

# St. James Parish

## Epistle



Summer 2021

### Rector's Message

*I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.*

Henry David Thoreau  
*Walden; or Life in the Woods*

My family and I went walking for Tracey's birthday recently. We were walking in the Hidden Valley Reservation up near Washington in a truly beautiful part of our state. There are a couple of neat suspension bridges in the woods there and I found myself, on one of them, stopping for a moment or two, sensing the Holy Spirit's presence on the cool and refreshing wind that was blowing.

I began to pray out loud (my family has become accustomed to such strange behavior on my part and blissfully ignored me). I felt a bit of what Henry David Thoreau, one of my favorite writers and poets, must have sensed when he spent time living in a cabin near Walden Pond in the woods not too far from Concord, MA. I, as he, experienced the serenity of the woods, the voice of the trees and rivers, and the nuanced yet unmistakable presence of God amidst it all. We later saw the above quote from *Walden* by Thoreau, emblazoned on a bench on the trail and that clinched it: the Spirit of God was in that place.

The natural world is where I most fully feel the splendor and healing power of God. Christ moved through the world, lived off the land, out-of-doors. Yet, Jesus did not mistake creation for the Creator and calls us to experience God in all that we see and do; to fill our experiences of life and view them through the lens of a God that has given us this good earth as a way of knowing how much He



loves us. I am not an avid outdoor person. I don't like mosquitos very much and have no tolerance whatsoever for sleeping on the ground (or in an uncomfortable bed, for that matter). Yes ... yes, I am soft. But I do love very much to walk in the woods and in all the natural world; to stare at cathedral mountains and sigh at the snow as it falls gently around me. My recent walk in the woods reminds me of John the Evangelist's words: "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (1:3). The Psalms are rife with powerful images of God in the natural world and says, in Psalm 91, verse 1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." The summer beckons and life calls to us in the ocean, the mountains, and in the cry of the owl that we hear in the distance and in the darkness. Let us be in it: venture out in the summery Creation, and know that God is God.

In Christ,  
Fr. George+

### Summer Worship Schedule

We will continue with single Sunday worship service at 9:30 a.m. throughout the summer. This service is held for in-person attendance and available online as well. It will be held outdoors on the parish front lawn when weather permits, otherwise in the church. NO nursery or childcare will be available during the summer. Weekday services continue: Morning Prayer on Monday at 9 a.m., Evening Prayer on Wednesday at 5 p.m., and Compline on Friday at 7:30 p.m. (Fridays Compline is Facebook livestreamed only).



## Warden's Corner

Hope and Smiles --two words that are meaning a lot to me now as the pandemic eases. Hope as the world is slowly going back to normal and we can start gathering together with our family and friends. We even took our first out of state vacation in June and it felt glorious. Smiles as we begin to unmask and we can see people's faces again, which means we can see each other's smiles again. This pandemic was hard on all of us, and so many of our support systems were no longer available to us (including in person church for many of us). But we are slowly coming back out into the world and gathering together. As we do, please be thoughtful on how you go back to "normal" and remember how important smiles are for all of us. Hope, smiles – and we hope to see you back in church soon!



Blessings,  
*Kim Pereira, Co-Warden*

## Worship service survey

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

In a few weeks you are going to receive, either electronically or via mail, a short survey that we hope will help us answer some really important questions, as we try to move forward as much as possible beyond COVID. The survey will ask about moving back to the 8 am and 10:15 am service times that we typically use during the program year, but have not used since early March 2020. We are trying to gauge willingness to try in-person church school among other things, too. Please take literally two minutes – maximum – of your time to answer and return the paper or electronic survey as soon as possible! Please let us know if you do not receive the survey in one of the two forms by July 9<sup>th</sup>. We want to best serve the needs of our faith community moving forward and very much desire to know what you need and want. God bless you this summer and know we are very blessed by each of you.



In Christ Jesus, *Fr. George+*

## ECCT resolution for parish research of history of racism

As many of you know, the Episcopal Church in CT (ECCT) has been very invested in – and encouraging all parishes to be, also – conversations around issues of racial reconciliation, justice, and healing over the last several years. Resolution 7, passed at Annual Convention last fall, had a number of components contained in it. One part of the resolution requires all elected lay leaders to undergo racial awareness and anti-black bias training in the first year of their service, at such a time when ECCT creates or makes available such a training program. Something I thought would be helpful for folks to know relates to another subsection of Resolution 7 which reads:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that as part of this important and ongoing work, each parish, worshipping community, and intentional Episcopal community shall take steps to discover their historic complicity in racism through research of parish registers and archives; and ...

I am not sure that evidence of racism would be discovered in research of our records, possibly town records, etc. but I am wondering if there is anyone who would like to take on said research? I would be happy to meet with any person(s) who might be willing and/or interested in taking on the task of looking through documents to investigate any instances of racial bias, exclusion, racial prejudice, etc. that might be discovered in St. James' history. I know that these kinds of conversations are not easy. A person looking into our history would have to do so with an open mind and heart, prayerfully, and with as unbiased a view as possible to what might be found. A short report would be written, following the research, which the rector will, of course, be happy to give guidelines for. Please reach out to Fr. George if you are interested in this project and taking on the research; it could be illuminating and cathartic, regardless of what is found. You are not committing to anything by simply talking to your rector. I invite questions, concerns, and ideas as we move forward. Thank you and God's many blessings to you!

In Christ, *Fr. George+*

## From the Deacon's bench

### Building Community

On Friday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, Father George and I didn't know what to expect as we entered the Westerleigh senior apartment complex in Unionville. This HUD funded project began as an initiative of five Farmington churches to provide affordable housing. While the project has expanded to provide more apartments, contact with the founding churches has declined. A lay minister from the Catholic church continues to serve this population but George hoped that St. James Parish might join this effort. This initiative came up in my first meeting with Fr. George almost a year ago as we discussed possible avenues for my ministry, if the bishop and vestry approved my appointment to St. James. Patience is a virtue that we all must learn as ECCT carefully considers where we might join God's mission of reconciliation.

In the spring, Fr. George and I met with Westerleigh administration to see where St. James might provide some support.

Jim Shortley from St. Mary's Catholic Church gave us a quick tour of the building as he described his Communion services and showed us the meal kits left to be picked up by residents. Unlike most of the senior housing where I've volunteered, the Westerleigh provides very few programs or facilities. They do have one large meeting room with tables and a small, attached kitchen. Besides one room with a few computers, there are no lounges or exercise facilities. There was a nice patio in the front of the building where some people might gather. As we walked down the halls, I noticed several corridors with closed apartment doors.



From my years at Seabury, I began to wonder whether the occupants of those apartments had any

sense that they belonged to a community. If we did start a program at the Westerleigh, how many residents would choose to leave the privacy of their apartments to join an activity? It seemed clear to me that we needed something to draw people back into a community that had been shattered by COVID. I suggested a good old

fashioned sing-a-long, the program that had been pretty successful at Seabury.

Friday, George and I arrived with my songbooks and ukulele, wondering if anyone would show up for our program. It had been advertised and we were told to expect 6 residents out of about 60. Okay, I thought, that's a start. Slowly more people made their way into the room until we had 15 folks, with every available chair occupied. We all had a wonderful time and I told folks to "tell your friends about our show."

Speaking with George afterward, I believe we need to start by rebuilding a sense of community at the Westerleigh. We had asked residents to tell us of their needs and, as these are discerned, we hope St. James will be supportive of these efforts. We have been invited back for another program on July 16<sup>th</sup>. This is just the beginning of building community and trust. I pray that the Lord will guide us as the parish reaches out to the senior residents of our community.

Besides my songs, I also tell some pretty bad jokes.

A zookeeper had his delivery van break down on the highway on one hot July day. He was concerned that the penguins being transported would suffer from the heat, so he flagged down a farmer driving a pickup truck.

"Here's 50 dollars. Please take these penguins to the zoo," said the zookeeper.

"Sure thing," said the farmer, as he loaded the animals into his pickup.

Two hours later, the zookeeper was still waiting for a tow truck when he sees the farmer's pickup coming back down the road with the penguins still standing up in the back.

"Didn't I give you 50 dollars to take those penguins to the zoo?" asked the confused zookeeper.

"Right", said the farmer, "But I had some money left over and now I'm taking them to the movies."

*Doug Engwall, Deacon*



## St. James Day – July 25<sup>th</sup>

Every year July 25<sup>th</sup> marks the feast day of our patron saint, St. James the Greater. St. James, brother of St. John, the Evangelist, was one of Christ's inner circle during our Lord's earthly ministry. He is typically mentioned before his brother, John (they are almost always mentioned together in the Gospels), so he is believed to have been the elder of the two. James seems to have been a man of fiery disposition but of passionate and growing faith. He is believed to be the first of the original 12 to be martyred for his faith (beheaded under Herod Agrippa), and the only original apostle (other than Judas) whose death is specifically mentioned in Scripture (in the book of Acts). James, legend has it, preached in Spain after Christ ascended, at some point. St. Paul had intended to take a mission to Spain, as well, but there is no evidence that he ever made it there. Tradition also holds that James's relics (bones, some of them at least) were transferred to Compostela (in Spain), where they were interred. Compostela is now a place of pilgrimage to visit the holy relics of St. James that many believe are there. James is patron saint of Spain, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and of fishermen.



We were not able to do anything for our patron saint's feast day last year due to COVID or the year before, as Fr. George was on sabbatical through the summer. So, we want to attempt to mark, in a fun way, the feast day of our patron saint this year. As luck would have it, the Feast day of St. James, the Greater, commemorated on July 25<sup>th</sup>, is on a Sunday this year. We wish to do something celebratory while still understanding that we need to be cautious in what we do and how we do it (some have not yet been vaccinated, particularly children under 12). **So, after our 9:30 am service on Sunday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, we will have pastries in individual takeaway boxes for parishioners to enjoy here on the lawn or for you to take home. We will make drinks available, too. Please join us for this day of celebration and stay after for some goodies!!!**

## 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.

A simple prayer to begin each day – the words are familiar to us, as they are from Psalm 51, and also appear in The Book of Common Prayer (Daily Devotions, p. 137).

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.*

*Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your holy Spirit from me.*

*Give me the joy of your saving help again,  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.*

*Open my lips, or Lord,  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.*

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

*Always available, always confidential*

Pat Clark:

Carol Kirkwood

Donna Paye

## Bible Study: Letter to the Hebrews

This study takes us through the Letter to the Hebrews (New Testament). We use the NT Wright *For Everyone* study guide. A donation of \$9 to cover the cost would be appreciated for your personal copy of the guide. The Letter to the Hebrews was chosen by the Study Group as our next Biblical adventure; all are not only welcome but encouraged to join us at 11:15 a.m. If you don't have a Bible and are struggling to get one, please let Fr. George know and we will remedy that issue straight away for you! Hebrews is a truly different kind of letter and should be fun to explore. Please feel free to invite your neighbors, friends, coworkers and any and all who might be interested in a lively study leading to a more open and fundamental understanding of God's will for our lives via Scripture.

## Notes from the Parish Office

The parish office keeps summer hours of Monday–Thursday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This *Epistle* carries us through the summer. **Please note the submission deadline for the very-important September *Epistle* is Wednesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>** and will include as much fall programming information.

In early July, the parish office will mail pledge statements for the first two quarters' contributions. Take the time to review your statement, and if you are not current on your pledge, please make every effort to catch up. If you suspect you are in arrears now, Sue Deming (Parish Administrator) can provide an update on your pledge status over the phone. It's important to stay as up-to-date as possible on your pledge throughout the summer as the bills still need paying despite our staycations and travels. Thank you so much for your continued generosity!



## Newly refreshed front gardens

Our newly replanted hillside shade garden at St. James is dedicated to the Holy Trinity in that it has three tiers of different plants which altogether make up the beauty of the garden. With a whimsical tip of the hat to the precept that only God is perfect and that the prodigal child is always welcomed back into God's family and His embrace, Jim Wilkie and I deliberately added a plant different from the others. Stop by our church grounds, get out of the car and take a look. Perhaps you can spot it, too!

*Joyce Bettencourt*



## Minutes of the Vestry of St. James: May 20, 2021

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

### Minutes of April 22, 2021 Vestry Meeting

Foster moved to accept the minutes. Anna seconded. Unanimous vote to accept the minutes.

### Ministry Reports

#### *Finance/Treasurer's report – April 2021*

Foster moved to accept the report. Mimi seconded.

- EJ reported to continue to keep eye on any significant gaps in budget of Actual vs Budgeted. Gap a bit closer. Actual continues to be ahead of Budgeted. During summer period gap tends to close in. Unanimous vote to accept the financial report.

### *St James Sign Update*

- Jim reports the sign is up on the front lawn – looks great. Few minor cosmetics being taken care of. Landscaping around the area to be finished soon. Anonymous donor paid for all of sign project. Much gratitude to the donor.

### *Capital Campaign Project Feasibility Update*

- Waiting on further estimates for construction costs and elevator costs.
- Some ceiling tiles will need to be removed for project. Will have tile samples tested for asbestos, so best decisions can be made dependent on results. Will also be considering if paint should be tested for lead in order to not get into projects and find unanticipated extra costs.

Reminder from April meeting - after all cost estimates are in for all feasibility projects, next step would be meeting with a Capital Campaign consultant. There it would be determined what would be advisable and to get a better sense of what we could raise, while looking at options of how to get there. The Parish will be involved, as they will be presented with information and will have opportunities for input along the way.

### *Stewardship Project Resource*

- The 6 sessions for this training have ended. There were 5 from parish involved with the online course. Kim Pereira, Fr. George, Anna Whilby, Linda Larkin, and Mimi Hostetter. Next step Vestry will discuss regarding information gained and ideas expressed as it pertains to Stewardship and application to our parish.

### *Church School*

- Church School ends May 23<sup>rd</sup>, the formats used were quite successful. Due to pandemic held online combining Pre-K thru 5<sup>th</sup> grade. An average of 4-5 families participated with a high of 9 families involved.
- Many THANKS to the following who taught classes for our wonderful youth throughout the year: Joyce Bettencourt, Amy Steele, Cathie Martin, and Evan LaPointe.

### **New Business**

#### *Fall Fair/Festival*

- Donna Paye and Fr. George have met. Ideas being tossed around.
  - Hold it outside in October; rain date?
  - Could offer Festive Music in Concert format (Foster suggested CT Virtuosi or possible group from Miss Porter's, fun things to do, sell items (food, mums, pumpkins, apples), raffle
  - Discussed whether food could/should be sold given where COVID standards will be in the fall. A few on vestry have been to outdoor festivals and baked goods were sold.
- Pursuing ideas and leadership for event. Contact Fr. George if anyone has ideas and/or might be willing to help should contact Fr. George.

#### *Update on COVID restrictions*

- May 19<sup>th</sup> restrictions lifted with guidelines from the diocese. **Outdoor services** can be held without masks if social distancing is maintained. Wear mask to your seat and have choice to remove it. Singing outside with choir. Will do as many outdoor services as weather permits over summer at 9:30 am.
- Outdoor service does have a complex set-up due to logistics of speakers, mics, chairs altar etc. Consider putting together

a set-up manual of instructions so others can help.

- **Indoor services** wear masks considering less distancing vs skipping every other pew. Some may still prefer every other pew as we need to remember children are still unable to be vaccinated and more caution may be used, or others may choose to be cautious whether vaccinated or not dependent on their own health or comfort level. Be conscientious so all feel welcome and are comfortable.
- Will people come back? Have they gotten use to and prefer online? This year Sunday after Easter had decline of viewers which is usually the norm if in person. People start to get outside more. Online does track number of views, but not necessarily who is watching.
- Discussed further ways to reconnect with Parishioners.

#### 2023 – Sesquicentennial (150<sup>th</sup>)

##### *Anniversary/Celebration Planning Committee*

- Contact Fr. George if interested – a few have expressed interest thus far. Over this summer plans are to schedule a casual meeting.

##### *Coming Summer 2021 – Outdoor Family Movie Nights*

- Hold family-based movies outside at St James June–August – More to come

### **Old Business**

#### *Questions / Concerns*

##### *Coffee Hour*

- Felicia DeDominicis oversees the signups – fewer people have been signing up to take a Sunday. How do we keep it going? Vestry needs to help as we can.
- When do we bring it back? Fall 2021? Consider just 1 person serve (pour) the coffee. Can bag up cookies or donuts in individual bags. Keep family oriented. Pair up with a few. Maybe more would consider signing up if we put instructions in bulletin, so people know what is involved.

We closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:54 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

*Carol*

Carol Kirkwood, Clerk

## Our summer Family Film Series!

Each film is shown out on the front lawn, projected onto our large screen. We invite everyone to come, no matter your age, and feel free to invite neighbors, relatives, and friends to enjoy the fun. Bring chairs to sit in or blankets to spread out on. There will be popcorn and drinks (no cost, an outreach donation is appreciated) and the folks in attendance will be able to vote on one of our charities where the money gathered from donations will go. Each movie has a rain date, so hopefully we can get all of the movies in this summer!! Hope to see you at the movies!! All movies are approved for all audiences with positive themes. Contact the parish office for details

## 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.

## *Celebrating July & August birthdays!*

Amelia Mason  
Charlotte Paré  
Jessica Watkin  
Alexis Palais  
Jane Torrence  
Alda Debboli  
Huckabee Cadigan  
Joan Sussler  
Kaye Robertson  
Roland Therrien  
Maryalice Widness  
Linda Larkin  
Emma Kate Johansen  
Sally Levin  
Drue Pines  
Alec Hansen  
Helga Schramma  
Holden Grieco  
Dona Waugh  
Neil Clark  
Tom Nelson  
Ian Manton



Michael Rosenthal  
Grant Manton  
Sadie Greaves  
Michael Pines  
David Hadlow  
Phil Schenck  
Alissa Buth  
Maggie Ososki  
Bert Geuser  
Annemarie Lucas  
Geoff Manton  
Charlotte Buth  
Christine Bogino  
Oliver Cadigan  
Vivian Lane  
George Roberts  
Abby Crawford  
Skip Mason  
Susan Pollard  
Barbara Hess  
Matt Roach



## St. James Parish

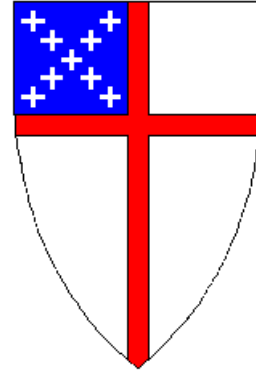
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### MISSION STATEMENT:

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

#### STAFF

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| The Rev. George C. Roberts | Rector               |
| The Rev. Doug Engwall      | Deacon               |
| Amelia (Amy) Steele        | Youth Minister       |
| Blake Hansen               | Director of Music    |
| Susan Deming               | Parish Administrator |
| Anthony Nauss              | Sub. 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

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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

