

St. James Parish

Epistle



December 2022

Rector's Message

*Trace we the Babe, who hath retrieved our loss,
from his poor manger to his bitter cross; treading
his steps, assisted by his grace, till our first
heavenly state again takes place.*

The Hymnal 1982, #106

Advent is a time of waiting, hoping, and longing for Jesus to come and bring light into our world. Jesus has, of course, already shattered the darkness forever; that permanent, enveloping darkness that nothing can seem to penetrate. Jesus Christ, Messiah, has exploded into the human world, overcoming death in the process. Advent, yes, reminds us that Christ has already come and our dark nights, such as we experience them in this life, are not forever. Christ, we are promised, will come again to blast away the remaining wall of pain, sin, greed and all other kinds of darkness. "Christ has died. Christ is Risen. Christ will come again." Advent is a time of wonder, a liturgical season that is at once full of light and, at the very same time, tinged with darkness. How does that work? Well, those of us who believe in Christ's power to overcome death know that we have nothing to fear, not death, nothing the world may do to us. Real and present pain, loss, suffering, violence, and a whole host of other challenges, however, seem to be incongruous with the reality that Christ has overcome death for us all. If Christ has died, risen, and redeemed us then why is the world still such an unholy mess?

Revelation tells of a "new heaven and a new earth," and St. Paul often spoke of the final judgment when Christ shall come and renew the faithful and all the cosmos will become one. We wait for Christ's return, His coming to dry the eyes of every sufferer, His final blessing for all who believe, with full and redemptive life. Advent tells

us that Christ, the One who was to come into the world, has come into the world and interpenetrated our darkness. The darkness still exists, however, but we need that dark, too, if we are to see the full light of God in Christ.

I love the season of Advent, the waiting and longing that remind me how blessed I am to have Jesus in my life, my family's life, and how beautiful it is to celebrate the season with all of you at St. James. Advent is the calm before the stormy arrival of Christ the King in that manger in Bethlehem. Christ's birth, because of God's Divine will to claim us forever, shattered the darkness in such a way that it no longer holds us. Christmas always feels different, somehow, calming and warm, loving and blessed, partly because we sense the change, the new day that God in Christ is making.

My first Christmas Eve at St. James, the late service ended about 11:45 pm. As the front doors of the church opened and we stepped out into the cold night, a light snow was falling and a little was already accumulating on the ground. I remember feeling such a sense of complete and total peace and wonder, as we all said "Merry Christmas" to each other and departed for home. We headed out into the dark with the Christ light shining brightly in our hearts. The darkness had not gone away, it was still there. Yet, the light of Christ had poured strength into our hearts to face the world again, until that day when Christ returns again.

In Christ,
Fr. George+

Warden's Corner

What does *More than Enough* mean to you? Does it mean you are content and have everything you need? Does it mean we should live in a way that doesn't require much, therefore we have everything? Does it mean your basic needs are met and that should be all one hopes for?

If I think about the Bible reference of the multiplying of the loaves and fishes, I realize that the lesson might not be to accept that the 5 loaves and 2 fishes are enough, but that those "gifts" PLUS the trust in our God that he will provide and care for us MAKES those gifts enough. For me then it becomes less about what I have and more about what I DO with what I have that gives me the feeling of completeness, the feeling that I have *More than Enough*.

I remember my first Stewardship season at St James when a parishioner stood and said, give what you can, be it money, time, talent, etc. When we view our individual gifts as not something to hold and possess, but rather something to give and share, we see that TOGETHER we can ensure that the St James community, and through Outreach, the community at large can always have *More than Enough*.

As we enter our 150th year, I hope you will think not only about the gifts you have, but about how you might USE your gifts to further the ministries of St James and to be a voice and a light in the community beyond our doors.

May you have *More than Enough* to be thankful for this season.

Blessings,
Kim Faubert, Co-Warden



First Sunday Breakfast!



Find delicious food and fellowship at the First Sunday Breakfasts cooked by a great crew of men of the parish, led by John McBride: pancakes, waffles, sausage, bacon, eggs, breads, juice and coffee as good as Mom made. The menu may change from one month to the next. Join us Sunday, December 4th for a wonderful time of food and fellowship!

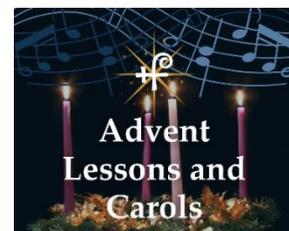
Advent Lessons & Carols

Advent Lessons and Carols are a wondrous tradition that come to us from the Anglican tradition but have 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 set of foci. The Lessons and Carols date back at least to the 18th century but became popular in the 19th and early 20th centuries in England, first sung at the Cathedral in Truro and then, later, more famously at King's College, Cambridge.

Lessons for the service focus on the Genesis story of the fall in the Garden of Eden and then, through the prophetic witness of Isaiah, Zechariah, and Ezekiel, the anticipation of our redemption is highlighted. Traditionally, nine Lessons are read, though at St. James we have typically done between five and seven. Music complements and expands the message of the lessons that are read with a combination of special music, choral singing, and congregational hymns for Advent. There are prayers said and often the short liturgy for the lighting of the Advent candles is observed. The combination of reading the story/prophesy of our salvation, along with beautiful music, helps to prepare us for the coming of our Lord at Christmas.

Please join us on Sunday, December 11th, at 4:30 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, immediately following the service, for a reception in the parish hall. Advent is a truly important time for us to live into, as an anticipatory sign of Christ's coming among us.



From the Deacon's bench

In December 1904, a classic character flew across a London stage in a new play called *Peter Pan, Or the Boy Who Would Not Grow Up*. The play is turned into a novel in 1911, and later an animated film, television musical, live-action movie, and a pack of sequels.

You remember the story. Peter invites a girl named Wendy to travel via fairy dust to Neverland, to be a mother to his gang of Lost Boys. Many adventures unfold, including battles with Peter's archenemy Captain Hook, but in the end Wendy decides that the best place for her is back at home with her family.

Looking in on Wendy after her return, Peter knows that he will never experience the happiness of growing up with a mother and father and brother and sister — it is “the one joy from which he must be forever barred.”

And then, years later, he returns to see Wendy again, and is shocked to discover that she has grown up. She's a mature woman, with a daughter of her own. Peter sits down on the floor and sobs, not able to accept the fact that Wendy has become a woman. Peter is destined to be, forever, the “Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up.”

One suspects that we, too, would prefer that Jesus as the baby who stays in the manger. After all, this is a magical time of year. The lights, and carols, and decorations, all combine to evoke the memory of Christmases past, of good times and better years. We love the Christ child in the stable, the shepherds kneeling, the angel chorus singing, the magi worshipping, camels trekking across a midnight desert under the light of a brilliant nova leading the way, the holy family gathered. We wish it could be this way all year. We're not really too enthused or enthralled with the idea that this child will leave the crib for the cross. This child will grow up.

Jesus has his moment of birthday glory and praise, for sure, but then he is carted off to Egypt to escape the homicidal hysteria of bloodthirsty King Herod, according to Matthew's birth narrative. Being a refugee is perilous, whether you are on the run in the first century or the 21st century. And the danger is doubled if you are a helpless newborn, defenseless against the threats posed by soldiers and bandits and

accidents and disease. But Mary and Joseph will bring their infant son to the safety of Nazareth where he will grow into adulthood.

As for Peter Pan — let's just say that being stuck in childhood has a definite downside. Peter never really develops as a person because he stubbornly holds on to his Neverland view of reality. He shuts out grown-up thoughts, feelings, and responsibilities, and as a result never experiences mature human emotion. He's a victim of the “Peter Pan Syndrome” — a refusal to grow up, settle down and commit.



This is not a syndrome that afflicted Jesus in any way, which is why we should look at him as The Boy Who Did Grow Up — even as we celebrate his birth.

When we read about the trek to Bethlehem, we are invited to recall Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. When we imagine the visit of the shepherds, we are reminded that Jesus grew up to become the Good Shepherd. When we hear about the visit of the angels to Bethlehem, we are propelled forward — across a lifetime

— to the appearance of the angels at the empty tomb.

Unlike Peter Pan, Jesus did grow up ... and it is only through the lens of his maturation, ministry, death, and resurrection that we can truly appreciate the wonder of his birth. So let's celebrate the birth of Jesus, and join the shepherds and angels in praising God for the gift of the Christ child. To us is “born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord”.

He's the Boy Who Will Grow Up. Thanks be to God.

Deacon Doug

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.

Come caroling with us!

Join us for a time of community, caroling, and outreach! On **Saturday, December 17th**, we will **gather in the parish hall at 9:30** for a time of refreshments (donuts and juice, etc.) and to make cards for the residents of Touchpoints and Amberwoods and to “rehearse” our carols. We will then go to Touchpoints and Amberwoods to sing carols, accompanied by our own Deacon



Doug on the ukulele! We should be done by around 11 a.m., but folks can depart earlier, if necessary. Families are encouraged to come, singles, the elders of the parish and our youth, **all are welcome!** The folks we are caroling for are often alone; many have no family or visitors around the holiday season. Our presence makes a difference for them. Come join the fun!!!

Save these January 2023 dates!

Saturday, January 14th is Poetry Night. We will begin celebrating our 150th Anniversary by holding a night of poetry on January 14th at 5pm. All are invited to bring in a poem to read, perform, or just share. You can highlight your own work, the poems of your favorite poet, or sing a piece if you like. We invite folks to come as they are for a night of casual community as we kick off a year of celebrating 150 years in the life of St. James Parish. New poems written about St. James are surely welcome, too 😊. Everyone is asked to bring a heavy hors d'oeuvre to share. Drinks and dessert will be provided. (Snow date is January 21st)



On **Sunday, January 29th**, we will hold our Annual Meeting, immediately following the 10:15 service. We plan to hold this in the parish hall and invite everyone to bring food to share (an entrée, a side, or dessert) and we will eat potluck style. We will vote on the budget, elect new Vestry members, and report on the overall state of things at St. James Parish. We will offer a Zoom option to join the meeting, for those who are not yet comfortable gathering in the parish hall. During the 10:15 service, we will have a special treat, as we will hold a *Festival of Lights*, a narrative play about the life of St. James! Join us for worship and then the Meeting. More to come!

Join us for Greening of the Church

On **Sunday, December 18th**, immediately following the 10:15 service (roughly 11:30), we'll begin our Greening of the Church for Christmas!! We are doing both indoors and outdoor Greening as our early Christmas Eve family service will begin with a Carol Sing (4 p.m.) outdoors. So, if you are more comfortable being outside, there will be “something green” for you to do! Many hands make light work. Please bring your clippers as we only have a few pairs. Blessings and we look forward to seeing you then!!



Prayer Team

From time to time, the Prayer Team shares some of what has been helpful to us, in the hope that you might find it helpful too.

An Advent Prayer

*Lord Jesus,
Master of both the light and the darkness,
send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for
Christmas.*

*We who have so much to do, seek quiet
spaces to hear your voice each day.*

*We who are anxious over many things, look
forward to your coming among us.*

*We who are blessed in so many ways, long for
the complete joy of your kingdom.*

*We whose hearts are heavy, seek the joy of
your presence.*

*We are your people, walking in darkness, yet
seeking the light.*

To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

Henri J. M. Nouwen

St. James Prayer Team ...

Praying together for you

Always available, always confidential

Pat Clark
Carol Kirkwood
Donna Paye

Faith & Fries!

We usually gather on the 4th Tuesday of every month at **Five Corners Bistro & Craft Bar**, 354 Colt Hwy (Rt. 6) in Farmington. To move out of Thanksgiving week, **we next convene on**



Tuesday, December 20th, from 7–8:30 pm. You can come for dinner, have a drink or snack, whatever is comfortable for you. 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!*

Church School to Confirmation

This year's church school theme is "All are equal in God's Eye and welcome in His House". As a response to that, we've begun a new youth greeter ministry here at St. James. At the 10:15 service, children join the ushers in welcoming parishioners and distributing bulletins. Some children have already shown an interest in being a part of this. Youth greeters meet in the church hall at 10 am then go as a group to the narthex. They greet people and then they join the procession after the crucifer and proceed down to the church school to join their classes. Please contact Joyce Bettencourt at jyvet@comcast.net if you would like your child to be a part of this ministry. The youth greeters are listed in the weekly bulletin.

Celebrating December birthdays!

William Rice
Blair Connelly
Kim Faubert
Elijah Howe
Jim Clifford

Gloria Flis
Kevin Ives
Robyn Shover
Jennifer Rosenthal



Christmas Eve Celebrations

We will hold two services for Christmas Eve this year, Saturday, December 24th. 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 of our services, as we gaze at the eternal light that shines on us still, two thousand years on.



We will begin at 4 pm with a casual outdoor Christmas carol sing (weather permitting), with firepits, warm drinks, and cookies. At 4:30 pm, we will process into

the church and begin our family worship for Christmas Eve. We will sing lots of Christmas hymns and our plan to hold a special version of our Nativity pageant. All our children, grandchildren, friend's children, neighbor's children, etc. are invited to take part. If your child is going to dress in costume, please have them here by 3:30 pm so that they can pick out their costume and be ready when the carol sing begins at 4 pm.

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, Sunday, at 10:15 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.

Angel Giving 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 through FSC's ownership and operation of housing for the poor. Farmington Community Services provides support to residents experiencing financial, physical, and psychosocial hardships. St. James Outreach Committee asks you to help provide Christmas gifts to approximately 30 individuals from the Friendship Service Center and 10 children from Farmington Community Services. The Christmas ornaments representing each individual are hanging from a Christmas tree in the narthex. We ask that you select one or more ornaments, sign your name on the appropriate 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, serving as a gift tag. Or you can sign-up online at <https://bit.ly/StJamesAngel22>

Each recipient was asked to list several items that they are hoping for, but it is not expected that all items on the tag will be donated. You can choose to fulfill all items or just one or two; perhaps you'd like to team up with a friend to fulfill the wishes! This is a wonderful opportunity for St James to share joy with those in need in our community. **The deadline for the return of gifts is Sunday, December 11th.** If you have any questions, please contact Dona Waugh or Linda Larkin. Thank you very much for being one of our angels.

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 an offering 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 Monday, December 19th.** Make checks payable to *St. James Parish* marked "Christmas Decorations." If you would like to help with that ministry, please call the parish office (860-677-1564). Thank you.



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

In memory of

OR In thanksgiving for

Given by

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.

Yearend notes from the Parish Office

IRS reminder: as the end of the 2022 rapidly approaches, many of us choose to make charitable gifts. In order for you to receive credit for a tax-deductible donation on your 2022 tax return, **the donation must be received by St. James or postmarked on or before December 31, 2022.**

Donations made or mailed after that date, even if the check is dated in 2022, cannot be included in your 2022 Contribution Statement issued in January 2023. Please contact the parish office if you have any questions about the status of your 2022 pledge.

The 2023 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.

If you pledged for 2023 and requested envelopes, the boxed envelope sets will be labeled and ready in the narthex for you to pick-up on December 11th. Please contact the parish office if you would like your envelopes dropped off at your home.

Minutes of the Vestry of St. James: October 20, 2022

Present in-person: Fr. George Roberts, Carol Kirkwood, Jim Wilkie, Kim Faubert, Anna Whilby, Kathy Bullard, Bob Sudell, Bonnie Sudell

Present via Zoom/Phone: EJ Ososki, Foster White

Absent: Tom Nelson, Maina Rice

Meeting called to order 7:04 pm

Minutes of September 15, 2022, Vestry Meeting

Bob moved to accept the minutes as submitted.

Seconded by Kim.

Unanimous vote to accept the minutes as submitted.

Ministry Reports

Finance/Treasurer's report – September 2022

Summary of Report by EJ Ososki

- On the income side, we are in good shape. \$20K favorable to plan.
- On the expense side, we continue to face headwinds from the physical plant. Church property expenses are \$9K unfavorable to budget, primarily due to insurance, heating oil, repairs, and snow removal. The rectory is a similar story at \$2K unfavorable to plan.

Motion made by Bob to accept the August financial report as submitted; seconded by Anna.

Questions / Discussion: request for Jerry to give an overall investment report.

Unanimous vote to accept the September financial report as submitted.

150th – 2023 Celebration Update

Next meeting for the 150th committee is early November. Draft being drawn up of 2023 timeline of events. At November Vestry meeting should be available for review.

New Business

Stewardship

- Runs 5 Sundays, Nov. 6th to Dec. 4th with testimonials presented each Sunday in November
- Looking to raise pledge goal by 7%
- Kathy asked about Outreach budget. In past % of pledges put towards Outreach, but not currently being done since pandemic.

Motion made by Bob that parishioners be asked to increase pledges 5–9%. Seconded by Bonnie. Discussion: Let people know what is important to increase/why we are asking for an increase.

Motion amended by Fr. George that we ask for a 7% increase Bob seconded.

Unanimous vote to accept the amended motion and ask for a 7% increase in pledges.

Motion made by Bob for a minimum of 2% of income go to outreach. Seconded by Bonnie.

Discussion: to include fundraisers such as Craft Fair monies to go to Outreach and have a specific amount to line item seen as especially important Unanimous vote to accept the motion.

Kim and David Faubert, as in previous years, graciously offered to print weekly annual appeal postcards to include logo, pictures, and bullet points

Fr. George writing a weekly devotion for Sunday bulletins and e-flash. Where is God in all of this? Pray for why we are giving. Prayerfulness and mindfulness.

Building and Grounds

Columbarium (outdoor) – a permanent structure with inbuilt spaces (niches) that house inurned cremated remains. A niche unit provides a place for family and friends to pay respects to a loved one much in the same way a grave does.

Jim discussed future idea of having a Columbarium by the patio area. Currently ashes being buried under stone slabs are potentially a concern as slabs can shift, be damaged, and could be a safety hazard for tripping. Jim willing to investigate prices etc.

New Vestry/Annual Meeting January 29, 2023

3 current vestry members will be going off Vestry at end of January 2023 – Jim Wilke, Foster White, and Tom Nelson, which means 3 new Vestry members are needed.

Old Business

Anti-Racism Training required for all elected leaders of Vestry

- Start in 2023 at Vestry Retreat which is planned for Saturday, February 4th, onsite. We could sign up for online 1-day anti-racism training with Absalom Jones Institute of Atlanta, Georgia.
- Possibility of doing teambuilding on Friday, February 3rd, in evening

Adjourned at 9:04pm

Respectfully Submitted

Carol

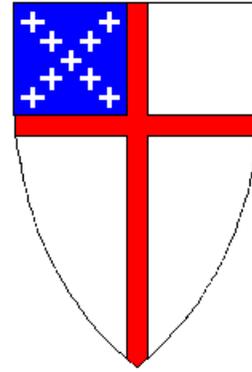
Carol Kirkwood, Clerk

St. James Parish

3 Mountain Road
Farmington, Connecticut 06032

Phone: 860-677-1564
Fax: 860-677-8219

Email: st.james.church@sbcglobal.net
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

3 MOUNTAIN ROAD
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

