a part time director, approximately 70 volunteers comprised of members of the Cathedral and others from the wider community provide not only food but also hope, kindness, and security during times of need. This ministry is funded by donations and grants.

"My heart tells me this is the thing to do, the place I am needed to help others."

"The mice are like little blessings going out into the world."

The Mouse Factory

One of the largest and most unique ministry activities is the Mouse Factory. Founded in 1961, volunteers from the Cathedral and the wider Fond du Lac community work throughout the year to design, sew, package, and sell Cathedral Mice Christmas ornaments. Cathedral mice have become highly prized collectibles not only locally but across the U.S. and even overseas, with hundreds of orders shipped to out-of-state and European collectors. This ministry is instrumental in financing the restoration of Cathedral buildings, with annual sales proceeds totaling $50,000 to $60,000 funding preservation projects identified by the Chapter. Since its founding, the Mouse Factory has contributed in excess of $2,500,000 to fund restoration projects that have included Cathedral tuck pointing, bell tower remodeling, plaster repair, and restoration of the Parish Hall. Currently the Mouse Factory is supporting the restoration of the original stained-glass windows.

St. Nicholas Faire

Today's St. Nicholas Faire, an annual Christmas fundraiser, represents a greatly expanded event from its inception over 60 years ago. The initial focus was a means to distribute the orders of handsewn Christmas mouse ornaments; over the years, though, many new attractions were added to the Faire. Since 2021, the Faire has been held in the Cathedral, which is transformed into a festive old English Christmas Market. In addition to the mouse pick-up, many vendors offer their art and craft works for sale, and a large bakery and canned foods section provide tasty Christmas goodies. Raffles, silent auction items, and timeless treasures are offered as well as the opportunity to have one's photograph taken with St. Nicholas. Refreshments and Christmas music add to the festive atmosphere which gives all who attend an opportunity to experience the beauty of our sacred 138-year-old Cathedral.

Strengths

Growth in Numbers

During the interim, we have seen numerical growth with new families and individuals. A year ago, our average Sunday attendance was 34; it is now 50. A year ago, we had no children in the congregation; we now have at least eight, with another baby on the way. In the past year, we have celebrated three baptisms and are preparing to welcome yet another person into the household of God. We are grateful for this growth; it has brought us renewed energy, and we are committed to doing all we can to continue this trajectory.

Give Us a Project

While we are feeling the need to broaden involvement in many of the day-to-day ministries and activities at the Cathedral, we are also willing to roll up our sleeves and get to work on specific projects. Members have willingly offered their time and skills to accomplish projects such as renovating the apartment in the Parish Hall and the spaces in Ambrose Hall.

This is Home

Life-long members and new people alike describe St. Paul's as home. We are a community devoted to one another, this place, and our faith. While we have had our share of struggles, we strive to welcome all and be supportive of one another as we seek to be visible witnesses of God's love.

"Interacting with the congregation in a volunteer setting is what drew me to want to be a part of the Cathedral."

Gift from the Sisters of the Holy Nativity

In 2023, the Sisters of the Holy Nativity gave a gift of $4,000,000 to the Cathedral. Their generosity has provided financial security for St. Paul's and has enabled us to complete significant capital projects such as replacing the slate roof.

Challenges

Resistance to Change

We are sometimes our own worst enemy by resisting change, even though we want St Paul's to grow. As the Cathedral, we have been rooted in tradition and formality and can be uncomfortable with innovation and experimentation. The author Kathleen Norris reminds us that disconnecting from change does not recapture the past, but it loses the future. We need to learn better how to embrace new ideas and to see that doing so does not need to sacrifice our core values.

Formation for All Ages

We give thanks for the new people who have joined St. Paul's over the past year and are excited to have families with children once again at the Cathedral. It has been a while since we have had a structured Christian formation program, especially for children, and we look to our new priest to share their knowledge and guidance as we seek to support one another, including the youngest among us, on our faith journeys.

Music Ministry

One beloved tradition at St. Paul's that is missed is a choir. The Cathedral has a rich history of choral music adding beauty to the Mass, but we have not been able to sustain a choir in recent years. It is our hope that continued growth may lead to a revitalization of our music ministry, both in the selection of music and the re-establishment of a choir.

Lay Participation and Leadership

As with many Episcopal congregations, our pool of volunteers has gotten smaller and many of our lay volunteers and leaders are retired; at times we have been content to let our dean and staff run with ideas. We need to re-energize our efforts. One challenge is to continue to welcome new members to meaningful ministry roles of their choice without overwhelming them with too much, too soon. And sometimes we need reminding to share the ministry and create space for new people, new ideas, and new approaches. We anticipate that our new priest will have experience and advice to share on how best to approach this challenge...and that his or her arrival will give us a great opportunity to again invite even greater involvement

Connecting with Our Neighbors

As with many congregations that have declined in numbers, in recent years we have become more internally focused, tending to the worship and pastoral needs of the congregation and the maintenance of aging buildings, sometimes to the detriment of our mission. As the neighborhood surrounding the Cathedral has changed and become more diverse, we have become less connected with and reflective of the community around us. Whether because of shyness, nervousness, or complacency, we need support, training, and encouragement to go beyond our walls and connect with our neighbors. We believe that God is calling us to seek and serve Christ in others and trust that through that service, we ourselves will be transformed in the image of Christ.

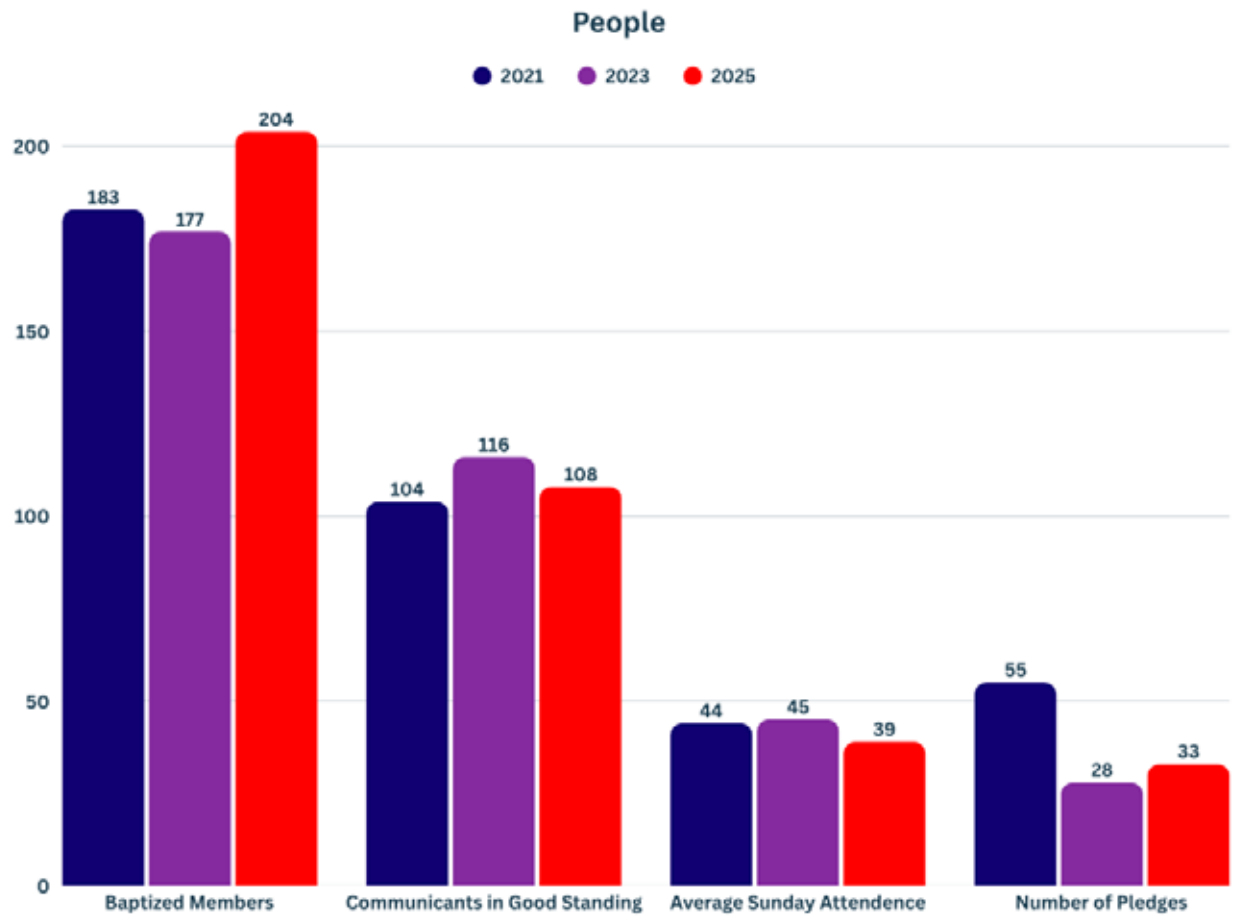
Buildings & Grounds

The Cathedral campus is comprised of several buildings and beautiful garden spaces that include an outdoor chapel and columbarium. The Cathedral is renowned for its outstanding collection of German and American woodcarvings and stunning stained-glass windows and invites all who enter to find it a place of beauty and reverence. In addition to the nave and chancel, the Chapel of St Michael the Archangel, St. Joseph's Chapel, and St. Augustine's Chapel provide space for smaller midweek services and private devotions. The 1965 42-rank Moller organ not only provides music for Cathedral services but also features in Fond du Lac's annual summer organ recitals. Within the past several years, the Cathedral's slate roof has been replaced, the sound system upgraded, and streaming capabilities installed. The Parish Hall contains Trakel Hall, a commercial-grade kitchen, the Cathedral offices, gathering and meeting spaces, and a recently renovated apartment. Ambrose Hall houses the Mouse Factory, storage space for Broken Bread, and a commercial walk-in refrigerator and freezer. Adjacent to the Cathedral grounds are the unoccupied offices of the former Diocese of Fond du Lac and land owned by the Diocese of Wisconsin.

"Through life's trials and tribulations, I have found my way back to God and the Cathedral. The warmth and beauty of both the place and community are wonderful. I truly feel welcomed and closer to God at Saint Paul's Cathedral."

Cathedral by the Numbers

Over the past decade, our membership numbers have remained steady, with a slight drop in Average Sunday Attendance; however, we are seeing an upward trend in 2026, with our ASA currently at 50.



In 2024, the Sisters of the Holy Nativity generously bequeathed $4,000,000 to the Cathedral's existing endowment. A portion of the endowment is used to cover operating expenses. What appears to be a sizable increase in operating expenses represents a shift in accounting practices that recorded building expenditures as part of the annual operating budget rather than preservation.

	2021	2023	2025
Plate Offerings, Pledge Payments & Regular Support	$ 88,095	$108,814	$211,299
Trust or Endowment Income	$54,252	$74,100	$134,179
Other Operating Income	$0	$1,853	$29,011
Total 'Normal Operating Income'	$142,347	$184,767	$374,489
Diocesan Assessment/Fair Share	$7,235	$19,057	$26,160
Total Operating Expenses	$168,014	$236,526	$374,419
Major Improvements,Capital Expenditures	$39,316	$42,398	$35,047

History

The Diocese of Fond du Lac was formed in 1875 with the parish church of St. Paul the Apostle being accepted as the cathedral soon after. The first resident bishop was John Henry Hobart Brown from the state of New York. The original cathedral, on the same site as the present building, was destroyed by fire in January 1884. The cornerstone for the new church was laid on October 28, 1885.

Bishop Brown did not live to see the new building completed, as he died in 1888. The second bishop of Fond du Lac, Charles Chapman Grafton of Boston, came to his see city in 1889. Using personal funds, as well as enlisting financial and artistic support from many contributors, Bishop Grafton made the completion of the cathedral a priority of his episcopate. The rebuilt cathedral is much larger than its predecessor with the additions of transepts, organ chamber, sacristy, choir room, chapel, and choir/sanctuary areas.

The photo now dubbed 'The Fond du Lac Circus' brought the Cathedral's Anglo-Catholic tradition to national attention; and the Cathedral has maintained a rich sacramental and liturgical life. It was at the center of missionary work in the early years of the diocese and housed Grafton Hall, an Episcopal girls' school on its campus. From the time of Bishop Grafton until the 2015 fire that destroyed the Mother House, the Cathedral maintained a close relationship with the Sisters of the Holy Nativity, who relocated from Boston to Fond du Lac in 1905. For many years, the sisters were an integral part of Cathedral life, including teaching in St Paul's campus schools and producing altar linens and vestments. Throughout the years of succeeding bishops and deans, the Cathedral Church of St. Paul the Apostle has remained a remarkable witness to its founders, a welcoming spiritual home to its worshipers, and a continual blessing to congregation, community, and diocese.

We strive to adhere to Bishop Brown's vision: 'The cathedral should be a center of missionary effort and zeal. Its worship should be fervent, constant, beautiful, and glorious.'

The Diocese

The Cathedral Church of St Paul is a member of the Episcopal Diocese of Wisconsin, comprising nearly one hundred churches in five regions, and is one of three historic cathedrals. While the original Diocese of Wisconsin had formed in 1847, it evolved into three: Fond du Lac, Milwaukee, and Eau Claire, with cathedrals located in each of these cities. After several earlier attempts at re-unification, the three came together again as one diocese in 2024. The Rt. Rev. Matthew Gunter, who had been bishop in Fond du Lac, provisional bishop in Eau Claire, and assisting bishop in Milwaukee, became the twelfth Bishop of Wisconsin.

As the cathedral of the Diocese of Fond du Lac, St. Paul's hosted diocesan services and events such as confirmations, ordinations, renewal of clergy vows and blessing of Chrism, and the Eucharistic Festival. Now one of three cathedrals, we continue to host some diocesan and regional celebrations, but we do not know what decisions the Diocese will make regarding the cathedrals going forward.

Where We Live

Our home city of Fond du Lac, population 45,000, is the county seat, located at the southern end of Lake Winnebago, one of the country's largest inland lakes at 215 square miles. It is a haven for boating, fishing, water-skiing, paddle boarding and windsurfing. In the winter, Lake Winnebago turns into a mini-city on the ice during the sturgeon spearing season and also becomes a great place for ice fishing and snowmobiling. Nearby trails provide venues for hiking and nature walks, as well as biking. Nearby Kettle Moraine State Forest-Northern Unit provides almost 30,000 acres of rolling hills, lakes, forests and grasslands.

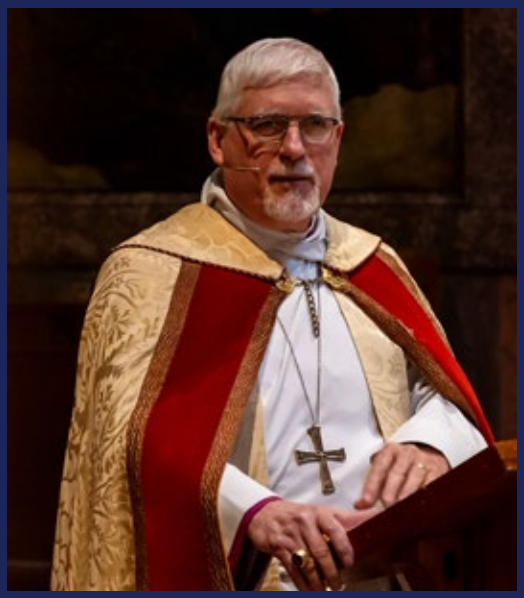
The greater Fond du Lac area has a lively cultural life, with the Thelma Sadoff Center for the Arts, two institutions of higher learning, community chorus and band, art shows, and speaker series. Festivals including Walleye Weekend and Fondue Fest as well as the monthly Tour the Town Art Walk, weekly farmers market, and other cultural events mean that there is always something happening. We are only about a 60–90-minute drive from Milwaukee, Green Bay and Madison.

Mercury Marine, three different healthcare systems, and education are among the top employers. Local housing prices are below the national average, making home ownership relatively accessible for families and young professionals. With an abundance of public parks and an excellent public school system, as well as several private/parochial schools, Fond du Lac is a fine place to raise children. Lakeside Park on Lake Winnebago offers 400 acres for family fun.

"We think our city is a special place!"

Leadership

The Episcopal Diocese of Wisconsin is dedicated to living out Christ's call through four core missions: Engagement, Discipleship, Evangelism, and Stewardship. Members blend the time-honored values of the Episcopal Church with the needs of today's world. The Diocese prides itself on its members and parishes offering welcoming spaces for spiritual growth, active service, and a chance to make a difference.



Bishop of Wisconsin:
The Rt. Rev. Matthew Gunter

The Cathedral Church of St. Paul the Apostle – Cathedral Chapter

Senior Warden: Sara Schmahl

Junior Warden: Brian Koehler

Treasurer: Helen Carew

Chapter Members:

Helen Carew
Tom Carew
David Nick
Nancy Judkins
Terry Judkins
Dave Twohig
Suzie Whitmore

Clergy & Staff:

Interim Dean: The Rt. Rev. W Michie Klusmeyer
Deacon: The Rev. Dc. Barbara Foster
Parish Administrator: Stefanie Misch
Organist: Ann Lemmenes
Broken Bread Manager: Ann Hounsell
Sexton: Jose Caldera
Assistant Sexton: Braydon Gustavson

Interested priests are asked to send a letter of introduction, resume, and OTM portfolio to the Rev Canon Scott Lcannah at scott@diowis.org. Inquiries will be reviewed and forwarded to the parish search committee as they are received, until the position is filled. The deadline for the first screening is October 31.