

St. James Parish

Epistle



May 2021

Rector's Message

Come, Holy Spirit

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you do know Him, for He abides with you and will be in you... [John 14:16b -17]

The feast of Pentecost is one of the high holy days of the Episcopal year. Eastertide gives us cause to celebrate, as Christ enters the locked room of the disciple's fear – literally and spiritually – as he brings the gift of His continuing presence and makes a promise that He will be with them. The feast of the Ascension (May 13th) commemorates Christ's final departure, in visible form, and return to God the Father that, in Luke's Gospel, also holds a command that they return to Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit, the advocate of John's Gospel, comes upon them. Pentecost brings with it another appearance in yet another room, where the praying disciples receive the gift of the Holy Spirit that catapults them out of the shadows of their own fear and doubt and into the light of Christ's call on their lives. They see that they are to be witnesses in the world of who Christ is and what, in crucifixion and resurrection, God has done. Jesus' promise, at the end of Matthew 28, "I will be with you, even to the end of the age," comes to fruition at Pentecost. Christ keeps His promise and now, in the present Holy Spirit, God continues to move in the world which has been true since Creation of the world.



The Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity that we consider to be the activity of God in the world, the way the truth of Jesus is still communicated to us. When I feel particularly close to God, moved by the presence of God, or arrested by the experience of God in my own life, I generally attribute it to the Holy Spirit, God's Divine agent of blessing today and the continuing presence of Christ in the world. I remember vividly, on my sabbatical in England, walking out at low tide to a tiny outcrop (Cuthbert's Island) about 50 yards off the shore of Lindisfarne (Holy Island, near the Scottish border). There is a giant cross on this little atoll, so I picked my way through the stones, and stepped up onto the rocky promontory to get a better look. There were items, at the foot of this large Celtic cross, left behind by pilgrims – crosses, rosaries, icons, stones, prayer cards, and much more – that were now faded but carried with them a little essence of the person who placed it there. I felt the Holy Spirit powerfully in that moment, the faith of others who had come before me, and a connection to them and God, brokered by God's continued presence, the Holy

Spirit. We often find God's spirit in the people that we meet, even if only for a moment. God's kingdom, in this season of Pentecost, will most surely be revealed when we come together as one people, tied to God in His continuing, spiritual life among us.

In Christ,
Fr. George+

Warden's Corner

He has risen! Hallelujah! Eastertide is a time of hope, a time for joy, a time for jubilation.

Hope, joy, jubilation - all wondrous feelings that we greatly need right now. We all know that this has been an incredibly hard year for everyone. Some of these challenges have been communal, others have been very individual. However, I do not know anyone who has not suffered greatly in some way in 2020 and into these early months of 2021. But HOPE is an amazing word. It means a feeling of expectation and optimism. And that is the feeling I hold right now as summer is approaching, the warm weather is here, and the vaccine rollout continues at a breakneck speed. Hallelujah!

By the time this *Epistle* is published, I will be among the fully vaccinated and hope to be able to slowly emerge from this cocoon I have been in while staying safe at home. This emergence will be slow for some of us, but we can start to see people again, hug our loved ones, maybe even travel. Each of us has our own ideas of what we feel safe doing, but I hope that we all feel hopeful for the future. For what our post-COVID lives will look like, be like. For when we can all gather together again. Until then, I am thinking of you all. If you need anything, your St. James family is here for you so please reach out to Father George or any member of the Vestry. And remember, it is a time for HOPE! May the sun be shining where you are today.

Blessings,
Kim Pereira, Co-Warden

Church School update

Join us every Sunday for a few minutes of faith, fun and friendship.

We continue our Virtual Church School classes each Sunday. Kindergarten-5th grade meets from 10:40-11 am. 6th-12th grades meets from 11-11:20 am.

Elementary (K-5th) 10:40-11 am

Zoom info is sent out by email each week



Confirmation Corner

We will have our 7th and 8th VIRTUAL confirmation classes on Sunday, May 2nd and Sunday May 23rd from noon-2 pm. This month Confirmands will explore the history and contents of The Book of Common Prayer and the meaning of the sacraments in the Episcopal tradition. Later in the month they will explore the seasons of the church year and examine some of the materials used in Worship.



Friendly reminder to all confirmands that the April assignment is posted on the Google Classroom and is due on May 2nd. Confirmands should also be attending Church School virtual at least 2 times a month!

If you have any questions or need a copy of the Confirmation Expectations feel free to reach out at amy.sjyouthminister@gmail.com !

Youth Ministry Updates

May will be our last full month of Church School for this school year! Topics for the month of May include Jesus' Ascension into Heaven, Come, Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Paul Spreads the Good News and The City of God (The Book of Revelation).

Please remember there are separate links for Children's Church School and the Youth Church School. The following link is for YOUTH only at this time.

Middle + High School (6th-12th) 11-11:20 am-
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4640951232?pwd=SFpjRW9GdkxpM1JzQUJWZ0JGWEhaQT09>

Meeting ID: 464 095 1232

Passcode: 8EmEcb

- Amy Steele, Youth Minister

Your photo in print or on our website?

St. James Parish uses candid photos of various church activities on our website and in publications (like this *Epistle*). If you prefer that your photo NOT be displayed, please contact the parish office; we maintain a list of members whose likeness is not to be shared.

From the Deacon's bench

The call of a deacon: past and present.

You probably know that there are two kinds of deacons in the Episcopal Church. I am one of those vocational deacons who discerned a calling to the full and equal order of a *permanent* deacon. Father George was ordained as a *transitional* deacon and went on to become a priest in another ordination. This permanent/transitional distinction continues to confuse the faithful. We permanent deacons sometimes are thought to be stuck in ordination limbo and are asked when we will finally seek the upgrade to priest. However, the unique order of deacon has existed since the time of the apostles.

In the sixth chapter of Acts (*with some verses quoted below*), it seems the Apostles had found themselves in a predicament. They expected to be about their primary business of spreading the Gospel. Instead of being thrilled with being filled with the spirit, the congregation started grumbling about empty stomachs. "*The Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food.*" What was that about?

In compliance with the law of Moses to help the poor, the fatherless, and the widow, charitable giving was widespread in first-century Jewish society. Some of the first Christians in Jerusalem were Jews who had embraced Hellenistic culture, and some were Jews who remained closer to Hebraic customs. A cultural divide had developed in the early church. The Hellenists spoke Greek as their language of choice. If the Hebrews knew Greek, they preferred not to use it. The Hellenists may have conformed to Greek habits in dress, dining, and doing business. As a result of the linguistic and cultural divide, the two groups were probably segregated to some extent during times of fellowship. Thus, it was not long before the two groups became divided by outspoken animosity. The Hellenists started to complain that the daily sharing of food with the poor was neglecting their widows.

Who is going to serve the physical needs of the congregation? The Apostles decide "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables". The increasing demands of the growing community had outpaced the ability of the Apostles to oversee the distribution of goods. They

recognized their inability to preach and do outreach at the same time. The time had arrived to redefine the job description of an apostle. The Twelve recognized the importance of maintaining the community's spiritual and physical health. A staff of competent people must be selected to wait on tables and tend to the welfare of the believers most in need. Once settled, the outreach ministry of the church can continue to flourish.

Seven men with Greek sounding names were selected to perform this ministry of a servant (Greek: *diakonos*), leading to them being called deacons. With unity restored through careful attention to the welfare of all believers, the community's outreach ministry flourished, and its membership rolls increased, especially among those who felt marginalized. Since the time of the Apostles, therefore, it has been the special role of the deacon "to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick and the lonely (BCP p. 543)." This servant ministry is reflected in the special stole worn by deacons. The stole appears to have evolved from a napkin worn to cleanse the face and hands. When serving tables, deacons began to tie their stoles to the side. Deacons now engage in all kinds of servant ministry, but food kitchens continue to be a good location to spot a member of this order.

My call to the ministry of a deacon came during the Ministry Exploration and Education Program ably administered by St. James' own Jane Inrig. Through Jane's program, many deacons, priests, and even a bishop (The Right Rev. Audrey Scanlan) began to understand that God's call to ministry can only be answered by "here am I; send me."

Doug Engwall, Deacon



Bible Study: the prophet Jeremiah

Adult Formation continues with Bible Study in May. Sundays at 11:15 am we are exploring the Book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah is a departure, our first foray in our currently constructed Bible Study, to venture into the Old Testament and/or a book of a major prophet. Jeremiah is believed to have been in prophetic ministry from 627 BCE and ending sometime at the outset of the Babylonian exile in or around 586 BCE. Jeremiah's active years cover a stunning 40 years beginning with the last faithful king, Josiah, and ending with the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians.

A new Bible study will begin after Memorial Day. All are welcome! Please let Fr. George know what Book/Letter in the Bible you would like to take on next.

Prayer Team

From time to time, the Prayer Team shares something of what has been helpful to us, in the hope you might find it helpful too. This particular one speaks to "silent" prayer ... the kind where words fail, or are not enough; the kind composed of images, housed in our memories, or given by the Spirit.

A Prayer

Lord God, for the silent prayers deep in our hearts that have no words but are simply images held out to you of those we love and those we miss; the suffering, the sick, the lonely, and the lost, Hear our prayer, the offering of our hearts, and bless the ones we lay before you now. Amen

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

Always available, always confidential

Pat Clark
Carol Kirkwood
Donna Paye

Ascension & Pentecost

Ascension is a moveable feast that is always held on the Thursday that falls 10 days before Pentecost Sunday. Ascension marks, at the end of Luke's Gospel and at the beginning of Acts, Christ's final words to His disciples, after His resurrection, as He physically leaves them and soars heavenward. Christ is "now seated at the right hand of God the Father" and lives on with us through the indwelling agency and action of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has completed the work of salvation and now leaves us with "an Advocate" who will bless us, intercede with God for us, and energize the early Christian movement, and Christians ever since.



Pentecost is Greek for the Jewish Festival of Weeks, taking place 50 days after Passover. Pentecost means "50" and we call the period between Easter and our Feast of Pentecost the Great Fifty Days. Pentecost, in the Christian Tradition, commemorates the promised coming of the Holy Spirit upon the praying disciples, in Jerusalem, during the Festival of Weeks. Tongues of fire marked the Holy Spirit's presence on all in the room as the disciples were praying, generally believed to be a house but, according to some, may have been in the Temple itself. The Apostle Peter declares the promised coming of God and invited the people from every land and tribe to understand that God in Christ was Lord.

In England, Pentecost is still often referred to as Whitsunday (or "White Sunday"). Pentecost generally marks the end of the Easter season and is one of the major feast days of the year, commemorating the entry of Christ's promised Advocate that would come and strengthen the faithful, after His Ascension into heaven. Pentecost is a day of baptism, the renewal of baptismal promises, and denotes God's continuing action among us.

Thy Kingdom Come

To commemorate the holiness of Pentecost, we are inviting everyone to participate in the *Thy Kingdom Come* time of prayer again this year. *Thy Kingdom Come* is an initiative begun in the U.K. about five years ago and aims to spread the Good News of Christ's coming and God's grace and mercy poured out for us. Please go to <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/> for resources and more information about the program. But the cornerstone of *Thy Kingdom Come* is for each person who wishes to make a pledge to pray for five people, people who you know or know of, for whom you will pray from Ascension Day (May 13th) to Pentecost (May 23rd). Your prayer is focused on your five people that they may know and receive the knowledge, awareness, and love of Jesus Christ in their lives. The Our Father or Lord's Prayer is used in the resource material and folks are encouraged to use it to pray for people. We pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven ...". Our prayer is that God will give us the strength, purpose, and patience to reach out to the needy, the neglected, the poor, and those who do not have a sense of what Christ can do in their lives as yet.

We will hold a Vigil, on the eve before Pentecost, beginning at 5 pm, inviting people to pray continuously (as a community) from 5 pm (Saturday, May 22nd) to 6 am (Sunday, May 23rd, Pentecost). Communal prayer bonds us together and lifts us. You will have the option of coming to the church for a slot that you sign up for to pray during the Vigil to Prayer (people can take as many slots as they wish) or you can come to our Virtual Prayer Room and pray there. More to come on all of this. God bless you this Eastertide and Pentecost!!



Novena for Pentecost

St. James will support your efforts to prayerfully enter into the season of Thy Kingdom Come with two new resources this year. One is a novena cycle of prayer that you can acquire online. We will include the link to the novena in our e-flashes on May 6th and 13th and in our bulletin announcements on May 2nd and 9th. A novena (meaning 9) is a traditional way to pray for a specific intention leading up to a major feast day or season (there are novenas leading up to Christmas, Easter, and for focus on certain issues). The link provided will give you instructions about how a novena is prayed and prayers for Ascension Day on the 13th of May and for Pentecost on May 23rd, but the novena itself will be prayed on the nine days in between. All you will need is provided in the link below. Please take a look and see if praying a novena might offer a new way for you to prayerfully celebrate and focus on the holy days of Ascension and one of the major feast days of the church, Pentecost.

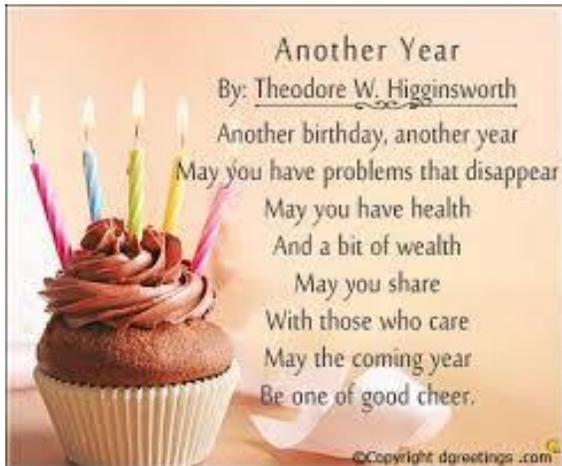
https://www.thykingdomcome.global/sites/default/files/2021-03/RC1053_TKC_Novena2021_V5-WEB.pdf

Prayer Journals

Journaling is a way that some people focus on their prayer life, writing down questions about faith, moments of awareness, thoughts about prayer or family life. During the season between Ascension and Pentecost, we invite you to use a prayer journal, which we've made available in the narthex, to write down what is happening in your prayer life, as a way to go deeper into that spiritual prayer life. Each day (eleven, including Ascension and Pentecost) has a short scripture passage, brief reflection, and a little prayer for you to use as a central part of your prayer life during that time. A deeper spiritual life is possible for anyone who wishes to have one and sometimes a journal can aid us in finding a disciplined life of prayer that may have eluded us in the past. Each reflection has ample room for writing down thoughts, observations, things you notice that may be new and exciting, and anything else that comes up for you.

Celebrating May birthdays!

Bob Stanek	Elizabeth Hillemeir
Nancy Thompson	Chris Newton
Lindsay Hillemeir	Gisli Ingimarsson
Spencer Rice	Mary Lansing
Gina Pines	Betsy Bailey
Chloe Roberts	Gunni Propiescus
George Cadigan	Carol Kirkwood
John McBride	MJ Greaves
Mia Stein	Brian Bullard
Sarah Newton	Sonia Mason
EJ Ososki	Tom Mason
Evan Wahl	Jake Lapointe
Vanessa Reynolds	Olivia Lathrop
Travis Church	Victoria Lathrop
Mary Roberts	Jane Johansen
Sally Moss	J. D. Stanek
John Newton	Madeleine Sullivan
Libby Chambers	



Minutes of the Vestry of St. James: March 18, 2021

Present via Zoom: Fr. George Roberts, Carol Kirkwood, EJ Ososki, Kim Pereira, Jim Wilkie, Mimi Hostetter, Robyn Shover, Tom Nelson, Foster White, Kimberly Faubert, Anna Whilby
Absent: Maina Rice

Meeting called to order 7:04 pm

Minutes of February 18, 2021 Vestry Meeting

Foster moved to accept the minutes. Kim P. seconded. Unanimous vote to accept the minutes.

Ministry Reports

Finance/Treasurer's report – February 2021

Foster moved to accept the report. Robyn seconded.

- Technology grant money \$1760 was received from Episcopal Church in CT to be used for tech equipment needed to telecast live on social media.
- EJ noted the following:
 - Rental money surpassed what was planned. (Miss Porter's is using space during COVID).
 - Pledge income \$6K ahead as of now
 - Expenses used for Professional Education (Fr George uses for mandated professional development)
- Discussion of pledging in general - questions pertaining to how pledging budgeted / online payments can be made / patterns of when pledges received varies include weekly-monthly-quarterly-yearly.

Unanimous vote to accept the financial report.

St James Sign Update

- Sign has been approved through Town of Farmington Planning and Zoning and can now proceed forward. Will take 6 weeks for the sign to be made and should be installed during month of May. Anonymous donor has committed to cover the entire cost.

Capital Campaign Project Feasibility Update

- Looking at 2 options of elevator
 - LULA (limited use limited application) operates similar to regular elevator; no assistance needed to operate - has State regulations; more expensive.
 - Wheelchair Lift –assistance needed to operate; less regulated & less expensive.
- Location stair area leading from church to Parish hall and library.

- Would need electricians and carpenters to install.
- April or May Vestry meeting should have completed feasibility study.

Stewardship Project Resource

- Episcopal Church Network for Stewardship offering an online 6 session online training. Small group from St James interested in taking. Cost 5 people @ \$555 for entire course. Tailors program for your specific congregation. Grant has been applied for to supplement fee – budget able to cover rest. Package also includes some follow up by consultants.

Motion made by Foster to move forward with this training. Mimi seconded. Unanimous vote to proceed with Stewardship Project Resource training.

New Business

Bank Change

- St James banking accounts currently with People's United Bank however they will not waive any service fees.
- EJ has checked with Webster Bank and they will meet our needs without charging fees.

Motion made by Kim P. to move banking to Webster Bank ASAP. Seconded by Anna. Unanimous vote to proceed in changing over to Webster Bank EJ will follow through to change over accounts.

Review of Ministry Teams

Each Vestry member to choose a few areas to be the liaison to, so that those involved in the ministry have a connection to Vestry.

- Parish Life – Robyn
- Christian Formation – Kim P. / Carol
- Mission and Outreach -
- Finance – Anna / Kim P.
- Building and Grounds -
- Parish Development – Kim F.
- Ministries in Worship – Mimi / Anna

Other vestry members deciding their preference areas. Revision may be needed to balance. Should any be removed or new areas to consider adding, possibly Discipleship / Prayer Team.

Old Business

Evangelism

Conversation on *What do we do well?*

- Church school

- Engagement of youth – pageant / craft bags / worship. Youth included in all aspects of worship and events – Youth Sundays
- Meeting spiritual needs of parish worship – in person church / virtual online worship
- Excellent Music program
- Outreach - Friendship Center / Gift giving at Christmas / Thanksgiving baskets
- Bible Study
- Communication – *Epistle* / Weekly E-Flash
- Ministries with other churches
- Welcoming new people
- Rector is available to parishioners.
- Rector very engaged and adds to the church.
- Church ALWAYS OPEN, never locked 24/7
- Services went online once church was closed due to COVID and reopened resuming in-person services as soon as possible with safeguards in place.
- Pastoral care check ins
- Caring of each other's needs
- Prayer Team

For next meeting think about vision of

Who are we?

Who do we wish to be as a parish?

Who is missing? (Age groups/demographics that other parishes may not focus on)

How do we reach out more completely to the Farmington Valley?

Rector's and Warden's Thoughts

- Under consideration whether to keep Summer services at 9:30 am or change to 9 am – TBD.
- Weather permitting will hold Pentecost service outside on May 23rd. Will also hold more services outside when weather is nice.
- Hoping in the Fall to go back to 2 services (8 am and 10:15 am)

Mimi moved to adjourn. Foster seconded.

Unanimous vote to adjourn.

We closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Carol

Carol Kirkwood, *Clerk*

St. James Parish

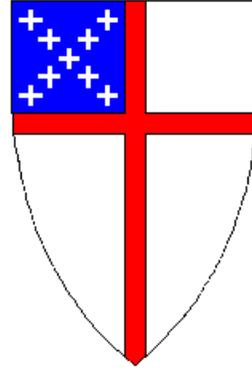
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Website: www.stjamesfarmington.org



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	Rector
The Rev. Doug Engwall	Deacon
Amelia (Amy) Steele	Youth Minister
Blake Hansen	Director of Music
Susan Deming	Parish Administrator
Kelly Nauss	Sexton
Laura Vacca	Nursery Supervisor

OFFICERS

Kim Pereira & Jim Wilkie, Wardens
EJ Ososki, Treasurer
Jerry Hess, Asst. Treasurer
Carol Kirkwood, Parish Clerk

VESTRY

2021
Mimi Hostetter
Kim Pereira
Robyn Shover

2022
Thomas Nelson
Foster White
James Wilkie

2023
Kim Faubert
Maina Rice
Anna Whilby

St. James Parish

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

