# St Luke & St Simon Cyrene (Rochester)

| TYPE | DIOCESE | NAME |
|---|---|---|
| Congregation | Rochester | Church of St. Luke and St Simon Cyrene |

| TYPES OF WORK | POSITION TITLE/ROLE |
|---|---|
| Part Time | Rector/Priest-in-Charge |

ROLE SUMMARY/DESCRIPTION

St Luke & St Simon Cyrene Episcopal Church- known throughout the diocese as "Two Saints"- seeks a quarter-time rector to provide focused spiritual, liturgical, pastoral, and collaborative leadership within a shared-ministry model. Recognizing the scope of a quarter-time call, we have intentionally focused the rector's responsibilities on those areas where ordained leadership is most important: worship and preaching, sacramental ministry, pastoral care, spiritual leadership and discernment, and the development and encouragement of lay leadership.

The rector will preside and preach according to an agreed worship schedule, working collaboratively with our Music Director and lay liturgical leaders. We value thoughtful, biblically grounded preaching that connects Scripture with contemporary life. The rector will also provide pastoral care in times of serious illness, crisis, bereavement, and other significant spiritual needs, while our deacon and congregation share responsibility for the broader ministry of caring for one another.

Two Saints has strong lay involvement and a variety of established ministries, including Jazz Vespers, Engineering Up, music, hospitality, outreach, and online worship. We are not seeking a rector to personally operate these ministries. Instead, we seek a priest who can equip and encourage lay leaders, help us discern priorities, and keep our mission at the center of our decisions.

This position offers an opportunity for a priest who values collaborative ministry and understands that healthy part-time ministry depends upon clear priorities and shared responsibility. Vestry, wardens, staff, ministry leaders, and parishioners will take primary responsibility for the governance, operational, and lay ministry responsibilities of the parish, in partnership with the rector.

| CURRENT STATUS | RECEIVING NAMES FROM | TO |
|---|---|---|
| Receiving names | 10/31/2026 | 01/04/2027 |

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Interested candidates are invited to email the following application materials to the diocese’s Director of Ministry,
the Rev. Dr. Julianne Buenting, at transitions@episcopaldioceseofrochester.org :
1) A letter of interest addressed to the search committee;
2) A current resume or C.V.; and
3) A pdf of current your Vocation Hub Candidate Profile, which must include answers to Applicant Narrative
Questions numbers 10, 13, and 14.


LEGACY RECORD CREATED 01/20/2026; LAST UPDATED 01/20/2026

CANDIDATE NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

10. What theological convictions shape your ministry?, 13. What is a ministry risk you've taken, and what came of it?, 14. How do you discern and adapt to the changing needs of your community?

CONTACT


| | |
|---|---|
| NAME | The Rev. Dr. Julianne Buenting |
| ROLE | Director of Ministry |
| ORGANIZATION | Episcopal Diocese of Rochester |
| PHONE NUMBER | 7736771996 |
| EMAIL ADDRESS | transitions@episcopaldioceseofrochester.org |


# POSITION DETAILS

ORDERS OF MINISTRY

Priest

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Northeast

WORK ENVIRONMENT

In Person

MINISTRY SETTING

Urban

**PAROCHIAL REPORT DATA**

| AVG. SUNDAY ATT. | ANNUAL BUDGET |
|---|---|
| 41 | 269873 |

**FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

**FINANCIAL OVERVIEW NARRATIVE**

Two Saints is committed to maintaining a sustainable financial foundation that supports our worship, ministries, community engagement, and future clergy leadership. Like many congregations, we are navigating the financial realities of a smaller congregation, increasing building and operating costs, and the need to align our staffing model with the resources available to us.

Recent years have required us to take a careful look at our operating expenses and long-term financial sustainability. Following an operating deficit in 2025, the parish adopted a significantly leaner budget for 2026, substantially reducing expenses and bringing ongoing operating revenues and expenses into much closer alignment. This reflects an intentional effort by the Vestry to move toward a financial model that can be sustained over the long term.

Our congregation also benefits from a number of unrestricted and designated endowment funds. These resources provide additional financial stability and support ministries including outreach and training, music, scholarships, health and wellness initiatives, altar needs, memorials, and community partnerships. Financial sustainability is an important consideration in our rector search. Our current financial planning anticipates a part-time rector, with a clergy compensation and staffing model that reflects both the needs of our congregation and the resources we can responsibly sustain. We see this not simply as an exercise in reducing expenses, but as an opportunity to thoughtfully consider how clergy and lay leadership can work together in the next chapter of our ministry.

Looking ahead, we recognize that long-term sustainability will require continued attention to stewardship, congregational giving, responsible use of endowment resources, building use, grants, fundraising, and community partnerships, as well as careful exploration of new possibilities for generating revenue and supporting ministry. We intend to approach these opportunities carefully and strategically, with transparency and realism, while recognizing the significant resources of our congregation—our people, our historic building, our financial assets, our community relationships, and our commitment to ministry in the City of Rochester.

**FINANCIAL RESOURCE TYPE** None

# STIPEND, HOUSING, AND BENEFITS

COMPENSATION/SALARY DETAIL

RANGE $0 - $25,000

DETAILS

Pro-rated for quarter-time position, according to diocesan clergy salary scale.

HOUSING/RECTORY TYPE

TYPE OF HOUSING PROVIDED Cash Stipend

DETAILS

Two Saints does not have a rectory. Housing allowance may be designated according to IRS guidelines for clergy.

SECA REIMBURSEMENT DETAIL

REIMBURSEMENT OFFERED Full

DETAILS

100% reimbursement of SECA (15.3% of cash stipend) is standard for this diocese.

MEDICAL & PENSION BENEFITS DETAIL

| PENSION PLAN | HEALTHCARE OPTIONS |
| --- | --- |
| In compliance with CPF requirements | n/a |

DETAILS

This quarter-time position does not include medical and dental insurance benefits.

VACATION, CONTINUING EDUCATION, AND OTHER BENEFITS

VACATION & LEAVE DETAILS

The proposed quarter-time package includes four part-time weeks of paid vacation annually, including up to four Sundays. The parish will arrange and pay for supply clergy during the rector's approved vacation Sundays.

CONTINUING EDUCATION DETAILS

The proposed package includes one week annually for continuing education and spiritual renewal, not including a Sunday. The parish also provides an annual continuing education allowance of $200. Unused continuing education funds may accumulate for up to two years, subject to a maximum accumulated balance of $500. Continuing education time and resources are intended to support the rector's ongoing professional, theological, and spiritual development.

SABBATICAL PROVISION DETAILS

Sabbatical or extended renewal leave would be considered in consultation with the Vestry and in accordance with the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester's applicable policies for part-time clergy and the terms of the Rector's Letter of Agreement.

TRAVEL/AUTO ACCOUNT DETAILS

Authorized parish-related mileage, tolls, and parking expenses are reimbursable according to parish/diocesan policy and the current IRS rate for mileage reimbursement. A dedicated parking space at the church will be provided at no cost to the rector.

EQUIPMENT/PHONE DETAILS

The parish will provide the rector with a laptop for church-related work, along with a church email account and access to necessary parish software, printing, and other technology resources. The parish anticipates replacing the church-provided laptop approximately every four to five years. The rector will also receive a cell phone allowance of up to $25 per month for parish ministry, consistent with applicable EDOR policy.

OTHER BENEFITS OR COMMENTS

Recognizing the nature of a quarter-time call, Two Saints intends to provide flexibility and support that enable the rector to use the limited contracted time effectively. The rector will have dedicated office space at the church, a dedicated parking space, a church-provided laptop and technology resources, and access to volunteer and paid administrative assistance. Administrative work, sermon preparation, virtual meetings, and other appropriate responsibilities may be completed remotely.

The parish supports a flexible work schedule that recognizes the unique rhythms of ordained ministry. The rector and Vestry will work collaboratively to establish regular availability and an appropriate balance among worship leadership, pastoral care, administration, congregational leadership, and other agreed-upon priorities.

The parish also provides a modest professional expense allowance ($250/per year) for items such as books, clergy dues, vestments, conferences, and ministry resources. Supply clergy expenses for approved vacation and leave are paid by the parish and are not deducted from the rector's compensation.

DIOCESAN COMPENSATION INFORMATION (IF APPLICABLE)

FORMAT PDF

# MINISTRY CONTEXT AND DESIRED SKILLS

WHAT ARE YOUR COMMUNITY'S HOPES FOR THIS POSITION?

Two Saints enters its next chapter with gratitude for our history and optimism about our future. We are a small, diverse downtown congregation with a beautiful historic church, a strong Episcopal identity, rich music and worship, committed lay leadership, and ministries that reach beyond our Sunday congregation. We hope to build upon those strengths while continuing to discern how God is calling us to serve a changing church, neighborhood, and city.

We seek a rector who will become a spiritual partner in that discernment, rather than arrive with a predetermined plan. We hope to strengthen our connections with downtown Rochester, welcome new and younger people while remaining a multigenerational community, creatively use our building and resources for mission, deepen pastoral and congregational relationships, and continue exploring innovative ministries such as Jazz Vespers and Engineering Up.

We also recognize that faithful stewardship requires us to make choices about where our limited people, time, and financial resources can have the greatest impact.

The priest who will thrive with us will be a thoughtful preacher and worship leader, a compassionate pastor, a good listener, and a collaborative and adaptive leader. We value someone who can recognize the gifts already present within the congregation, develop and empower lay leadership, help us navigate change thoughtfully, and encourage experimentation without losing sight of our Episcopal identity and traditions.

We do not expect our quarter-time rector to accomplish these hopes alone. Our vision is one of shared ministry in which clergy and laity discern, lead, serve, and grow together. We hope our next rector will help us focus not simply on maintaining what we have, but on recognizing where God is already at work and faithfully discerning what Two Saints is being called to become.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Adaptive Leadership, Change Management, Collaborative Leadership, Leadership Development, Strategic Planning

MINISTRY SKILLS

Community Building, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Evangelism, Innovative Ministry, Intergenerational Formation, Outreach, Pastoral Care, Prayer & Spirituality, Preaching, Worship & Liturgy

LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English

LANGUAGES WRITTEN

English

LANGUAGES REQUIRED TO LEAD WORSHIP

English

1. **What is your organization's mission and focus?**

***Describe your core mission and ministry priorities. What values guide your work, and what is your community or organization striving to embody in this season of ministry?***

Two Saints is a downtown Rochester Episcopal parish whose mission is to be 'an inclusive community of people, striving to be loving and forgiving to ourselves and others, strengthened by our diversity and unity in the breaking of the bread.' We seek to embody that identity as 'A Welcome Table for All, A Healing Place for Souls, and A School for Justice.' We seek to live that mission through worship centered in the Eucharist, generous hospitality, spiritual growth, care for one another, and service to the wider community. Our parish describes itself simply as "Loving, Diverse, Risk Taking," reflecting both who we have become and who we continue to strive to be. As we enter a new season of ministry and search for our next priest, we are discerning how our traditions, people, resources, historic building, and downtown location can best serve God's mission—strengthening the community within our walls while becoming an increasingly visible, welcoming, and responsive presence beyond them.

2. **How would you describe your ministry context?**

***Share about the setting and community you serve. What are the unique characteristics of your context - such as urban, rural, or suburban dynamics; multi-faith or multicultural environments; community partnerships; or social and cultural factors that shape your ministry?***

Two Saints ministers in a downtown urban context shaped by both our history and our location. Our parish emerged through the hard work of bringing together St. Luke's and St. Simon Cyrene, two congregations with distinct histories, cultures, and traditions, into one community. That history has given us an appreciation for diversity, resilience, and the importance of developing a shared identity over time. We also have a longstanding connection to Rochester's history, including involvement in the city's early anti-slavery efforts.

Today, we are a relatively small congregation with committed lay leadership ministering from a large historic church in the heart of downtown. Our immediate surroundings include government and business offices as well as apartments, while the expressway separates us from some of the city's more residential neighborhoods. This creates both opportunity and challenge as we seek deeper connections with those who live, work, and gather around us. Our ministry context includes questions of visibility, pastoral care, an aging membership, community partnerships, and sustainability—particularly how to balance the cost and responsibility of maintaining our historic building with the size and resources of our congregation. At the same time, we see the building, our location, and our people as significant assets for ministry and are discerning how a smaller congregation can continue to make a meaningful difference in the city.

**3. How would you describe your congregational/diocesan leadership culture?**

***Reflect on how your community approaches leadership - what styles and qualities you value in clergy, how leadership is shared between clergy and laity, and how you navigate change and challenges.***

Our congregational leadership culture is collaborative, supportive, and grounded in a shared sense of responsibility for one another and for the wider community. Leadership at Two Saints is intentionally shared among clergy, staff, lay leaders, and volunteers. Our deacon participates fully in liturgical and pastoral ministry, and during this time of transition, retired clergy who are members of the parish have also generously provided coordinated liturgical leadership. The rector has traditionally worked in regular consultation with the Vestry and congregation and closely with the Music Director in planning worship. At the same time, leadership is often grassroots: ideas and initiatives frequently emerge from members of the congregation, and people with particular knowledge, passion, or skills are encouraged and trusted to take ownership. Although we are a relatively small congregation with a limited volunteer pool, when needs arise, people consistently step forward and work together to get things done. We value leadership that recognizes people's gifts, encourages initiative, and provides the support and freedom necessary to put good ideas into action.

**4. How would you describe your congregational/diocesan liturgical styles and practice?**

***Share how worship is shaped in your community - what influences your liturgical life, how you balance tradition and innovation, and how liturgy reflects your theology and context.***

Our worship is centered on the Holy Eucharist, through which we renew our covenant with God and one another as Christ's beloved community in downtown Rochester. Rooted in the Book of Common Prayer and Episcopal tradition, our broad church worship style is reverent, joyful, and welcoming while reflecting the diversity of the people who gather here. That diversity is evident in the ages, genders, backgrounds, and experiences of those who participate and lead. It is also reflected musically through the use of both The Hymnal 1982 and Lift Every Voice and Sing, as well as choral, instrumental, and original music composed specifically for Two Saints.

We value scripturally-grounded preaching that connects Scripture to contemporary joys and challenges and is thoughtful and relatable across generations. Music is integral to our liturgy and one of the defining strengths of our parish. Our Music Director and Choral Scholars provide exceptional leadership, supported by volunteer singers, and our postlude is treated as an intentional part of worship rather than simply an ending.

We understand liturgy as truly “the work of the people.” Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, acolytes, musicians, ushers, altar guild members, and other lay leaders all contribute. We are intentional about inclusion as well: those worshipping online are acknowledged as part of the community, and communion is brought to those who need to remain in their seats. While Sunday Eucharist remains at the heart of our worship life, we also embrace other expressions. Our monthly Friday evening Jazz Vespers offers music, prayer, and reflection in a form that complements rather than competes with Sunday worship and welcomes many from beyond our congregation.

**5. How does your congregation/diocese approach cultural identity and inclusion?**

***Reflect on how your community engages diverse cultural identities, fosters belonging, and responds to the needs of a diverse or evolving population.***

Two Saints' identity has been shaped by diversity throughout its history. Our parish brings together the histories of St. Luke's, the first established Episcopal church in Rochester, and St. Simon Cyrene, the city's first African-American Episcopal congregation. From that heritage has grown a community that strives to be unreservedly welcoming. For us, “all means all”—across race, income, geography, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and other differences. We want people to know that they can enter our community as themselves, without needing to fit a particular mold, and that there are opportunities to build relationships, serve, lead, and make a meaningful contribution.

That commitment is visible in parish life. For many years, Two Saints provided a welcoming home for Dignity/Integrity, an LGBTQ+ Christian community whose members came from Episcopal and Roman Catholic backgrounds. Several former Dignity/Integrity participants are now active members and leaders at Two Saints. Our Welcoming & Inclusion ministry intentionally develops opportunities that bring established and newer members together, while our Ambassadors see hospitality itself as ministry, welcoming people before, during, and after worship. Our inclusion has also extended outward through ministries serving families experiencing homelessness and, more recently, through practical and personal support for an immigrant family navigating pregnancy, a new child, and the immigration system. These experiences reflect our belief that inclusion must be practiced through welcome, relationship, service, and shared leadership—not simply stated as an aspiration.

**6. Other Information**

***Use this space to share any additional details about the role or organization that would help candidates discern their fit - such as organizational culture, special projects, or unique opportunities and challenges.***

Two Saints has sometimes been described as “a small church with a big heart.” We are seeking a part-time priest in a season that calls for exploration of possibilities, partnership, and shared ministry. We are not looking for clergy to do everything for us; rather, we seek a leader who can help us focus, equip lay leaders, care for one another, and move faithfully into the future with realistic hope and a continued commitment to serving our neighbors.

# MINISTRY MEDIA AND LINKS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Church Web site** | **https://www.twosaints.org/** |

# NARRATIVES

1. **Describe your congregation's/diocese's theology or spiritual identity.**

***Reflect on key moments or experiences that have shaped or challenged your congregation's theological understanding or self-identity.***

We are an inclusive community… strengthened by our diversity and unity in the breaking of the bread. St Luke and St Simon's parish is a community that comes together around the Eucharistic table, where all are welcomed, and who extend the mandate of the Eucharist to go forth in service of others. This is the basis of our theology and identity as a parish. Grounded in the Eucharistic framework, we acknowledge that we are all one as a people inhabiting this earth and that we consequently have responsibility to care for each other and our dwelling place on this earth and to heal divisions that have disrupted that unity.

Our priorities include a commitment to building up our community, creating a welcoming space for gathering, and a resolve to become a greater community asset. In that effort, we strive to build partnerships and coalitions which share our vision and commitment. Additionally, we are focused on social justice and serving the marginalized. Our vision includes equipping ourselves for that ministry and becoming more agile and responsive to our call to a healing mission within our community.

Our comparative profile situates us as a more progressive congregation but notes a strong desire to abide by our historical faith tradition. We most value a meaningful worship and liturgical music program, our culture of hospitality and welcoming of a diverse and inclusive community, and our culture of generosity and gratitude – demonstrating itself in a respectful and accepting environment and volunteer engagement.

We describe ourselves as a spiritually vibrant urban parish, a welcoming and inclusive congregation, reflecting the history and diversity of a successful merger of two city parishes, committed to the responsibility of service within our larger community.

**2. Describe a recent ministry experiment or innovation in your congregation/diocese.**
***What did you try, why did you try it, and what did you learn - whether it "worked" or not?***

In 2023, a couple of members of the congregation noticed many scholarship opportunities go unused for local public high school students to attend RIT, a top 100 engineering school for little or no cost. After speaking with other education professionals in the congregation, they created www.EngineeringUp.org, an after school program held at Two Saints where students can build engineering projects to acquire the understanding, skills, and confidence needed to consider such a career path. We have seen dozens of students benefit from the program, and many have since entered college with enough financial aid to graduate with no debt, inclusive of room, board, and fees.

Engineering Up is a 100% donor-funded ministry and is offered to students at no cost. This program was only possible thanks to the two main volunteers, the church's infrastructure and space, and the occasional support of a dozen members of the congregation. We have enjoyed gathering to help our local youth, being relevant in the community, and growing closer ourselves.

**3. What is a ministry risk your congregation/diocese has taken, and what came of it?**
***Reflect on a time your community stepped out of its comfort zone to meet a new need or respond creatively to a challenge.***

One of the most significant ministry risks Two Saints has taken has been Jazz Vespers, our monthly Friday evening offering of music, prayer, reflection, hospitality, and fellowship. The parish recognized an opportunity to engage people who might not be drawn to traditional Sunday morning worship and chose to create something new while remaining rooted in Episcopal tradition. Built around Evening Prayer, Jazz Vespers combines contemporary theological and philosophical reflection with jazz as its primary musical expression and connects Two Saints with Rochester's rich jazz community and musical resources.

The ministry involved genuine risk. It required substantial volunteer energy and financial resources, with no guarantee that an audience would develop. Diocesan grant funding helped launch the ministry, but that support was temporary, requiring Two Saints to develop other ways of sustaining it through freely given donations and additional donors. There was also the challenge of introducing an innovative style of worship while remaining authentically grounded in our tradition.

That risk has borne significant fruit. Jazz Vespers has become a signature ministry of Two Saints and draws many people who do not regularly attend Sunday Eucharist. Over time, it has developed a growing spiritual community of its own and introduced people to our congregation, our historic church, and an Episcopal expression of faith they might not otherwise encounter. It has taught us that faithful experimentation need not diminish tradition; it can deepen ministry, extend hospitality, strengthen community relationships, and create new paths for outreach in our urban environment.

**4. How does your congregation/diocese discern and adapt to the changing needs of your community?**
***Share an example of how your congregation listened, responded, and experimented faithfully in your context.***

Two Saints seeks to discern the changing needs of our congregation and community by listening first. We use congregational surveys, town halls, informal conversations, and other opportunities for people to share their experiences, priorities, and concerns. We also try to listen beyond the congregation by paying attention to the people who live, work, and move through downtown Rochester. One recent grassroots effort has been to open the church for a regular period during the workweek, inviting passersby to enter, experience the space, and engage in conversation with parishioners. It is a simple experiment, but one that helps us learn more directly about the people around us.

What we hear informs how we respond. Ministries such as Jazz Vespers reach people beyond Sunday morning; Engineering Up connects the parish with high school students and families; and community partnerships and creative uses of our building allow us to engage people in different ways. Engineering Up itself continues to evaluate participation, attendance, and student engagement and to ask how the program can better reach young people who will benefit from it.

We do not assume that what worked in the past will necessarily meet today's needs. Instead, we want discernment to be ongoing—listening, trying, evaluating, adjusting, and continuing to ask where God is calling Two Saints to serve.

**6. In what ways is your congregation/diocese engaged in the wider Church or local community?**

***Whether through diocesan leadership, ecumenical partnerships, civic involvement, or community organizing, describe how your congregation serves beyond its own walls.***

Two Saints sees engagement with the wider Church and the Rochester community as central to our mission. Our downtown location and historic building create opportunities to welcome people for worship, music, hospitality, learning, and community gatherings. Jazz Vespers brings together people from across the region for music, prayer, reflection, and fellowship, including many who have little connection to traditional Sunday worship. Engineering Up, another ministry of Two Saints, provides high school students with a ten-week, hands-on engineering experience designed to develop technical skills, resilience, confidence, and awareness of future opportunities. The program also conducts workshops in local schools and provides transportation assistance to participating students.

Our engagement takes many other forms through community partnerships, diocesan participation, ecumenical relationships, hospitality, and use of our building. Parishioners have responded directly to families in need, including adopting and supporting a Haitian refugee family and developing a relationship with Rochester Refugee Resettlement. We regularly collect food for local food ministries, and Two Saints is represented in the Greater Rochester Council of Churches, strengthening our connection with the wider ecumenical community. We have also supported families experiencing homelessness and immigrant families navigating significant transitions. On occasions such as Rochester's St. Patrick's Day Parade, we open our doors to the community, offering hospitality, snacks, warm drinks, and a welcoming place along the parade route. Whether through an organized program, community partnership, or simply an open door, we want Two Saints to be more than a church people see from the street— we want to be a congregation connected to the life of our city and responsive to the people around us.

**8. How is your congregation/diocese preparing for the Church of the future?**

***Ministry is always evolving. Share how your congregation is growing, adapting, or learning to meet the changing needs of the Church and the world.***

Two Saints recognizes both the opportunities and challenges facing churches today. We are rooted in Episcopal tradition, but our history has taught us that faithfulness sometimes requires change. The merger that created Two Saints demonstrated that distinct histories and identities can be honored while something new is built together. More recently, ministries such as Jazz Vespers, Engineering Up, livestreamed worship, and online Morning Prayer demonstrate our willingness to reach people through forms of community, worship, learning, and technology that extend beyond the traditional Sunday morning model.

As we look ahead, we want to remain progressive, adaptable, and open to faithful experimentation. We hope to become increasingly multigenerational, invite younger people into the life and leadership of the parish, strengthen our visibility downtown, use our building more fully, and continue developing ministries that connect us with the surrounding community. We also recognize that the future requires realistic stewardship of our resources and an increasingly shared model of ministry between clergy and laity. We are therefore not seeking simply to preserve every existing program. We seek a rector who will help us discern where God is already at work, equip lay leaders, carefully introduce and implement change, and help us invest our energy where it can bear the greatest fruit.

**10. How has your congregation/diocese experienced and addressed conflict?**

***Conflict is part of communal life. Tell us about a time your congregation faced it and how you responded - what did you learn?***

Two Saints has experienced disagreement and conflict, particularly during periods of significant change, but those experiences have also helped shape a culture that values listening, patience, and respectful dialogue. The merger of St. Luke's and St. Simon Cyrene required people from congregations with different histories, traditions, and ways of doing ministry to form a shared identity. That process involved difficult conversations, differing expectations, and emotional attachment to the identity of each congregation. Over time, honest conversation, continued worship together, shared leadership, and a commitment to the future helped the congregation move from being two churches joined together toward a stronger identity as Two Saints.

Another example involved the decision to remove pews from the front of the sanctuary to create a more flexible worship space. The proposal generated strong feelings on both sides. Many parishioners valued the historic character of the sanctuary and found it difficult to envision replacing permanent pews with movable chairs, while others believed the open space would better support worship and ministry. The project also represented a significant financial investment. People were encouraged to express their concerns, leadership listened, and the congregation ultimately made a decision based on its long-term ministry needs rather than simply preserving the status quo.

Looking back, the open space has become one of the sanctuary's greatest strengths. It allows for more participatory worship, different service configurations, choir involvement from the main floor, musical performances, Jazz Vespers, community gatherings, parish dinners, and greater flexibility and accessibility. Many who were initially opposed to the change have since come to appreciate its benefits.

These experiences have taught us that disagreement does not have to divide a community. We care deeply about our traditions and hold a diversity of perspectives, but we are willing to engage difficult questions, listen to one another, and remain together even when there is not immediate agreement. Over time, change that has been carefully considered, communicated, and implemented has strengthened our ministry and increased our openness to innovation.

**11. What has been your congregation's/diocese's experience leading or navigating change?**

***Ministry often requires change. Reflect on a time your community embraced or navigated change - when it went well, when it didn't, and what it taught you about shared leadership.***

Change has been an important part of the story of Two Saints. The formation of the parish through the merger of St. Luke's and St. Simon Cyrene required two congregations with distinct histories and identities to build a shared future. That process was neither immediate nor easy, but it taught us the importance of listening, patience, trust, and allowing relationships and a common identity to develop over time. Other changes—from reconfiguring our worship space to introducing new forms of ministry—have reinforced those lessons.

We do not see ourselves as resistant to change, but experience has taught us that successful change should be connected to mission, clearly communicated, and carefully introduced and implemented. People need opportunities to understand why a change is being considered, express concerns, and participate meaningfully in the process. We have also learned that the benefits of change are not always immediately apparent; sometimes a congregation needs time to experience a new reality before fully embracing it. As we look toward the future, we hope for a rector who will lead collaboratively, listen carefully, and help us discern where change will strengthen our mission. Our history gives us confidence that change can be challenging while also being faithful, healthy, and life-giving.

**12. What are your current strategic priorities or plans for the future?**

***Share about any existing strategic plans, visioning processes, or future priorities your community is pursuing. How do these goals reflect your mission and the needs of the people you serve? What hopes or aspirations are guiding your ministry in this season?***

Our overarching priority is to remain a relevant and engaged Christian presence in downtown Rochester, using the people, resources, relationships, and physical space entrusted to us in service of the wider community. As a relatively small congregation caring for a large historic building, responsible stewardship requires us to balance the financial demands of maintaining our property with its tremendous potential as a place for worship, hospitality, learning, service, music, and community gathering. Strengthening our connection to the immediate neighborhood and increasing the use and visibility of our campus are therefore closely linked priorities.

We already see models for that future. Jazz Vespers has developed a community extending well beyond our Sunday congregation. Engineering Up uses our resources to help high school students develop technical skills, confidence, and resilience. Our livestreaming ministry brings Sunday Eucharist, Jazz Vespers, and special services beyond our walls, while weekly Zoom Morning Prayer provides another form of spiritual community. We want to build upon what is bearing fruit while continuing to experiment, evaluate, and respond to emerging needs. Our goal is not simply to maintain a congregation or preserve a historic building; it is to steward both so that Two Saints remains a welcoming, active, and meaningful community asset and witness to God’s love in downtown Rochester.

**13. How does your congregation/diocese incorporate accessibility and inclusion in your shared life?**

***Share how your community strives to create welcoming, inclusive spaces for people of all abilities, backgrounds, and experiences.***

Two Saints strives to be a congregation in which people are welcomed as they are and invited into the full life of the community. Inclusion is expressed through worship, leadership, hospitality, relationships, and community events, as well as through respect for differing backgrounds, experiences, identities, and perspectives. We seek to give people meaningful opportunities to participate and lead, whether as readers, Eucharistic Ministers, musicians, Vestry members, committee participants, volunteers, or simply as members of the community finding their own place among us.

Accessibility includes practical attention to barriers that might otherwise prevent participation. Our building includes a ramp and elevator to assist those with mobility needs, communion is brought to worshippers who need to remain in their seats, and livestreamed services allow people who cannot physically be present to remain connected to worship. We intentionally acknowledge those joining online as members of the worshipping community rather than passive viewers. Our Welcoming & Inclusion Committee and Ambassadors further support a culture in which hospitality is intentional rather than assumed.

We recognize, however, that accessibility and inclusion are ongoing responsibilities rather than accomplishments we can declare finished. We want to continue identifying physical, technological, social, and cultural barriers and reaching people who may not traditionally have felt welcomed or fully included in churches.

**15. How does your congregation/diocese use technology in ministry?**

***Describe the ways your community uses digital tools for worship, communication, formation, or outreach - and what you've learned along the way.***

Two Saints uses technology both to extend our worship beyond the church building and to maintain connections within our community. Our A/V ministry livestreams Sunday Eucharist, monthly Jazz Vespers, and special services and events through YouTube. Typically 10–30 people participate live online, with additional people viewing recordings afterward. We intentionally recognize those joining remotely as part of our worshipping community, and the recordings also provide prospective visitors an opportunity to experience the worship, preaching, and music of Two Saints before entering our building.

Technology also supports forms of ministry that would otherwise be difficult to sustain. Weekly Morning Prayer has been offered on Zoom since November 2024, creating a small but consistent community that gathers to read Scripture and pray for the world, our nation, those who are sick, and one another. Engineering Up incorporates technology in a different way, with participating students creating videos and websites to share the engineering projects they develop. Our website, email communications, social media, and online giving provide additional ways to stay connected and support the parish. We view technology not as a replacement for gathering in person, but as another means of extending community, worship, communication, and ministry beyond our walls.