

St. James Parish

WITH ST. MARK'S MINISTRIES

Epistle



DECEMBER 2025

Rector's Message

December is a peculiar month, as are many on the Christian calendar. We begin the season of Advent on November 30th with Jesus saying: "Therefore, you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour" (Matthew 24:44). Jesus seems to be speaking to His disciples of His "second coming," that time when He will return at the end of time to rescue the faithful, judge the living and the dead. On Christmas Eve, Luke 2:10-11 features the angels proclaiming: "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloths and lying in a manger."

Advent heralds the return of Christ the King, and Christmas reminds us why it all matters: because God stepped into history, intervened for us, in our pathway to destruction, and rescued us in the form of a baby born in the city of David. The Gospel story always reminds us that God does the impossible. He brings life – by the power of the Holy Spirit – from a peasant woman and raises up a Savior amidst a broken, oppressed people. This Savior will proclaim, "Blessed are the poor, the weak, and the sick." Jesus, the baby that becomes a man, born of Nazareth's poor but faithful virgin, dies on a shameful Cross and by dying, saves us all. Advent heralds the coming of Christ, the Holy One who came and, by God's

grace, will come again. *Adventus* means "the coming" and, as we plunge into Advent and prepare for Christmas, one thing is certain: Christ is coming. We celebrate His birth at Christmas and rejoice in God's overpowering love. We anticipate His coming again, an energy that can empower us through life, knowing that that One who was born and saved us so that we might be born again, will come again.

In Christ,
Fr. George+



Warden's Corner

Food insecurity is defined as not having reliable access to enough affordable food to lead a reasonably healthy life. It is not confined to urban, low-income communities or distant lands. It is wherever people have to struggle to get to food sources or pay for food, while dealing with the rising costs of healthcare, childcare, medications or housing. Food insecurity hides behind closed doors where a parent skips meals in order to feed their kids, or a senior chooses between medicine and groceries. It could be your neighbors and friends who have hit hard times. Even in a society that has so much, there are people all around us who are forced to make these difficult choices.

Jesus guides us in the care of the hungry in Matthew 25:35 when he says: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in". Then, in Matthew 25:40, he goes on to say, "I tell you the truth, whatever you do for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me". It is clear that if we claim that we are disciples of Christ, we must follow his commands. Feeding the hungry is an act of compassion as well as a way to serve God.

Outreach at St. James has always been geared largely to feeding the hungry. Recently, due to cuts in food benefit programs and temporary loss of SNAP benefits, food pantries everywhere have been overwhelmed with need. This need will probably not abate anytime soon. As a result of this need, the St James collection of food has "ramped up" and will be continuous. I want to sincerely thank the parishioners of St James for your immediate response to the request for donations, and hopefully for continuing this generosity while the need is so great.

The food collected in the bins in the Narthex will be brought on a regular basis to the following local food pantries. The Farmington Food Pantry is an all-volunteer group whose clients are all Farmington residents. Another group, Gifts of Love, focuses on helping working people meet the basic needs of food, household goods, clothing and energy assistance. In their Backpack Program they send food home with kids who may not otherwise have it on weekends; including peanut butter and jelly we

collect regularly.. Additionally, our own St Mark's Ministries has long run a food pantry in New Britain. Recently, this food pantry has nearly doubled the number of people it serves each day it is open. A recent addition to food sites we support is Meals for Neighbors-Bristol. Each night a meal for about 40 people is served. St James has been making meatloaves to help with this effort. They also run a food pantry at that site.

In addition to supporting the food pantries, our Outreach Ministry will continue to participate in several other efforts that provide food to those who are food insecure. In the spring, the *St James Healers* will participate in the CT Foodshare Walk Against Hunger. CT Foodshare is an organization critical to providing food to pantries throughout the state but has unfortunately been greatly hit by cutbacks in governmental support. Also, twice yearly we sponsor Church by the Pond where we provide a lunch and a church service to people in Bushnell Park. Recently, St Mark's Ministries has started a weekly breakfast program called Morning Mingle in New Britain. This program may eventually feed as many as 150 people each week, and many St James parishioners have stepped up to staff it. Finally, our Thanksgiving Basket collection will provide complete Thanksgiving dinners for 10 local families.

These activities could not be accomplished without the continued, and very generous support from our wonderful St James family. I would like to thank everyone who participates in these efforts or supports them in any way. Hopefully we will be able to continue to serve God by helping to care for those that he loves.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Bullard, Co-Warden



Special December Worship Service

Christmas: A Season of Hope

On **Wednesday, December 17th**, at 5:30 pm, we'll hold a service with Holy Eucharist in the church, acknowledging that, for some, the Christmas season can be filled with grief, anger, hopelessness, and challenge. Our service, called *Christmas: A Season of Hope*, will leave space for lament and grief while also paying homage to the promise and hope that is Christ's coming into the world. There will be a simple reception afterwards in the parish hall with cookies, coffee, and cider and just maybe a fire in the fireplace.

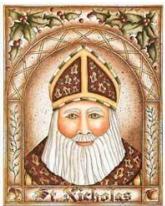
First Sunday Breakfast

Find delicious food and fellowship at **First Sunday Breakfasts** cooked by a great crew of men of the parish: pancakes, sausage, bacon, eggs, juice and coffee as good as Mom made. A gluten-free option will also be available. And, of course, much good conversation! So, join us this **Sunday, December 7th from 9 am–9:45 am**, bring your family and neighbors, and share in the great food from our Men's Group.



St. Nicholas Day

On **Sunday, December 7th**, we will celebrate St. Nicholas Day! St. Nicholas, for any who may not know, was a 4th century Bishop from Myra, now part of modern-day Turkey. He was known for giving to the poor, caring for orphaned children, and defending the faith of Jesus as it had come down through the church. On **December 7th**, we will have a visit from St. Nicholas again, who will share stories with us and our children! We also invite, on this special day, for folks to bring ornaments from home that you would like to donate to the church which we will put on our St. James Christmas Tree that very day (lightly used or new ones, please). It will be a *First Sunday Breakfast*, as well, so there will be much to celebrate.



Advent Bible study

Join us on the four Sundays of Advent at **12:30 pm on Zoom**, for a special Bible Study of Advent. We will use the theme of our Advent wreath candles – and their colors – to frame a special four-part Bible study. Beginning **November 30th** and the next three Sundays of Advent (**December 7th, 14th, and 21st**), we will explore Hope (purple, Advent 1), Peace (purple, candle 2), Joy (pink, candle 3), and Love (purple, candle 4). Each week will be framed by verses from scripture that foretells the coming of the Messiah, from the prophets, the psalms, and the Gospel witness itself.



More on the specific passages will be shared in the coming weeks, so stay tuned and plan to join us via Zoom, if you can!! Note that on **December 21st** the Study will begin at 1 p.m. A wonderful way to connect to the themes of the Advent season, as we wait expectantly the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Sundays of Advent:

O little town of Bethlehem

We love singing the hymns and carols that frame our brief, beautiful season of Christmastide! I so look forward to singing *Hark! The herald angels sing, Silent Night, It came upon a midnight clear*, and so many other wonderful hymns that express the joy of Christ's nativity and what that birth means for the world. But have you ever really explored the words of some of our great hymns of Christmas or Advent? Well, beginning on the first Sunday of Advent (**November 30th**), and running each of the following three Sundays of Advent (**December 7th, 14th, 21st**), we will dive a little deeper into the meaning and purpose of some of the great music of the Advent and Christmas season. There will be no book to buy, come as you are, and this will be a fun (we pray) and hopeful study of the words that frame the great tunes we have come to love. **Join us around 9–9:45 am in the parish hall, each Sunday morning beginning November 30th!**

Men's Breakfast

On Saturday, December 13th at 8 am, all men of the parish are invited to join us for a time of conversation and good food at the Crazy Pancake, 17 Whiting Street, in Plainville. Come as you are. Everyone is responsible for his own breakfast but let Fr. George know if that is a challenge, as there is assistance available. Join in fellowship with Fr. George and a great breakfast!

Faith & Fries!

On Tuesday, December 16th (note the special day, a week early, for Christmas), you are invited to join us for *Faith and Fries* at Puente American-Latino Pub at 81 Main Street in Unionville. Come for dinner, have a drink or snack, whatever is comfortable for you. We will explore the question:



what does God's coming in Christ as a baby/human change for us? We invite all to come as they are able and please, feel free to invite a friend, neighbor, or co-worker! Call the church with questions.

Join us for Greening of the Church

On Sunday, December 21st following 10:15 a.m. worship, we'll begin our Greening of the Church for Christmas! We are looking for volunteers to come help hang greens, wreaths and decorate the windows, all while enjoying fellowship and creating a glorious welcome for the Christmas season. If you are going to join us, please bring some clippers for trimming greens.

We are also in need of fresh greens for the windowsills. If you are willing to donate them, there will be a box to drop them in on the sidewalk to the right of the front entrance of the church. We are doing both indoor and outdoor Greening. Blessings and we look forward to seeing you on the 21st!



Women's Ministry



Coffee at the Daily Grind on Friday, December 5th at 10 am. Come join your St James' Women friends for coffee and discussion.

Christmas Cards and Cookie Tins, Monday, December 15th, 5 pm Join us for an evening of fun, levity and doing a good deed for others. Please bring 3 dozen cookies, no nuts please, that we will put in tins. We will also make cards which will require coloring skills only. By the end of the evening we will have almost 30 tins to be distributed. Some will go to our shut-ins, if you would like to help to deliver them for the holiday you may. The remainder go to Prudence Crandall for those that are there for the holiday. Please save the date for this project that is both giving and receiving during the holiday. To let us know that you can be there please email: 1delshire@gmail.com, Thank you!



Women's Book Club, Wednesday, January 7th, 6:30 pm. Join Tracey Roberts in reading and discussing the book, *The Lion Women of Tehran*, by Marjan Kamali. The internet write ups state it's an "evocative read and a powerful portrait of friendship, feminism, and political activism". This sounds like a book meant for the women of St James!

Prudence Crandall Valentine Care Project, Monday February 8th. Our fellow parishioner Christina DeFranco has asked for our help filling 100 beautiful bags for women at Prudence Crandall for Valentine's. She has done this project for seven years; this year we can help in the project. We will meet in the Parish Hall and work to fill the bags and make them lovely. Stay tuned for updates on specifics.

Our group events are open to any woman in our St James Parish, Farmington, CT. If you have any questions or have any ideas for our ministry, please feel free to talk to any of us: Kathy Bullard, Deb Butler, Gabriela Henry, Linda Mason, Tracey Roberts, Molly Sherman, Nancy Thompson, Anna Whilby.

Advent Lessons & Carols

A *Service of Advent Lessons and Carols* comes to us from the Anglican tradition but has seeped into the wider Christian traditions. Advent encompasses the four Sundays that fall before the Feast of the Nativity and a natural time of anticipation and urgency. *Advent Lessons and Carols* help us to focus on the quickening and longing of Advent, discouraging us from rushing



to a Christmas season that has its own special place and focus.

Please join us on Sunday, December 14th, at 5 pm

for an inspiring service of Advent Lesson and Carols at St. James Parish. We will have special instrumental music, choral singing, and Advent hymns to join in with as a congregation. The Lessons will be read by members of St. James. All are invited to join us, following the service, for a reception in the parish hall.

Christmas Decoration Fund

When we celebrate together during holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas, we are poignantly aware of those who are no longer with us. If you would like to make a donation for Christmas decorations in memory of loved ones, please complete the form below and return it to the parish office. Offerings may also be made in thanksgiving for our many blessings. **The deadline for donations is noon on Friday, December 19th.** Make checks payable to *St. James Parish* marked “Christmas Decorations.” Thank you.



Please print as you wish the donation listed in the Christmas Bulletins.

In memory of

OR In thanksgiving for

Given by

Writers’ reminder!

The December 6th deadline is fast approaching. If you have not yet sent your Lenten Devotional work to dianneantos45@gmail.com , it’s time! THANK YOU!



Yearend notes from the Parish Office

IRS reminder: as the end of 2025 rapidly approaches, many of us choose to make charitable gifts. In order for you to receive credit for a tax–deductible donation on your 2023 tax return, the donation must be received by St. James or postmarked on or before December 31, 2025. Donations made or mailed after that date, even if the check is dated 2025, cannot be included in your 2025 Contribution Statement issued in January 2026. Please contact the parish office if you have any questions about the status of your 2025 pledge.

If you pledged for 2026 and requested envelopes, the boxed envelope sets will be labeled and ready in the narthex for you to pick–up on December 14th. Please contact the parish office if you would like your envelopes mailed to your home.

The 2026 Altar Flower Chart is now in the narthex. Please sign–up for a Sunday when you would like to donate and dedicate the flowers for the day’s services. Note that there will be no altar flowers during the Lenten season.

Angel Tree for Friendship Service Center & Farmington Community Services

The mission of the Friendship Service Center is to provide friendship and direct service to the poor and needy of Central Connecticut, including the ownership and operation of housing for the poor. Farmington Community Services provides support to residents experiencing financial, physical and psychosocial hardships. The St. James Outreach Committee asks you to help provide Christmas gifts to approximately 20 individuals from the Friendship Service Center and 8-10 children from Farmington Community Services.

Angel ornaments representing each individual are hanging on a Christmas tree in the narthex (church entryway). Please select one or more ornaments, sign your name on the



corresponding sign-out chart, purchase an appropriate Christmas gift(s) for your chosen recipient, and return the gift *unwrapped* to the Parish Hall with the ornament attached as the gift tag. Each recipient was

asked to list several items that they are hoping for. It is *not* expected that all items on the tag will be donated. You can choose to fulfill all items (alone or partnered with friends at church) or just one or two items. This is a wonderful opportunity for St James to share joy with those in need in our community. **The deadline for gifts is Monday, December 15th.** If you have any questions, please see Dona Waugh or Linda Larkin. Thank you very much!



New Year's Day

Open House

Dianne Antos invites our church family to her home for
a New Year's Day Open House.

Stop by anytime on January 1st between 1:00-5:00 pm. Enjoy an array of appetizers and sweets with church family & friends, "old" and "new." You are asked only to bring non-perishable food items for the St. Mark's Pantry.

RSVP appreciated, but not necessary
860-677-1766

Address – 36 Burnt Hill Road, Farmington

Coffee Hour Ministry

Many thanks to those who have hosted our fellowship time following the 10:15 worship service. The 2026 signup is now on the parish hall ramp bulletin board, offering you the opportunity to host a Coffee Hour in the New Year! On your day, you will make regular & decaffeinated coffee and then clean up after Coffee Hour. You may signup for as many Sundays as you'd like – or just one! Signup to work alone or with a friend or two! Providing simple snacks (cookies, cupcakes, maybe a small gluten-free option) is nice, but not necessary to volunteer for this ministry.

Celebrating December birthdays!

William Rice
Blair Connolly
Kim Faubert
Elijah Howe
Anna Whilby



Jim Clifford
Gloria Flis
Kevin Ives
Jennifer Rosenthal

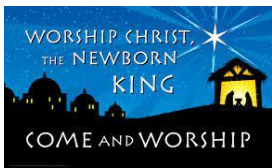
Christmas Worship Celebrations

The church, as always, will be splendid in greens, poinsettias, and candles, alight with the brilliance of Christmas. We gather to celebrate the birth of our Lord, the blessing of our Savior breaking into the world as a helpless babe, born to poor parents and into a dark world. Celebrate with us, at one (or more!) of our services, as we gaze at the eternal light that shines on us still, two thousand years on.

In the afternoon of Wednesday, the 24th, Christmas Eve, at 4 pm, we will hold a family service with the Nativity play and lots of engagement with our young people. We ask folks participating in the Nativity to arrive by 3 pm to get into costume and do a short run-through.



Our traditional late service will begin with our choir offering special music at 10 pm. The liturgy for Christmas Eve will begin at 10:30 pm, with our choir and Holy Eucharist. Our late service is one of warmth and beauty.



On Christmas Day, Thursday, at 11 am, we will hold one service as we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of Christ our Lord. Holy Eucharist will be celebrated, and Christmas hymns will be sung. Come as you are as casual is the order of the morning.

Save the date: The Feast of the Epiphany will be celebrated on **Tuesday evening, January 6th, 6 pm,** in the parish hall, with Holy Eucharist, the coming of the Three Wisemen, a "king's cake", special music, a fire in the fireplace, followed by pizza (including gluten free options) and fellowship. Invite your neighbors, bring your family!



Church School news

We continue to have a small, eager group of children with us each Sunday. It is joyful spending time with them as they receive a blessing and then hear Bible stories presented in a way that is meaningful to them.

This past month in church school we retold the stories of Jacob's son, Joseph, calling his family to Egypt to save them from starvation, Pharaoh's use of the Jewish people to do his bidding and perform difficult and strenuous tasks under harsh and cruel punishments and Moses' leading God's people out of Egypt to a town called Midian.

In December we will learn how these people forgot about the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They began worshipping false gods. In addition, God's people were persecuted by the Midianites. God found Gideon, a man still faithful to Him, and called him to once again save His people. As the story is told, God guided Gideon to select an army of 300 brave and trustworthy soldiers. They overcame the vast army of the Midianites with trumpets and torches.

This understanding that confrontations can be settled in nonviolent ways is an excellent introduction to the season of Advent, where we wait and prepare for the birth of The Prince of Peace. We will also have the joyful appearance of St. Nicholas on December 7th after the 10:15 service.

Thank you to the following teachers and assistants who lead church school this past month- Joyce Bettencourt, Evan Lapointe, Maggie Ososki, Tracey Roberts, Kathy Roach, Cindy Rosenthal, and Dena Tompkins. We are in need of teachers and assistants for the weeks of December 14th and 21st. The link to sign up and the lessons for those weeks can be found at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/174CEHyRktX5DXlt9_tMgqOspi4OSApb9jgK3Bg7XcBQ/edit?usp=sharing.



Winter reading recommendations

It has been a while since I have collected book titles from fellow parishioners to share, but as winter is approaching, it seemed to be time to look for some good winter reads. The most prolific reader I know is Marlene Skonieczny, and she has again offered a few titles along with Ed Preneta, and the Masons. I will add a few of my own suggestions at the end. This time most of the books are fiction and, one in particular, is appropriate for young adult readers.

Let's start with the book offered by Ed Preneta. It is *Twain's End* by Lynn Cullen and published by Gallery Books in 2015. This is the description that Ed sent me.

"Historic fiction with a Farmington connection. In 1902. Mark Twain hired Isabel V. Lyon as his private secretary. Lyon lived at "Oldgate" (148 Main Street, Farmington.) In 1909 he blessed her marriage to Ralph Ashcroft, his business manager. One month later he fired both and wrote a 429-page rant about both. Cullen reimagines the tangled relationship between Twain, Lyon, Ashcroft, Helen Keller and her teacher, Anne Sullivan Macy and Anne's husband, John, and Clara Clemens, Twain's daughter."

Marlene Skonieczny's contribution are *The Associate* by John Grisham, *The Woman in the Library* by Sulari Gentill, *Fits of Passion* by Anita Shreve, *Jackdaws* by Ken Follett, and *Keep Calm* by Mike Binder.

The John Grisham book, *The Associate*, was published in 2009. The main character is, according to the reviews I read, the typical Grisham character a good guy caught up in something not good, in this case industrial spying. It should be an enjoyable read, as Grisham's usually are.

The Woman in the Library is described as a "literary adventure that explores the complicated nature of friendship. While *Fits of Passion* looks at spousal abuse. The New Yorker reviewer said this about the book, "thrilling and finely written . . . a powerful portrait of truth, deception, and a troubled marriage."

Jackdaws by Ken Follett is a World War II historical novel. It is set in German occupied France close to the time of the allied invasion. An all-female team is created to sabotage strategic sites and naturally multiple complications result creating conditions that fill the story with suspense. The title is the codename for the squad. Descriptions of the book site its "unforgettable characters" and authentic details.

Another World War II novel, which I recently read and recommend is *The Forgotten Book Shop in Paris* by Daisy Wood. This novel weaves back and forth between the present time and World War II in France, but primarily Paris. It involves the finding of "lost" relatives and ending of marriages, but the outcome is good for all the characters including the book shop. The events move quickly, which makes it hard to put down.

Marlene's final recommendation is *Keep Calm* by Mike Binder. The plot is around a powerful conspiracy that includes a bombing at #10 Downing Street, the home of the British Prime Minister, which injures him. In a NY Times review the well-known author Lee Child wrote of this book that it is a "very superior high stakes thriller."



In addition to the recommendations from Marlene and Ed there was one from Skip and Linda Mason, *James* by Percival Everett. I asked a friend who read *James* when it was first published, and spoke highly of it, to give me a sentence or two about it and this is some of what he wrote. "In *James* you will discover a

moving story from a fresh perspective, compelling and interesting characters, and beautiful language. I think it is destined to become its own classic." Writing for *The Guardian*, Anthony Cummins stated: "*James* offers page-turning excitement but also off-kilter philosophical picaresque."

The final recommendations are my own. The first are two books by Louise Penny, a Canadian author, who has written twenty books, all murder mysteries with generally the same cast of characters. The mysteries are primarily set in and around Quebec, although one takes the

[continued on next page]

characters to Paris. The main character is a Chief of the unit in the province that investigates murders. The two most recent books are my recommendations: the titles are *Grey Wolf* and *Black Wolf*. They do not need to be read in order, nor does one have to read both, but they are connected. *Grey Wolf* is a more straightforward murder and mystery, while *Black Wolf* has a much more complex plot, which could be straight out of the current news on any given day.

Burning in My Bones by Winn Collier is the authorized biography of Eugene Peterson, the translator of *The Message* and well-known pastor and teacher. "Warm, fascinating, and uniquely inspirational, *A Burning in My Bones* is the authoritative and comprehensive story of this wise, humble, and influential man" is a quote from a review of the book on Amazon. The story of Peterson's life is informative and to some degree a spiritually uplifting. It is well written by someone who cared deeply about his subject.

The final recommendation is a book for almost any one 10 years of age or older. It is not a new book Its publication date is 1958, but the message is timely. The title is *The Witch at Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Spears. Like the book Ed Preneta recommended this story has a local setting, 17th century Wethersfield, which was a strict Puritan community. The story is about difference and coping with it and also allowing it to exist. The main character, a young girl, comes to Wethersfield from Barbados to live with relatives after the death of her grandfather. Much of the story is her learning to adjust to a different way of life. There are others in the community who either need to make similar adjustments or need to be understood. Into all of this adjusting the author manages to tell the circumstances surrounding the Charter Oak, an important moment in Connecticut history.

Happy reading, everyone.

Mimi Hostetter

Prayer Team

From time to time, the Prayer Team shares something of what they have found helpful, in the hope that you may find it helpful, too.

I recently agreed to write a meditation for the Lenten Devotional that members of St. James are putting together. My assignment is *The Parable of the Rich Young Man*, found in Mark's 10th chapter. In it, the rich young man asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. He tells Jesus that he has kept all the commandments of the Law since he was a boy. The account tells us that Jesus looked at him and loved him.

He lovingly broke through the young man's pride in his own self-effort, with a challenge that exposed the place in his heart that was in need of God's grace. He said, "Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." The passage goes on to say, "At this the young man's face fell, and he went away sad, because he had great wealth."

Money represented the pride he had in his self-effort and accomplishment in accumulating great wealth. He could not meet the one requirement Jesus gave – the first commandment, ironically –, to let nothing be more important than God. He could not give God his whole heart.

To be sure, not everyone is asked to give away all his money. But we all are prone to those heart-blocks, those barriers, those things that we rely on instead of God ... those things that take the place of the One who loved us first.

In prayer, we can ask God to show us those places in our hearts where He wants to reign. In faith, we can trust in His healing love and guidance.

St. James Prayer Team ... Praying together for you

Always available, always confidential

Pat Clark: jardinage45@yahoo.com,
860-965-4744

Carol Kirkwood: ckirkwood@snet.net,
860-793-2247

Donna Paye: djp2947@att.net,
860-673-0097

Minutes of Vestry Meeting of October 16, 2025

Present: Fr. George Roberts, EJ Ososki, Doug McDowell, Dave Tompkins, Ed Preneta, Molly Sherman, Kathleen Bullard

Meeting called to Order: 7:00 pm

Minutes of 9/18/25 Vestry Meeting: • Kathy made a motion to accept the minutes, Ed seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Ministry Reports:

Finance/Treasurer's Report—EJ Ososki

EJ reviewed the Finance Reports dated 9/30/2025 noting that our investment funds continue to do well. Molly made a motion to accept the report and Dave seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Capital Committee Report:

- Stephen has been working with a landscape architect on potential plans for the exterior of the building. Consensus made to continue conversations with this landscape architect with goal of having an actual plan done.
- Lighting designer consulted concerning improvements in the lighting in the Sanctuary.
- Recent roofing installer noted wind damage to the roof. Stephen will meet with the people involved to see if it is feasible for it to be covered by insurance.
- Elevator: awaiting structural plans •
- November 5, 2025, Meeting of Vestry with representative from Sacred Spaces, a firm that will give presentation on their services for leading a capital campaign.

Outreach—Kathy Bullard

- Next Outreach activity is Thanksgiving baskets for 10 families •
- St. Mark's Ministries *Mingle* set to begin weekly breakfasts on Nov 6, 2025. Recruiting of volunteers needs to ramp up in the next few weeks. •
- Meals for Neighbors, involving parishioners making meatloaves and possibly assisting at the dinners at faith Lutheran Church, Bristol, will be every other month.

For All Ages—Ed Preneta •

Ed reported an excellent turnout and good feedback about the event held Oct 4, 2025 at New Horizons

Old Business

Stewardship Update—Fr. George •

The Annual Appeal for Stewardship will kick off Sunday, 10/26/25. Vestry will help to enhance the coffee hour to make it more of a special occasion. Letters will be sent out in the next week, and postcards will be sent weekly. Stewardship will close 11/23/25 with another festive coffee hour

Follow up on Conversation with Leslie Pendleton—Fr. George •

Discussion on first Capital Campaign
Presentation tabled until full Vestry present

New Business

Discussion on Expenditures—Fr. George •

Vestry needs to determine what we are comfortable spending of the Church's funds without compromising our financial standing •
Conversation about developing a 10 year plan

Key holders—Fr. George • Awaiting warranty on new doors before we can make new keys. Plan to have Vestry members be on a rotation on Sundays to close the church

Closing • Dave motioned to adjourn, and it was seconded by Ed

Vestry meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen R. Bullard, Co-Warden

Emergency Closing Info

In the event of an emergency, most often weather-related, parish closing information will be available on WTIC-AM 1080 radio and on WFSB-3 and WVIT-30 television stations. Whenever possible, a notice (e-flash) will be sent and the website updated as well.



Capital projects

People of St. James, your Vestry has been, for the last several years, attending to some much-needed repairs and projects in the parish. Most of you are probably aware that earlier this year we began a drainage project on the patio area that necessitated, ultimately, the replacement of the old bluestone, damaged when moved for the necessary work, with a new patio. The drainage work was completed as well on both the upper part of the campus and the lower lawn, too. New doors, approved by your Vestry last year, replaced the original doors on the parish building that had become damaged and had gaps and openings. We now expect to enjoy greater energy efficiency and security. The work continues to complete the installation of the door closers – with handicap buttons – on the doors from the back parking lot. Your Vestry approved the replacement of all parish building windows (this does not include the sanctuary space) that could not be merely repaired and we should, again, enjoy much more efficiency and comfort. The window replacement process will take place in January of next year (2026). The front walk was also repaved last year and this spring all the way around the sacristy side of the building.

There are a few other projects your Vestry has been considering and, because there is so much to do, we formed a Capital Projects Committee to get bids/estimates on several additional projects, many that would be costly, if we decide to go forward. Easily the largest of these projects is a potential lift that would carry folks in wheelchairs, walkers, and folks who generally struggle with stairs, from the bottom level of our space to the church level and then the office level of the building. Currently, there are no bathrooms on the church level and, after exploring a possible restroom on that level, architects have determined other options should be explored. Improved lighting in the sanctuary, truly handicapped accessible bathrooms downstairs, and other projects are being vetted.

Due to the expansive and possibly expensive nature of projects being considered, your Vestry has been having conversations about a possible capital campaign to raise

additional resources to pay for these projects and/or other projects that the congregation may put forward. We understand that all this can feel overwhelming and more conversation is necessary before going forward with more expansive future projects or a capital campaign. Having input from parishioners is an important part of this process and your Vestry and I are hoping to hear from as many as possible. Anyone who has questions or concerns, please talk to a member of your Vestry or to me. We are in a beautiful, traditional, and aging building which needs work and care if it is to continue to serve as our base of spiritual life and outreach well into the future. Thank you, everyone, for all that you do to support the life of this place which is, first and foremost, the place we praise God.

Fr. George

Save the Date

On **Sunday, January 11th**, we will host Bishop Laura Ahrens at both the 8 am and 10:15 am services, with a Q and A with the bishop between the services, and time with the bishop after the 10:15 am service. Come, support the work of the Episcopal Church and blessing of our suffragan bishop.



St. James Parish

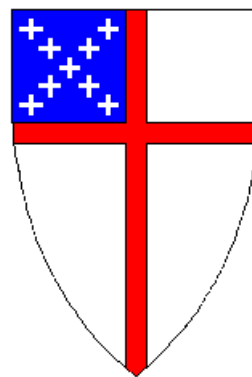
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MISSION STATEMENT:

*We welcome all to worship and nurture spiritual growth through faith, grace and reason.
We reach out to those in need as a caring community
and live Christ's teaching to love one another.*

STAFF

The Rev. George C. Roberts	<i>Rector</i>
Lee Febos	<i>Clergy Intern</i>
Blake Hansen	<i>Director of Music</i>
Susan Deming	<i>Parish Administrator</i>
Cheryl Rusczyk	<i>Admin., St. Mark's Ministries</i>
Ray Smith	<i>Sexton</i>
Kim McLaurin	<i>Nursery Supervisor</i>

OFFICERS

Kathy Bullard & Stephen Hard, *Wardens*
EJ Ososki, *Treasurer*
Jerry Hess, *Asst. Treasurer*
Bonnie Sudell, *Parish Clerk*

VESTRY

2026
Stephen Hard
Skip Mason
Robert Sudell

2027
Kathy Bullard
Doug McDowell
Molly Sherman

2028
Linda Mason
Ed Preneta
David Tompkins

St. James Parish

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

