

St. James Parish

Epistle



May 2022

Rector's Message

Compassionate God, as you know each star you have created, so you know the secrets of every heart; in your loving mercy bring to your table all who are fearful and broken, all who are wounded and needy, that our hungers may be satisfied in the city of your peace; through Christ who is our peace.

Morning Office, Book of Common Prayer,
Church of England

The Lord is Risen! The Lord is Risen indeed!!! Yes, we are firmly and comfortably ensconced in Eastertide season! After a grueling journey through the Lenten wilderness, we finally embrace the energy and vitality of the Easter season, the story of Resurrection, and a transformed, new life. Yet, many are not feeling terribly festive. Loss and confusion can and do continue to niggle at us, poking us in the ribs with the reality that all is not right with the world and our lives, regardless of the Resurrection. If Christ is raised and death is overturned by God's inbreaking into the world, then why does the world seem so oblivious to it? Why are so many so mean to each other? Why do babies still die and our older loved ones suffer with cancer, dementia, and so many other maladies that God – in His good mercy – has not decided to eradicate? What is the use of Christ's redemptive blessing if we don't experience that blessing in our lives?

Good questions, yes? I have been asked – or heard others ask – the kind of questions posed above many, many times. We might say there is no answer and we would, in one sense, be right. There is no easing of the world's troubles, human

challenges, or individual tragedy because of the Resurrection ... at least that is partly true. Christ's Resurrection blasted the doors of death forever, yes. Christ's resurrection impacts the living, however, only when we are willing to live into its true reality. Christ's Resurrection means that every bit of human suffering can be transformed, that all life is made new. But we cannot yet see what God sees; sometimes we are called to patience amidst suffering and called to keep our eyes and spirits focused on God. The blessing of God's new life in Christ may be working on the margins and fringes of tragedy. The war in Ukraine, for instance, has been so very sad in epic proportions, displacing more than 4 million people and depriving millions upon millions more of any sense of normalcy in their lives. We do not know how many have been killed and we also struggle to measure the emotional and spiritual toll that killing others, even if for survival or the state, has on folks.



Yet, even with all the horror that is Ukraine right now, we still see signs of Resurrection. Thousands of volunteers have gone to Poland, Romania, and even western Ukraine to make meals, provide shelter and medical care, and simply to be present to the millions of refugees the war has created.

Nearly two hundred religious houses in Poland have assisted with food, clothing, and shelter and untold numbers of families have opened their homes across Europe to strangers from Ukraine, people who are lost. The cruelty and the difficulty of life – and it doesn't take something as terrible

[article continued on next page]

[Rector's Message continued]

as war – can cause us to ask, “why does God let these things happen?” Most tragedy in the world, lest we forget, has a human origin and, additionally, the God who gave us freewill also does not intervene to cure every illness or to heal every broken heart. We do not know why God doesn't make everything alright but, if God did, what kind of world would we live in? What would there be for us to do? God gave His “only Son that we might not perish but have everlasting life.” God holds us for eternity; that is His promise to us, the Easter Covenant. If we trust in God's promise, then we will begin to see the possibility of the Resurrection in this life, as God seeks to redeem even the most tragic, painful realities. We are Christ's Light in the world and we have a God-given opportunity to shine that light even into the darkest places.

In Christ,
Fr. George+

Garden Clean Up Day, Saturday, June 4th

Our church gardens are looking pretty good this year after the huge clean up we did last Spring. Yet gardens need periodic attention to keep them weed free and growing well. Our clean up day this year will involve removing leaves and other debris from all the gardens, edging, weeding, and pruning where necessary. We would like to freshen up the memorial gardens (the one under the large ash tree and the one on the hillside), the church wall garden, the church sign garden, the garden beds along the main entry sidewalk. We would love to have families join us. There will be work for all ages. Many hands make light



work. Please bring gardening gloves and any garden tools you may have available.

Jim Wilkie, Co Warden
Joyce Bettencourt, St. Francis Guild

Warden's Corner

It is so nice to start seeing the warmer weather, things opening up all over as fears of the Covid virus diminish. Attendance at church has been improving every week. It is wonderful to watch our parishioners chatting with each other, even hugging before and after service. Outdoor services are just around the corner.

In the future we will be adding a monthly article called Vestry Corner as well as or instead of the Warden's Corner. This will give members of the Vestry an opportunity to share their experiences hopes as Vestry members and active members of the St. James Community.

The time has come to re-activate our missions, committees, and guilds. Many have been silent over the last two years due to CDC guidelines and restrictions. The importance of these committees cannot be underestimated. Can you imagine what our budget would look like without the hard work of the Stewardship Committee? I sure miss Coffee Hour after the morning service, and the monthly St. Andrew's Guild Breakfast.

Every month or possibly on a weekly basis in an e-flash we are going to take time to highlight at least one committee. Please take time to consider joining one. If you are currently the leader or chair of a committee and want to get your group up and running again, feel free to send a write up with brief bio to me, Kim Faubert, my Co Warden, or Fr. George for distribution.

This month we highlight the St. Francis Guild. During the past couple years due to Covid restrictions, work was organized and run primarily by Joyce Bettencourt and me, AKA the Gardening Committee. The Gardening Committee is the St. Francis Guild and will be called that going forward. We could use all the help we can get! The more hands we have, the less any one person has to do. Once we start having regular meetings, maybe quarterly, we can elect new leaders. Co-Chairs seem to work pretty well, sharing the responsibility and allowing for flexible schedules. We need new blood, we need leaders.

Please as you see a committee at work in the church and community that piques your interest, join in and help out

Peace,
Jim Wilkie, Vestry Co-Warden



Church School

This Church School year is coming to a close. We spent a lot of time with the children trying to understand how God has been faithful to His people throughout the generations from Adam up to and including now and will be for generations to come. We have learned about how Jesus wants us to act towards others.

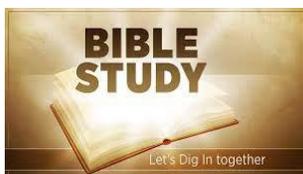
We will spend this last month trying to more fully understand how we are responsible to do God's work. We are His hands, His eyes, His fee, and His voice. Luke 12:48 tells us that "To whom much is given, much will be expected". We will be making cards for the residents at Amberwoods, doing good and kind deeds to earn money to send to a charity of their choosing, and sharing toys and books with those less fortunate children at the Friendship Service Center in New Britain.

St. Francis Guild

There has been some interest in a return of the St. Francis Guild. In the past, this group of parishioners organized to provide ongoing attention to the gardens after the big Spring cleanup. Teams sign up for one day a month (usually a Saturday morning) where they do spot weeding, watering and minor pruning as necessary. If interested as individuals or as families, please contact Jim Wilkie. There will be suggestions of what to look for on the team's selected day. It's a fun way to serve our parish community and enjoy a return to nature.

Bible Study continues

The Bible study group is immersed in a 12-week exploration of the Book of Genesis. Study guides by Mitchell Kim are available in the office. \$12 is asked for your copy, simply reach out to Fr. George. As always, all are welcome! Note: we continue to use Zoom with Meeting ID: 810 0898 0546 and Passcode: 062552 to join us Sundays at noon.



Prayer Team

From time to time, the Prayer Team shares something of what has been helpful to us, in the hope that you may find it helpful, too. I think we all have our favorite prayers, the ones that speak what is in our heart, or lift us to an awareness that might elude us otherwise. These are spoken prayers, and our wonderful Book of Common Prayer is rightfully renowned for containing so many. But there is also a kind of prayer, where we do not speak, but rather silently trust and listen. We let God take the lead.



Meeting God in prayer

Quiet, contemplative prayer happens when we are still and open ourselves to Christ's Spirit working secretly within us, when we heed the psalmist's plea: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalms 46:10). These are times when we trustingly sink into God's formless hands for cleansing, illumination, and communion.

- Tilden Edwards

Prayer is not primarily saying words or thinking thoughts. It is, rather, a stance. It's a way of living in the Presence, living in awareness of the Presence, and even of enjoying the Presence.

- Fr. Richard Rohr

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

Always available, always confidential

Pat Clark
Carol Kirkwood
Donna Paye

From the Deacon's Bench

Imagining the childhood of Jesus

What was Jesus like as a child? Was he a good student? Did he help out in his father's workshop? When did he begin to understand his special gifts? What did Joseph and Mary tell him about his birth? The gospels aren't much help in answering these questions. In fact, the Gospels tell us precious little about the childhood of Jesus. We get the story of his birth and infancy, including the rite of circumcision. Luke also tells us of a visit to the Jerusalem Temple when Jesus was 12, the age when a boy begins the transition to adulthood. Mary and Joseph lose track of their son, only to find him in the Temple talking with the elders. All who hear Jesus are amazed at his understanding. Then the story falls silent until the adult Jesus comes to John to be baptized. In this Deacon's Bench, I'd like to share with you a fictional account of those missing years.

This vision of the Child Jesus emerges in *'Shua*, a short book by William Burke. At a deacon retreat some years ago, I witnessed this book come to life in a dramatic reading. The story is told from the perspective of a childhood friend of Jesus. In this book Jesus is known by Joshua, his Hebrew name, and his friend calls him 'Shua for short.

Shua does not work miracles as in other fictional accounts but does have a special gift, one of compassion for others. He brings food to a woman who has been shunned by the rest of the village. When a friend is crucified for a crime he didn't commit, Shua risks his own life to bring water to the suffering boy. No one in Nazareth understand this boy who violates custom and religious laws to help those in need. Rather than a brilliant scholar, Shua cannot seem to get out a sentence without stammering. His teachers rebuke Shua for his peculiar ways and his strange speech patterns. He eventually leaves the village to spend some time in the wilderness with a prophet named John. 'Shua returns to the village transformed by this experience, announcing, in the clear voice, the coming kingdom of God. Soon 'Shua is off again preaching this new vision of the kingdom. His childhood friend wonders "Where ya going, 'Shua?"



Of course, this vision of Jesus is a work of fiction. In that sense, it does not tell the "gospel truth". But I can imagine this Jesus growing up to say these words from John's Gospel. "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

Would this Jesus seek those on the fringes of society, associating with tax collectors and prostitutes?

Would this Jesus constantly be accused of breaking religious laws and customs to heal and comfort those in need?

Would this Jesus be willing to do a new thing to bring people closer to his Father?

Would this Jesus have disciples called to form a radical new kind of relationship with those considered outside the fold?

From my perspective, this Jesus is calling us to let go of the comfortable and seek a greater experience of life in this world and life in Christ. By exercising our strengths, exploring our options, express our thanks for all things, dreaming new dreams, enlisting the support from our friends, and being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Let us look for God to do new things in this parish and in our own lives as well.

Doug Engwall, Deacon

Ascension & Pentecost

The Feast of the Ascension is always observed, in the Anglo-Episcopal tradition, 10 days before Pentecost (always falling on a Thursday). May 26 is our day of Ascension observance this year and we once again plan to have a traditional Choral Evensong around our celebrations. The Feast of the Ascension of our Lord is one of the oldest feast days in our church calendar, already established and mentioned in writings dating back by the 4th century. The Ascension of Jesus commemorates the end of Christ's ministry on earth, as the 40 days of post-Resurrection appearances come to an end and Christ ascends into heaven in view of the 11 remaining disciples and maybe others. Ascension sends the disciples back into Jerusalem to await the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.



Choral Evensong dates back to the Middle Ages and most likely to Saxon times, as Old English speakers translated the Latin word *vesperas* as *æfensang*. Evensong is most nearly connected to the Anglican (Church of England and its offshoots) practice of singing most or all of the Evening Office. Evensong relies heavily on singing – by either a member of the clergy or a cantor – the Psalms and canticles, such as the Song of Simeon. St. James will commemorate Ascension Day with prayers and choral singing of much of the service which will begin at 7 p.m., followed by a reception.

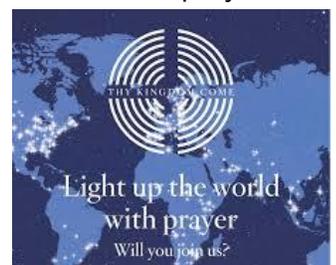
Ascension will also usher in our fifth year of participating in *Thy Kingdom Come* (TKC). TKC had its beginning in the Church of England about six years ago, with the idea of focusing the time between Ascension and Pentecost (10 days) on praying for five people in one's life who have not yet asked Jesus to come into their lives. TKC utilizes the praying of the Lord's Prayer as we pray for the people on our list of five people. TKC has wonderful resources that we will use again this year, which includes a Prayer Journal (for any interested), a novena (prayed nine days leading up to Pentecost), and a website. We will invite folks to sign up for a Vigil the night of Ascension which, like the Vigil for Maundy Thursday, can be done at the church or from home. More to come about all the above.

Thy Kingdom Come

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. What started in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer.

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, to see the *Light of the World* map, 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 26th) to Pentecost (June 5th). 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 Ascension, beginning at 5 pm, inviting people to pray continuously (as a community) from 5 pm (Wednesday, May 25th) to 6 am (Thursday, May 26th, 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 a link to the novena in our e-flashes on May 12th and 19th and in our bulletin announcements on May 15th and 22nd. Please contact the parish office if you would like a printed copy mailed to you. 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 26th of May and for Pentecost on June 5th, but the novena itself will be prayed on the nine days in between. 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.



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. Please contact the parish office if you would like a printed Prayer Journal mailed to you.

Conversations on World Religions & Faith

On Tuesday, May 17th, at 6:30 pm, we will be blessed to host Imam Khalil Abdullah for a dialogue via Zoom. Imam Khalil will share with us his journey to Islam (he grew up in a Christian context in Texas), what it means to be Muslim in his current context (as a university chaplain), and what his experience has been, and those of his Muslim students, during a global pandemic. Imam Khalil has a keen desire to be in – and to promote – dialogue across faiths, cultures, and backgrounds.

Imam Khalil is the Assistant Dean for Muslim Life in the Office of Religious Life at Princeton University. He works closely with students on campus to support their diverse cultural and spiritual identities while helping to strengthen their religious literacy and mutual respect for others. In addition, Imam Khalil offers pastoral care to students and regularly hosts campus dialogues on various topics related to Islam and spirituality, identity, and meaning.

Professionally, he has held various leadership and management roles, taught in public and private schools, and organized teacher and chaplaincy trainings. He has been active in interfaith dialogue, minority male mentoring and various social justice initiatives. His academic interests include religious pluralism, Islamic ethics and spirituality, and history of Islam in America, with a focus on black Muslim experiences.



Faith & Fries is back!

We now gather on the 4th Tuesday of every month at **Taprock Beer Bar and Refuge** at 81 South Main Street in Unionville. **We next convene on Tuesday, May 24th, from 7–8:30 pm.** You can come for dinner, have a drink or snack, whatever is comfortable for you. We will be exploring what do we believe? What tests our belief? We invite



all to come as they are able and please, feel free to invite a friend, neighbor, or co-worker to the conversation! Call the church with questions or more information on *Faith & Fries!*

Minutes of the Vestry of St. James: March 17, 2022

Present via Zoom: Fr. George Roberts, EJ Ososki, Carol Kirkwood, Jim Wilkie, Kim Faubert, Tom Nelson, Foster White, Maina Rice, Anna Whilby, Kathy Bullard, Bob Sudell, Bonnie Sudell.

Absent: none

Meeting called to order 7:02pm

Minutes of February 17, 2022, Vestry Meeting

Bonnie moved to accept the minutes. Seconded by Jim. Unanimous vote to accept the minutes.

Ministry Reports

Finance/Treasurer's report – February 2022

Summary of Report via EJ Ososki

- Pledges are slightly behind but not enough to be concerned about in February.
- There are several expenses running above budget including heating oil and snow removal. Neither of these is surprising nor do we have much control over these items.
- Overall, we are \$7K over our February budget. As it is early in the budget year, no significant concerns currently.

Motion made by Bob to accept the February Financial report as presented. Seconded by Kim F.

Discussion – Kathy asked for clarification of expenses and predicted budget. The gap is more pronounced in the earlier months. Fr George gave example that in a given month he may have professional education expenses and then no further expenses for the rest of the year, but expenses are budgeted in monthly increments. Expenses cannot always be controlled. Tom asked about clarification of how we chose oil company – how is decision made. Quinoco Oil has been used for a long time. Quinoco has different plans and has been exceptionally good to come out at any time to provide service. Unanimous vote to accept the financial report.

Outreach

- Nearly \$600 was raised for outreach ministry through the chili fundraiser held on Shrove Tuesday. Many thanks to all who participated by coordinating the event, making chili, helping in the kitchen, serving, and/or purchasing chili. Those working in the kitchen that evening reported having a wonderful time and the chili was delicious.

New Business

Coffee Hour on Easter Sunday and beyond – restarting / reconnecting

- We will have a sheet cake honoring those taking 1st Communion
- Easter Egg Hunt will happen outside
- Robin Shover volunteered to make coffee for each Sunday and will look for volunteers to help when she is away. We would ask anyone to bring goodies such as pastries, fruit, cookies etc. Gluten-free items also welcome.
- We can open windows and outside door in Parish Hall; when warmer we can move outside to the patio for Lemonade and Iced Tea along with cookies.

Vestry Papers - Discussion

- Inviting spirit – lead by example, welcoming attitude
- Vestry board members are also Spiritual Leaders
- Evangelism to welcome people into loving relationship with God
- Go out to see what's in your neighborhood – What does it look like? What does it sound like? What strikes you?
- What is our comfort level in talking to others about faith / faith community?
- Be curious, empower ourselves and each other with gentle conversation
- Offer Jesus to someone; all about sharing
- Easier to converse with familiar people reach out to those you may not know well or not know at all
- Fr George was in touch with all parishioners one way or another through COVID – most would be happy to hear from other parishioners also
- Bringing people back since the COVID pandemic – connecting with those unable to get to church / or be online / or just have not been around – Fr George to give us names of people unable to be at church we can see about connecting with
- If COVID a concern and more precautions needed, we can converse in small groups – on the phone etc. Other ideas that came up – have kids make cards as warm up while they wait for all to settle in at church school on Sunday – Give invites to neighbors when events are held – hold a St James open house.

*Communion – different ways we could distribute
– in the Sundays after Easter*

- Individual stainless-steel wine cups could be used and reused after being washed/sterilized
- Some concerns of cost and environment issues with using the plastic cups
- Look at getting Chalicists back involved – hand individual cup to communicant
- Go to Main aisle and eventually progress back to rail as it is safe to do

Vestry back to in person meetings

- Have some meetings in person – important to get together

Old Business

Bibles replacing inserts

- There are sample Bibles for Vestry and parishioners to check out in the Narthex to see what font is easiest and provide feedback to Fr. George or Vestry members.
- To discuss at next meeting ordering approximately 100 Bibles to provide 2 Bibles in each rack (4 Bibles per pew). Consider doing book plate acknowledgement of donors and dedications

Rector's and Warden's Thoughts

- June 5th Pentecost - retired ECCT Bishop Suffragan Jim Curry will be with us – Swords to Plowshares Ministry Network

Bob made a motion to adjourn. Kim seconded.
Unanimous vote to adjourn.
Adjourned at 9:07pm

Respectfully Submitted

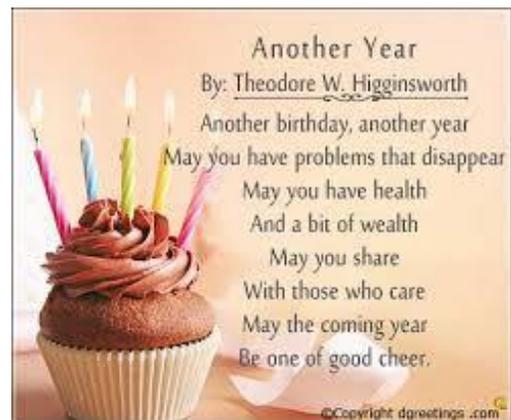
Carol

Carol Kirkwood, Clerk

Celebrating May Birthdays!

Bob Stanek
Nancy Thompson
Lindsay Hillemeir
Spencer Rice
Gina Pines
Chloe Roberts
George Cadigan
John McBride
Mia Stein
Sarah Newton
EJ Ososki
Evan Wahl
Vanessa Reynolds
Mary Roberts
Sally Moss
John Newton
Libby Chambers

Elizabeth Hillemeir
Chris Newton
Gisli Ingimarsson
Mary Lansing
Betsy Bailey
Gunni Propiescus
Carol Kirkwood
MJ Greaves
Brian Bullard
Sonia Mason
Tom Mason
Jake Lapointe
Olivia Lathrop
Victoria Lathrop
Jane Johansen
J. D. Stanek
Madeleine Sullivan



Your picture in a brochure or on our website?

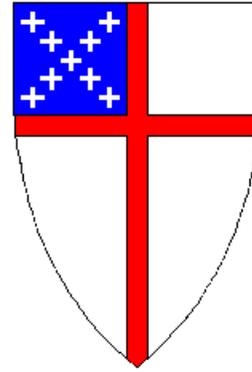
St. James Parish uses candid photos of various church activities on our website and in publications (like this *Epistle*). If you prefer that your photo NOT be displayed, please contact the parish office; we maintain a list of members whose likeness is not to be shared.

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	<i>Rector</i>
The Rev. Douglas Engwall	<i>Deacon</i>
Blake Hansen	<i>Director of Music</i>
Susan Deming	<i>Parish Administrator</i>
Anthony Nauss	<i>Sexton</i>
Laura Vacca	<i>Nursery Supervisor</i>

OFFICERS

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

2022

Thomas Nelson
Foster White
James Wilkie

VESTRY 2023

Kim Faubert
Maina Rice
Anna Whilby

2024

Kathy Bullard
Bonnie Sudell
Robert Sudell

St. James Parish

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

