



SAINT PAUL'S

WITHIN THE WALLS

The Episcopal Church in Rome



“To all God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:
Grace and peace to you from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

—*Romans 1:7*

An Episcopal Church in Rome

Saint Paul's Within the Walls is a parish of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, and—with Holy Trinity in Paris—one of the oldest congregations of the Episcopal Church outside the United States. Originally organized as Grace Church in 1859, and recognized as a church in 1861, our community saw the unification of Italy in 1861, the annexation to Italy of the Papal States in 1870, and the declaration of Rome as the capital of a united Italy in 1871. We were the first non-Roman Catholic congregation permitted by the new government of Italy to build a church for itself within the ancient walls of Rome. That building—Saint Paul's Within the Walls—was begun in 1873, and consecrated in March of 1876.

The Saint Paul's of today would be nearly unrecognizable to its founding generation. We are no longer a church for the enclave of American expatriates; we are a multinational, multiethnic, and multilingual community. Members of our congregation come from churches across the Anglican Communion, from backgrounds outside the Anglican tradition, and from no previous experience of faith.

In all that we do—in our life of worship, our times of fellowship and study, and in our ministries of service to refugees—we seek to live out our baptismal commitment to love Jesus, to support each other in our journey of faith, and to serve others in his name. We are committed to being fully welcoming and inclusive of all people as we seek to share the transforming message of Christ's love in a place where people yearn for authentic community—and have often given up on the idea of a church that would actually strive to live out the Gospel's call to loving all people as neighbors.

A Beacon for Refugees

Saint Paul's is the home of one of the Episcopal Church's foremost ministries to migrants and refugees, the [Joel Nafuma Refugee Center](#). Organically a part of the church, JNRC serves nearly thirty thousand refugees each year who have fled war, instability, and the ravages of climate change in Africa, the Middle East, Central and South Asia, and Latin and South America.

The clergy-in-charge of Saint Paul's serves simultaneously as the Executive Director of JNRC, and is supported in this role by JNRC's Managing Director and a staff of five. A number of project coordinators, funded by grants received by the JNRC, also support the Center's mission.



Comunidad Latino- Americana

For more than thirty years, Saint Paul's has also been the home of Comunidad LatinoAmericana, a Spanish-speaking community living in Rome. The community is not separate but a part of Saint Paul's congregation, offering a Spanish-language service at noon on Sundays following the principal service at 10:30. Saint Paul's Vicar, Father Francisco Alberca, has pastoral and liturgical responsibility for this community.



Saint Paul's Vicar, Father Francisco Alberca

Representing the Episcopal Church

As the outpost of the Episcopal Church in Rome, Saint Paul's also has a unique role representing our church in the Eternal City. Historically, a part of the ministry of clergy at Saint Paul's has involved representing the Episcopal Church in both formal and informal ecumenical conversations that are centered in Rome.

The [Anglican Centre in Rome](#) is a convening center for conversations across the Anglican Communion; clergy of Saint Paul's typically share in sacramental ministry at the Centre, as invited by the Centre's director.



Bishop Austin Rios, then the Rector of Saint Paul's, meets with The Most Rev'd. Ian Ernest, director of the Anglican Centre in Rome



The clergy of the Convocation gathered at the Anglican Centre



The Primates of the Anglican Communion at their meeting with Pope Francis in March of 2024

Our Governance

Saint Paul's is governed by its elected Vestry, and supported by a staff of four. From before construction of our building began, Saint Paul's has been supported by, and organically linked to, The Board of Trustees of Saint Paul's in Rome, a nonprofit charitable corporation established under the laws of the State of New York in 1872. The Board of Saint Paul's formally holds title to the building, and takes particular responsibility for assuring the integrity and welfare of our capital plant. Over the past two decades years, the Board of Saint Paul's has made significant contributions in making possible an extensive renovation of the church, its [historic and artistically significant mosaics](#), and the rectory building, helping transform many of our spaces for public use. We are blessed by the support of the Board, and deeply value our unique and constructive relationship.



The Vestry addresses the congregation at the beginning of the search process



The restored mosaics of the West wall, by George Brack

Joining our Call in Mission

We believe God has called Saint Paul's to a unique—and uniquely challenging—ministry in the Episcopal Church. Despite our high profile, Saint Paul's is not a large congregation. The responsibilities of the mission to which God is calling us can feel heavy on a community our size, our diversity, and our complexity.

We seek a pastor and leader for our community who:

- ✦ Has demonstrated experience *working and leading in a multicultural, multilingual environment*. Facility with Spanish is an important aspect of the worship and pastoral life of Saint Paul's; facility with Italian, or an ability to acquire Italian at the level of working proficiency, is important for communication with local authorities, governmental officials, and ecumenical partners.
- ✦ Has demonstrated experience *managing a large, complex institution with a variety of stakeholders*. Leading Saint Paul's demands capable executive management skills, overseeing a multifaceted nonprofit corporation operating within the laws of the Italian state and demanding skills of staff leadership, fundraising, and strategic planning.
- ✦ *Can engage and empower members of the community in lay leadership roles*. A high degree of lay engagement in the life and governance of the church is a hallmark of the Episcopal Church—but is largely contrary to the dominant ecclesiastical culture of our surrounding context. The person whom we seek as our next pastor must be capable not just of teaching this aspect of our tradition, but of instilling and encouraging a spirit of engagement and shared responsibility in our work and witness.
- ✦ *Is an effective, accessible, and compassionate pastor*, able to enter with authenticity and humility into the joys and sorrows of our lives as individuals and as a community of disciples.

These pages present our answers to the questions posed in Saint Paul's Office of Transition Ministry Profile.

Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

✝ St. Paul's is well known as the home of the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center (JNRC), a church-leading ministry with and to migrants that serves nearly 30,000 refugees and asylum-seekers every year. This year, inspired by the commitment of the Convocation of the Rainbow Initiative, members of the parish and JNRC staff marched together in Rome's Pride Parade—making a clear and vibrant witness that the Episcopal Church welcomes and affirms the most marginalized in Italian society. The right-wing government of Giorgia Meloni has taken an increasingly harsh stance toward refugees arriving in the country from Africa, the Middle East, and the Arab world; it has played a central role in the development of a new “Pact on Migration and Asylum” in the European Union, one major effect of which will be to limit onward movement of migrants to secondary destinations in Europe. The government has also moved to deny non-biological parents in same-sex couples the right to have parentage. Saint Paul's has taken a clear and unapologetic stance for the dignity of all people, fully including both our LGBTQ members and those who come to us as refugees—groups that sometimes overlap. This stance sets us apart from the vast majority of faith communities in Rome.

Describe your liturgical style and practice.

✝ As the Episcopal Church in Rome—and the first non-Roman Catholic church ever built within the ancient walls of the city—Saint Paul's has a long history of offering worship in the broad center of the Episcopal tradition. We value a liturgy that reflects our theological commitment to welcoming the stranger and visitor among us, and we value a liturgical tradition that makes clear in gracious and dignified ways that we are not a Roman Catholic church. Saint Paul's also has a tradition of offering a strong music program, drawing on a mix of professional and volunteer choristers led by our long-serving organist and choirmaster, Stefano Vaselli. A typical Sunday sees two services—the principal morning service, offered in a mix of English and Italian, and a noon service in Spanish for the Comunidad LatinoAmericana, a ministry to Spanish-speaking Christians in Rome now in its fourth decade. On major feasts and other occasions, the two communities worship as a single congregation, with the language of the service then balancing between English and Spanish.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

✝ On any given Sunday morning, there are three communities present in the pews of Saint Paul's. One is those for whom Saint Paul's is their home church. They live in Rome year-round; they work as teachers, as staff at local U.N. agencies, as doctors, or in several other fields. A second is those who make Rome a part-time home; they are predictably here three months (or perhaps more) each year. It may be that they are in a "multinational marriage" with an Italian spouse, or they have maintained a home in Italy for some years, or they are considering the possibility of relocating to Italy full-time. The third is people present with us for likely their one-and-only visit. Our calling is to make each of these audiences feel equally that Saint Paul's is their church. We do this by hosting an informal lunch after most Sunday services, inviting all to join us; by regular events such as "refugee suppers," that lift up and celebrate the cultures of our refugee community; by hosting annual "Africa Sundays" led by our African members; and by communicating always that we yearn to include the gifts and skills of all to be part of our witness to Christ's transforming love.

As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being?

✝ The single word that links all our answers together here is "relationally." Saint Paul's is a community that to a remarkable extent runs on WhatsApp. Virtually every ministry in the church—every prayer group, every rota, everyone associated with the Refugee Center, every member of the staff team, every person living in the first-floor Collegio (a six-room suite of single rooms and shared facilities for students, YASC interns, and others) is a part of one—and often several—WhatsApp groups. These are used for planning and praying, for practical work and pastoral care, for making sure we are connected between Sundays. Saint Paul's has a Daughters of the King group that organizes a time of bible study and prayer prior to Sunday services and a monthly "Bibles and Beer" gathering at the restaurant across the street, for informal conversation engaging together with scripture. The Latin American congregation frequently gathers for a meal and fellowship after its service downstairs in the crypt. We have offered times of thematic bible study and prayer during Advent and Lent, and as noted above offer a healing service as part of our principal worship on the first Sunday of each month.

Describe your church's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.

✝ Saint Paul's has a leading place in refugee ministry across the whole Episcopal Church through the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center. This remarkable ministry serves nearly thirty thousand refugees each year, providing assistance with language skills, clothing, basic nutrition needs, job skills training, résumé

development, and interview practice. JNRC provides basic legal assistance helping recent arrivals navigate Italy's increasingly difficult pathway for obtaining refugee status. And in all things JNRC offers psychosocial support to refugees who frequently are fleeing from situations of trauma—or who have been traumatized on their journey. At the same time, Saint Paul's has a unique role in the whole Episcopal Church in representing our church in both ecumenical and intra-Anglican spaces. Rome is, in many ways, the center of communion-to-communion ecumenical dialogue, and hosts not only the Vatican's Dicastery for the Promotion of Christian Unity but the Anglican Centre in Rome. Clergy at Saint Paul's typically have a regular presence in these conversations and connected observances, and often facilitate the participation of senior representatives from the Episcopal Church.

How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

✝ Like many other parishes, Saint Paul's adapted quickly to online worship as a response to the challenges of the pandemic. Through the kindness of generous grants, we have been able to upgrade substantially the quality of the worship we share with the world. We still face some challenges in improving this—our internet bandwidth is not yet sufficient to permit livestreaming our service in real time—but we know we have built a new, substantial, and global audience of friends who understand themselves to be part of the Saint Paul's community. We know we need to do more to engage and include this community in our life and work. Beyond this, the psychosocial care provided to our refugee guests by JNRC—all done consistent with a strong norm of respecting all faith traditions that come to us, and not proselytizing—is a critical aspect of the pastoral care we provide to those beyond Sunday morning worship.

Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?

✝ There are a number of them. Our online presence, and particularly our worship broadcasts, are maintained by Madeline Hennig, our communications officer. Father Francisco Alberca, the vicar of Congregacion Latinoamerica, began a Spanish bible study with Morning Prayer online via Facebook that has garnered an audience far beyond Rome. Many of us share leadership of our Sunday Lunch ministry, which invites anyone present on Sunday morning—especially those who are visiting Rome perhaps for the first time—to join us for a light lunch at a nearby restaurant after worship. The DOK prayer group mentioned above, overseen by our co-warden Yvette Manigold offers a time for contemplative and intentional prayer before worship, and is leavening the prayer life of the whole community.

How are you preparing yourselves for the church of the future?

✝ Bishop Edington often speaks of the Convocation as a Research and Development Department for the whole church. In many ways, we are a laboratory where conducting experiments in a context that will come to characterize the U.S. home of the Episcopal Church in the decades ahead. We are a parish that has found ways of offering ministry in an environment much more secular, more multicultural, more multiethnic, and far more multilingual than is the case in the United States. We offer our witness to Christ's Way of Love in a place where local and national laws are much less deferential to religious institutions; where we are, and are seen as, a minority religion; where no one knows or cares that George Washington was an Episcopalian. Like all other congregations of the Convocation, we are no longer a majority-American parish, and certainly no longer an enclave for expatriates. So we are seeking someone to come among us who is capable of moving easily between cultures and languages, who can continually teach us the basics of the Episcopal tradition while treasuring and celebrating what is unique about our history and community.

What is your practice of stewardship—and how does it begin with your worship?

✝ We acknowledge that we have some challenges here. Europe generally, and Italy specifically, are profoundly different environments from the United States when it comes to teaching and talking about practices of stewardship. The dominant place of the Roman Catholic Church in Italy creates a culture in which most people view the church as wealthy and in some ways exploitative; we are always confronted with the need to explain that we do not benefit from anything like the same resources as our neighbors in the Vatican. The Episcopal Church is not among the churches recognized by the Italian state as qualifying for the "otto per mille" donation from individual income taxes to religious entities. And as a general observation, the growing share of our community coming from non-U.S. backgrounds means that we always face the challenge of translating our theological commitment to stewardship into other languages and cultural expressions. We seek someone who can help us to do this in ways that are culturally sensitive and inviting. Simply importing programs and ideas from the U.S. context won't work with the majority of our members.

*What is your worship community's experience of conflict?
And how have you addressed it?*

✝ In a community as diverse culturally and linguistically as ours, frictions and misunderstandings are unavoidable. In the work of our Refugee Center, which serves a truly global population from a vast array of cultures, one of the key staff roles is that of “peacekeeper”—a person uniquely skilled to intervene in a disagreement or argument between two or more of our guests before it becomes unmanageable. Peacekeepers are nearly always people who first came to us as refugees themselves, and who have demonstrated a gift of intercultural understanding that equips them for this essential and challenging work. Our parish comprises people from so many different nations and cultures that the work of listening intently, responding graciously, and identifying areas of disagreement and difference honestly and respectfully are a necessary part of how our community works, and our pastoral leadership must be able both to model and to strengthen this quality of our common life.

*What is your experience in leading/addressing change in the church?
When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?*

✝ Saint Paul's lives on a geographic, cultural, and demographic frontier of the Episcopal Church. We are working for and witnessing to the way of love in a context and culture radically different from what most people in our church think of as usual. Our experience of change, of the requirement to adapt to new circumstances and emergent challenges, is constant. Our life as a community is an ever-challenging search for balance between preserving our tradition and teaching it to a new generation on the one hand, and finding adaptive responses to our context and culture on the other. We have done well at creating a truly diverse, multicultural, multinational, and multilingual community. We need to find ways more effectively to share what we have found here with others who we know are searching for what we have found here. We seek a priest who will come among us as a creative colleague to imagine and implement with us new ways of searching out the neighbors we already have who would find a spiritual home here.

Some Practicalities

- ✝ The Vestry of Saint Paul's has chosen to search for a priest-in-charge whom we hope, after a period of mutual discernment, will become our Rector. The initial appointment of the priest whom we call will be for a period of three years; in the third year of the appointment, we will enter together into a Mutual Ministry Review, facilitated by the Convocation's transition officer, to discern together how our work together is responding to God's invitation to witness to Christ's love faithfully and joyfully in this place.

- ✝ Clergy serving Saint Paul's must apply for and receive a visa from the Italian state permitting them to work as clergy within Italy. A different process applies for those who are nationals of a member state of the European Union and those who are not. In the case of U.S. nationals, a *permesso di soggiorno* must be secured, and periodically renewed, both for the member of the clergy and for any family members planning to reside in Rome.

- ✝ Saint Paul's provides the services of an immigration attorney to assist in securing legal permission to reside in Italy. Note, however, that this can be a laborious and trying process.

- ✝ The structure of the compensation provided to clergy appointed to serve at Saint Paul's depends on the nationality of the priest appointed. Past practice in the case of U.S. nationals has been to pay a portion of compensation in Euros in Italy, and a portion in dollars in the United States. In all cases, Saint Paul's pays the full premium to the Church Pension Fund on behalf of its clergy.

- ✝ The priest called as our next priest in charge is provided housing in Saint Paul's Rectory. Our past practice has been for the parish to pay social costs to the Italian state on behalf of our clergy in order to secure health and pension insurance for clergy and their family members in the Italian system. A supplemental, private insurance policy has also been provided. In addition, an automobile is provided by the parish for transportation within Italy.

- ✝ Saint Paul's provides for the costs of round-trip travel for the priest-in-charge and their family members once per year to their home country.

A Message from our Bishop



The Convocation of **Episcopal** Churches in Europe

The Episcopal Church in The Anglican Communion

THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

23 Avenue George V + 75008 Paris + France

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Paris | July, 2024

Saint Paul's Within the Walls is a remarkable, wonderful, richly blessed parish. Its ministry to refugees is rightly renowned across the whole church. And—have no doubt about it—leading such a parish in such a place is one of the hardest jobs in the entire church.

You will be blessed with a parish of incredibly dedicated, committed Christians. You will be the leader of a ministry that helps thousands of the most vulnerable fellow human beings each year. You will be the clergy in charge of the Episcopal Church in Rome—the cradle of Western Christianity, the center of communion-to-communion dialogue, and the home of the Anglican Centre in Rome.

You will be supported by the Board of Saint Paul's in Rome, a nonprofit corporation with a deep history of supporting and sustaining the treasure that is Saint Paul's physical plant. Their long record of assisting in the preservation of this uniquely significant building is a gift to the whole church. And you will become part of a remarkably talented and richly talented group of clergy colleagues.

At the same time, you will face tremendous challenges. Practically nothing about the deferential treatment of churches typically taken for granted in the United States applies here. The sympathetic regard that once shaped European views of the United States has all but evaporated. As the congregation's leader, you will be principally responsible for generating the funds necessary to ensure the continuation of significant and complex ministries, managing two staffs (of the church, and of the refugee center) while providing pastoral leadership to a parish where “diversity” is a word with global significance.

Saint Paul's seeks a leader who is both entrepreneurial and pastoral, effective as an executive while able to move easily and authentically between cultures and communities. Those of us who serve in the Convocation know that ministry here is uniquely rewarding—and uniquely demanding.

It matters to the whole church that Saint Paul's Within the Walls is vital, joyful, and flourishing. I am confident that God has an amazing new chapter in store for this historic parish, and I invite your prayerful discernment in considering whether God may be inviting you to join that story.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark D. W. Edington'.

The Right Reverend Mark D. W. Edington
Bishop in Charge

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