



## **St. Luke's East Hampton**

### **Reflections from Fr. Ben**

**January 15, 2026**

A few highlights from January's vestry meeting:

#### **A search for a Curate begins**

Last Saturday, the vestry agreed to move ahead with a search for a curate. The Curate committee includes Father Shambaugh, Brian Craig, Martha Murray, Roy Parker, and Mark Nelson. The Curate Committee is in the process of finalizing materials to send to the bishop for his office to create a search profile which will be presented at Virginia Seminary in February and at the Transition Ministry Conference in March. Our goal is to find a full-time newly ordained priest who would live in the cottage at St. Thomas' Church in Amagansett, with 50% of that person's expenses covered by the diocese. (This is the same arrangement we had with both Father Joseph and Mother Leandra). Our goal is to initially cover St. Luke's part of these expenses not through our budget but through donations from parishioners, which have already begun to come in. If you are interested in participating in these efforts, contact Mark Nelson. Thank you to everyone for your support and prayers as we seek the person God already has in mind to help St. Luke's mission and ministry continue to thrive.

#### **New Kneelers are on the way**

Thanks to a generous donation, St. Luke's is getting new kneelers. After considering both "hassock" and "fold down" styles, the vestry has decided to go with the donor's suggestion of fold down kneelers. These fold down kneelers are engineered to be lighter, more quiet, and more comfortable than the older versions that were in the church a decade ago. In addition to these, we will be getting new cloth covered hassock style kneelers for the front pews in both the main and tower sections of the church and for the chapel, so an option will be available for those who prefer the hassocks. Though it's not a bad sign that our old kneelers were worn out due to use, we are delighted that people will have a more comfortable way to pray. You can see a sample of the fold-down kneeler in Hoie Hall. Note that we will be using a more sturdy and attractive fabric than the vinyl on the sample.

#### **Christmas Attendance remained strong**

The attendance at Christmas was remarkably consistent when compared to previous years. The big difference between the Christmas Eve 10:30 service came from 359 people watching Facebook live in 2024. On Christmas Eve in 2025, St. Luke's also had 1743 web site views, with an estimated 200 who clicked through to watch either the 4pm or 10:30pm services. Better website statistics will be available as we do planned upgrades on our site this year.

2025 Christmas Eve 4pm had 442 in person and 312 on Facebook+YouTube or 754

2024 Christmas Eve 4pm had 450 in person and 294 on Facebook+YouTube or 744

2025 Christmas Eve 1030pm had 138 in person and 188 on Facebook+YouTube or 326

2024 Christmas Eve 1030pm had 148 in person and 426 on Facebook+YouTube or 574