

St. James Parish

Epistle



February 2021

Rector's Message

That it may please thee to make wars cease in all the world; to give to all nations unity, peace, and concord; and to bestow freedoms upon all peoples, We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.

The lines above come from The Great Litany, which stands alone in our prayer book between the Daily Offices, the Collects, and special liturgies, which begin with Ash Wednesday. The Great Litany, as I sometimes declare, “ain’t called Great for nothing!” I have also referred to it as The Long Litany, because it is, well, rather lengthy, particularly when chanted, as we typically do at the Rite II service on the First Sunday of Lent. The Great Litany is a bit of a throwback in its way of communicating and praying and has language of petition to God, desire for repentance, and a vision of hope. Hard as it may be to fathom, we begin Lent on February 17th, with the first Sunday in Lent falling on the 21st. We have come far and been through much since Lent last year, when we got through the first Sundays before having to cease in-person worship due to COVID. Since then, we have not done many things as we typically do. We have not drunk from the common cup at Communion; we have not come to the altar rail; we have not gathered in our usual way; and we have needed to come to terms with the cost of a disease that has rampaged around the world for nearly a year. We have made adjustments and continue to worship, still receiving Holy Eucharist, albeit in slightly different ways.

Lent marks a time of reflecting where in our lives we are out of balance, how we might focus our living more directly and specifically on God, and begin the process of repentance: turning back to the Lord. The Great Litany, like many special services or moments in our Prayer Book, is a truly wonderful gift. A litany is “prayer consisting of a

series of invocations and supplications by the leader with alternate responses by the congregation” (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*). Litanies were once said often — a “litany for the saints,” for the Blessed Mother, etc. The Great Litany is a bit of a holdover which can wonderfully remind us of what we need from God, how we have fallen short of God’s will for our lives, and how we begin the never-ending process of reorienting our lives to God. In our Prayer Book service for Ash Wednesday, we have a Litany of Penitence (page 267), which not only confesses to God, but asks, “Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,” acknowledging that we are forever seeking for God in Christ to finish the work of salvation in us that God began in Christ at Calvary.

We have been through a terribly challenging number of months, dealing with COVID which has caused everything from inconvenience to carnage in the lives and communities of the world. The Great Litany does not call us to a time of self-flagellation at our shortcomings; the times we failed to live into and up to the Creed we espouse. Lent, the Great Litany, our wonderful Ash Wednesday Liturgy, and our tradition teach us that we are not primarily a fallen people. Rather, we are, by God’s extraordinary grace, saved people who call on God for mercy, for help, and seek His blessing in our lives. Lent commemorates our continued journey to God through “a land of waste,” into the land of the living, the assurance of God’s never-ending blessing. No matter what befalls us, may we hold fast to the promise of God found, yes, in our wonderful liturgies, but always encapsulated in the One who died and rose again for us. God bless us this Lent.

In Christ,
Fr. George+

Warden's Corner

As my term as co-warden ends, I feel a tinge of sadness, It has been a huge honor and a pleasure to serve under Father George's expert guidance. In this time of church closings, I am proud that we have been able to weather the storm. We are not totally upright; we have issues with declining membership, need for updates and renovations which hopefully will help with the declining membership etc., but we are still afloat! We are a caring community who embrace our 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

We know that Christ calls us to 'feed His sheep' and one of the most meaningful ways of doing that is through community outreach. We must at all cost continue and grow this ministry, be an example and beacon for our kids who will eventually take on that mantle; and as always nurture our older members on whose toils and dedication we have been in operation for 125 years. May God continue to guide and strength us as we continue His work.

*Dona Waugh
Co-Warden*

Candlemas, the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord

On Tuesday, February 2nd, at 5 p.m. we will celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple. I believe this is the first time since I have been at St. James that the feast day has fallen on a Sunday. The feast has been celebrated since at least the beginning of the 4th century, where it is referenced by bishops in sermons of the day that have survived. The feast is often called Candlemas, because light is an important part of the readings, and candles are often blessed and used at the service. In Luke 2:22-40, Mary and Joseph take the infant Jesus to the Temple, 40 days after His birth, so that Mary may be ritually purified. Jewish custom at the time was that women were ritually unclean after



giving birth and would be purified 40 days after the birth.

The service traditionally begins with all processing with candles into the church together. Parishioners are encouraged to bring candles that you might use in the coming year; they will be blessed during the service. As we move through the season after Epiphany and await the beginning of Lent, recognizing and celebrating our Lord, who is the light of the world, seems a most fitting thing. We commemorate those who, though old, sick, in distress, living in poverty or physically ill are still able to recognize Jesus's power, divinity, and promise.

Chili Cook-off?!?

Well, at least some recipes!! Last year for Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, we had a great turn out and lots of fun for our first Annual Chili Cook-off. We cannot, unfortunately, gather for chili this year, but our youth minister Amy, the mastermind behind last year's cook-off, suggested we gather recipes. **So, we are asking for folks to send your favorite chili recipe (one you are willing to share!) to her at amy.sjyouthminister@gmail.com , by Sunday, January 31st.** On Tuesday, February 16th, at 6 pm we invite everyone to join us on Zoom with the chili you prepared (eating it, hopefully 😊) and engage in a fun trivia game with Amy leading us!! Listen, we know this has been a hard time for so many, so let's get together, have fun, eat some great chili (are you up for it?!) and enjoy our community!!!



**** Stay tuned for Fr. George's very serious, very "challenging" Shrove Tuesday Pancake Flipping Challenge!**

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

Middle + High School (6th–12th)

11 am–11:20 am

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4640951232?pwd=SFpjRW9GdkxpM1JzQUJWZ0JGWEhaQT09>

Meeting ID: 464 095 1232; Passcode: 8EmEcb

Bible Study: the prophet Jeremiah

Adult Formation will continue with Bible Study in February. Beginning on Sunday, February 7th, at 11 am we begin an exploration of 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. We will use a study guide by Matthew S. Harmon, copies of which we have in the office. The book highlights themes, oracles, and the hope that we find in Jeremiah, despite its dire warnings. We will read, using the study guide, the entire text of Jeremiah over the course of three months. Please let Fr. George know if you would like a copy, as supplies last.

Confirmation Corner

February brings our 4th VIRTUAL confirmation class on Sunday, February 7th from noon–2 pm. This month confirmands will learn about the history of the church through the writing of the Nicene Creed and will define the meanings of some basic concepts of faith.

Friendly reminder to all confirmands – the January assignment is posted on the Google Classroom and is due on February 7th. Confirmands should also be attending Church School virtually 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

Church school continues each Sunday at 11 am! Topics for the month of February include Jesus healing the sick, Jesus calling his Disciples, Stories from the Kingdom of Heaven, and scenes from the ministry of Jesus.

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 grade) 11 am–11:20 am–

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4640951232?pwd=SFpjRW9GdkxpM1JzQUJWZ0JGWEhaQT09>

Meeting ID: 464 095 1232

Passcode: 8EmEcb

I hope you had a wonderful start to the new year and are continuing to find peace in an unsettled world.

- Amy Steele, Youth Minister



Adult Christian Formation 2020-2021

We are in an exciting Christian Formation program year for our congregation and beyond. We partner with the Spiritual Life Center (SLC), in West Hartford, to present a year on Christian Spiritual Practices. Part of walking the way of Jesus and truly living the Christian life means drawing forever closer to the Divine presence. In our busy lives, however, finding new, creative, and practical ways to live the Christian life and engage in our spiritual journey (we are all on one, by the way) can be very challenging indeed. So, St. James Parish presents, in communion with the SLC, workshops on Christian Spiritual practices.

Ignatian Spirituality, Judy Pluta, BA, MA, Boston College, NYU. Saturday, March 20th, 10 am–2 pm.

Praying with Art, Lisa Hudkins. Saturday, April 17th, 10 am–noon.

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.



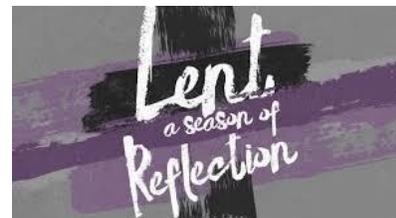
Lent: a season

Lent is a period of 40 days (not counting Sundays; the Sabbath day supersedes the Lenten fast, so we can eat chocolate or donuts that day☺) that begins with Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday (see article on the next page) is the day we commemorate Lent's beginning with Holy Eucharist and the Imposition of Ashes. Lent lasts from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday, the day before Easter, when we commemorate the passing of Christ from death into resurrection with a service of Vigil at sundown. We suspend the saying or singing of alleluias for the season of Lent, a highly symbolic way of reminding us we are in a time of intentional reflect. Lent should not be joyless or a "grit your teeth and bear it" kind of time. Lent is for reflecting and being intentional.

Lent is a time of reflection and we all can come to that in different ways. Some folks like to give something up for Lent (something simple like chocolate, alcohol, sweets, coffee – tried that one year; didn't end well), something that we might miss in our everyday lives. Some folks also add something, maybe in place of something they have given up, like daily prayer or an additional time of prayer or just being more intentionally kind or more patient, etc. The purpose of fasting or adding during Lent is so that we can become, at least for a season, more mindful of how blessed we are and how much we can often miss the places and ways Jesus calls us in our lives. Lent might also be a time for us to remember how Christ suffered and why. Where do we need forgiveness or, maybe more importantly, to give offer it? The blessing of our church year is that it gives us time to think, reflect, and become more aware of where we feel God's absence and presence in our lives. Lent is a gift and we should look on it as such.

Major dates of Lent

Wednesday, February 17th, Ash Wednesday
February 21st, First Sunday in Lent, The Great Litany,
March 28th, Palm Sunday, Procession of Palms,
Wednesday, March 31st, 7 pm, Tenebrae
April 1st, 7 pm Maundy Thursday
April 2nd, 11:30 am, Good Friday Contemplative Service; 7 pm, Veneration of the Cross
The Great Vigil of Easter, Saturday, April 3rd, 7:30 pm
Easter Sunday, Resurrection Sunday, April 4th



Ash Wednesday, February 17th

It is important to say that ashes are not the focus of the Ash Wednesday service, which dates back to the early days of the church, though some of the things we do on the Wednesday before the first Sunday of Lent were once done on the Sunday itself. Wednesday became the beginning of Lent later on, so that Lent (not including Sundays) could be exactly 40 days. Ashes have figured into Christian practice since well before the 4th century; in fact, ashes go back to the times of pagan religions (Egypt and Greece), before the time of Christ, when ashes sprinkled on the head signified mourning. In most Catholic countries outside the United States and Africa, in fact, ashes are still sprinkled on the head on Ash Wednesday, instead of the priest making the sign of the cross on a person's forehead. Ancient



Christians, as a practice, might be separated from his/her congregations because of "notorious sins." If the congregant wanted to

come back into Christian community, he or she went through a process. They would, on more than one occasion, confess their sins publicly, and would lay prostrate on the floor, as a priest sprinkled ashes upon their head. In contemporary Catholic Poland, for instance, sprinkled ashes on one's head, rather than tracing a cross on the forehead, is the sign and symbol of repentance for sins.

We tend to focus too much of our energy on ashes on the Wednesday that begins Lent. Actually, ashes are a sign of repentance, as we understand that we have fallen away from the desires and design of God for our lives and wish to turn back to God. The priest says, as ashes are sprinkled on the head (or traced in the sign of the cross, more typical for us American Christians), "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Those words remind us that we bring nothing into the world and will take nothing from it but, whether we live or die, we belong to Almighty God.

This year, because of COVID, we may be trying on the ancient practice of sprinkling ashes on the head, as a safer way of imposing the ashes (not requiring the priest to touch the head of a penitent parishioner). We will have two Ash Wednesday services on February 17th: one at noon and one at 7 pm both with Holy Eucharist. If

you are not comfortable coming to a public worship service but would like to have ashes on Ash Wednesday, you need only stop by the church between 9–11:30 am or between 2–5 pm. Call Fr. George if you wish to have ashes and cannot make it to church, but would like a very short visit for the imposition of ashes.

Celebrating February Birthdays

Foster White

Jeff Dugan

Donna Paye

Molly Greaves

Ethan Lucas

Charlotte Sullivan

Audrey Hunt

Jamie Baldwin

Siggi Ingimarsson

Connor Hillemeir

Joyce Bettencourt

Marjorie King

Francesca Flynn

Betty Marino

Marjorie Bingham

Daniel Roberts



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.

Prayer Team

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

A Prayer for Unity

In this century and in any century, our deepest hope, our most tender prayer,

Is that we learn to listen.

May we listen to one another in openness and mercy.

May we listen to plants, animals, and all creation, in wonder and respect.

May we listen to our own hearts, in love and forgiveness.

May we listen to God in quietness and awe.

And in this listening, which is boundless in its beauty, may we find the wisdom to cooperate with a healing spirit, a divine spirit,

Who beckons us to peace, and community, and creativity.

We do not ask for a perfect world,

But we do ask for a better world.

We ask for deep listening.

Jay McDaniel

St. James Prayer Team ...
Praying together for you
Always available, always confidential

Pat Clark
Carol Kirkwood
Donna Paye
Armen Slusarz

Minutes of the Vestry of St. James: December 17, 2020

Present via Zoom: Fr. George Roberts, Jessica Watkin, Julia Grieco, Robyn Shover, Foster White, EJ Ososki, Jim Wilkie, Tom Nelson, Rebecca McFarland, Kim Pereira, Dona Waugh, Mimi Hostetter.

Meet the Reverend Deacon Doug Engwall

- The Vestry welcomed Rev. Doug Engwall and learned a bit about his background as well as the role of a Deacon: preaching about once per month, eventually (post-COVID) preparing the Table for the Eucharist.
- Some ideas for his specific role in our community would be to revive our long-standing ministry at Westerleigh and to work with the youth or children with music.

Minutes: November, 2020

With the correction of the typo of “race” to “face”, Mimi moved to accept the minutes, Rebecca seconded, there was a unanimous vote to accept the minutes as amended.

Ministry Reports

Finance/Treasurer’s report – November, 2020

- We’re still ahead on pledges; our total income is right on where we budgeted. We’re ahead on a number of expenses.
- Jim moved to accept the report, Kim and Foster seconded, there was a unanimous vote to accept the report.

Report on the reserve account/investments

- Our year-to-date earnings total \$100,684 or 11.1% which is slightly better than our benchmark Index of 10.2%. The current value of our investments is \$920,105 which is \$11,944 above our last year-end balance.

Spiritual Practices Workshops

- So far, we have had three of these; fourth to be at the end of January. Facilitators have been great, each workshop has had 10–11 participants.
- These are tools in our toolbox for our spiritual life.
- An idea came up in Bible study to do a workshop on comparative religions or religions of the world, etc. in the 2021-22 program year.

- It is noted that the workshops have been extremely enlightening and rewarding for participants.

New Business

First Look at the 2021 Budget

- As a draft, we have budgeted for a return of the Fall Fair. We did not budget any increases for staff salaries. We budgeted for increases in 2020; it is noted that Fr. George refused his increase.
- It is noted that expenses are always an estimate. A new computer is needed for the church office.
- We are reminded that we aim not to draw more than 5% from our invested funds; in this draft we are drawing 7.9% (we drew 8.5% last year). We are reminded that a 7.9% deficit is not considered sustainable in the long run, yet there is no extra to cut from the budget.

Stewardship Update

- We have only had a few decreases and mostly increases. Per pledge numbers have been on the increase in the last 5-7 years, although the number of total pledges has gone from a high of 114 to approximately 90.
- Last year we didn't reach our goal. This year it looks like we have a good chance of meeting it.
- Thanks to Kim who made calls and organized others to make calls to those who had not yet pledged.
- Question: Historically, how much income do we receive from non-pledging members? Answer: Between \$5,000 and \$9,000 depending on the year.

Old Business

New St. James Sign

- Of the two choices we considered, the "V-shaped" sign was going to be \$1200 more, so we are leaning toward the simpler "two-sided" sign that faces straight up and down Mountain Road.
- Questions: Could we get another bid once we get through zoning? Answer: Yes; we paid Sign Pro \$85 to do the zoning work with the town and now we could use that with another firm.

- We are on the agenda for the town Zoning meeting on 12/18; Fr. George has been invited to be there. We are going to have to have a line item in the budget and will also seek specific donations for the cost, which we expect will be around \$7,000.

Rector's and Warden's Thoughts

- The Annual Meeting is Sunday, January 31 via Zoom.
- Safe Church training: if Vestry have not done this, stay tuned for more information from Fr. George on the online portion.
- Kim shared that she, Blake, and Fr. George applied for a grant through ECCT for technology for streaming worship. We could receive \$1,750.
- Our Bible Study of Romans with NT Wright's *For Everyone* continues on Zoom.

Kim moved to adjourn, Julia seconded; there was a unanimous vote to adjourn. We closed in prayer and adjourned at 9:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Jessica Watkin, Parish Clerk

Addendum

The following resolution was approved via an email vote of the Vestry; emails received between 12/19/20 and 12/23/20:

Resolution of the Vestry: Whereas the Rev. George Roberts is employed as a minister of the Gospel by St. James Episcopal Church, Farmington, CT, which although providing a residence for him does not provide the full cost of maintaining and furnishing such a residence, the Vestry resolves that of the total compensation of \$103,150 to be paid to the Rev. Roberts during 2020, that \$7,200 be designated a parsonage allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the IRS Code of 1986 as amended, but in any event until further notice the parsonage allowance shall be \$600.00 per month.

St. James Parish

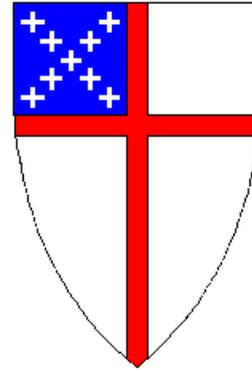
3 Mountain Road
Farmington, Connecticut 06032

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		OFFICERS		
The Rev. George C. Roberts	Rector	Kim Pereira & Jim Wilkie, Wardens		
The Rev. Doug Engwall	Deacon	EJ Ososki, Treasurer ^		
Amelia (Amy) Steele	Youth Minister	Jerry Hess, Asst. Treasurer ^		
Blake Hansen	Director of Music	Carol Kirkwood, Parish Clerk ^		
Susan Deming	Parish Administrator	2021	VESTRY	2023
Kelly Nauss	Sexton	Mimi Hostetter	2022	Kim Faubert ^
Laura Vacca	Nursery Supervisor	Kim Pereira	Thomas Nelson	Maina Rice ^
		Robyn Shover	Foster White	Anna Whilby ^
		^ To be voted at 1/31/21 Annual Meeting		

St. James Parish

3 MOUNTAIN ROAD
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

