

St. James Parish

Epistle



March 2021

Rector's Message

When I think about God's love in Christ, I think about sacrifice. Christ sacrificed for me, for you, for us all, and the reality of that sacrifice changes my life. Because of what Christ has done, I can pray to God understanding that I am already forgiven and am completely and totally known and loved by God. For many, many years Lent was, for me, a time of sacrifice. I fasted on Fridays during Lent and Holy Week. My mother would become alarmed when her already rail-thin son would lose a few pounds every Lent and always exhorted me to give up the fasting and go back to the red meat, etc. Yet, I am not certain that all my fasting brought me any closer to God. Today, fasting is incredibly hard for me and I very rarely do it anymore. But our sense of living a sacrificial life in Christ need not be one of deprivation, even though it is important for us to know that there are people who fast, against their will, every day, because they do not have anything (or enough) to eat. So, we need to consume all things with others in mind. Christ calls us to walk in his path, the way of the cross, which means to follow him. Lent is a good time for us to begin to allow our lives to take the shape of the Cross; the shape of Christ.

What does it mean for us to live a "cross-shaped life"? Bringing our lives more into harmony, alignment, and orientation to Christ is really the fast, and the life that Christ would choose for us. When we give up things for Lent, we might ask ourselves if we are giving up something that is going to help us remember Jesus and all that He gave up for us? Our true sacrifice is trying, day by day, to give over our will and giving way to the Divine will for our lives. In a time when simply getting through the day can be hard, it may seem impossible to think about how our lives are being shaped by our awareness of Christ's sacrificial life. We may struggle more than usual with the idea

that even in our sin, our anger, despair, violence, indifference, and insistence on our own way, Christ died for us.

I am put in mind of St. Matthias, a little-known saint whose feast day is February 24th. He was chosen – by lots, no less - to replace Judas after Christ ascended into heaven. But he did meet some strict criteria. The candidate to replace Judas had to have been with Jesus from the time of His baptism until after His resurrection; he had to be a witness to all Christ had done. I think of Judas often, how this man was called by Jesus and walked with our Lord, knew Him, we would think, and yet lived to betray Him. Judas was almost certainly not the villain he is sometimes portrayed to be but rather a soul that became lost when Jesus did not answer His prayers in the way that Judas expected. We can become disillusioned in the same way. But, when our Lenten (and everyday) lives begin to focus on being formed and molded by Christ's love, His sacrifice of holiness, and the reality that He died, not in spite of my challenged choices, but because of them, our lives change. Christ lived and died for us, regardless of our status, wealth, race, or any other thing because we all meet Christ's criteria for love: we are all sinners AND we are all God's children. Christ doesn't need us to sacrifice for Him to love us; he desires for us to live a life that has Him at the center.

In Christ,
Fr. George+

Warden's Corner

As we enter into this Lenten season of sacrifice, it is hard to believe that it has been a year since all of our lives were changed so abruptly and dramatically. We all thought it would be only a couple of weeks that we would need to "stay safe at home" – but now it's been a year! When the weather was nice, we could gather safely outside, but this brutal winter has made seeing others much more difficult and the isolation so much more salient.

Just as Lent is only a season, and one that ends in jubilation and hope, it appears our long 2020 (and now 2021) season of sacrifice may finally come to an end sometime later this year. I'm hopeful as the vaccine rolls out in our state and around the country and world. I'm hopeful as our virus numbers are finally heading in a downward direction once again. I'm hopeful as warmer weather and longer days are coming soon.

As St. Catherine of Sienna said, "Nothing great is ever achieved without much enduring." We endure now, but greatness is coming. And when it comes, we will gather together again to rejoice.

Blessings,
Kim Pereira, Ed.D.
Co-Warden

Church School update

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

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

Elementary (K–5th) 10:40–11 am

Zoom info is sent out by email each week



Confirmation Corner

We will have our 5th VIRTUAL confirmation class on Sunday, March 7th from 12–2 pm. This month Confirmands will explore how God helps us transform the pain in our lives into the very power we need to transform the world. They will also examine those things that can help others, those things that don't, and why we help others at all.

Peer Mentors are asked to attend this session from 12–1 pm.

Friendly reminder to all confirmands that the February assignment is posted on the Google Classroom and is due on March 7th. Confirmands should also be attending Church School virtual at least 2x 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 is continuing to be held each Sunday at 11 am! Topics for the month of March include more scenes from the Ministry of Jesus, The Transfiguration of Jesus, Be Ready! The Son of Man Is Coming!, and Jesus Enters Jerusalem (Palm Sunday).

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

Middle + High School (6th-12th) 11 am-11:20 am-
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4640951232?pwd=SFlpRW9GdkxpM1JzQUJWZ0JGWEhaQT09>

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

Bible Study: the prophet Jeremiah

Adult Formation continues with Bible Study in March. Sundays at 11 am we are exploring the Book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah is a departure, our first foray in our currently constructed Bible Study, to venture into the Old Testament and/or a book of a major prophet. Jeremiah is believed to have been in prophetic ministry from 627 BCE and ending sometime at the outset of the Babylonian exile in or around 586 BCE. Jeremiah's active years cover a stunning 40 years beginning with the last faithful king, Josiah, and ending with the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. We use a study guide by Matthew S. Harmon, copies of which we have in the office. Please let Fr. George know if you would like a copy. The book highlights themes, oracles, and the hope that we find in Jeremiah, despite its dire warnings. We are reading, using the study guide, the entire text of Jeremiah over the course of 3 months.

Adult Christian Formation continues

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. Judy serves as a Spiritual Director, Supervisor and a trainer

of Spiritual Directors and Supervisors at The Spiritual Life Center in West Hartford. Her Jesuit Volunteer Corp and Boston College experiences provided an introduction to the richness of Ignatian Spirituality over 35 years ago. Please signup at <http://bit.ly/ignSpirit> so that we can forward Zoom information prior to the program.

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. Consider this, as we move through Lent ...

Lightening the Load

The first thing we have to do
Is to notice
That we've loaded down this camel
With so much baggage
We'll never get through the desert alive.
Something has to go.

Then we can begin to dump
The thousand things
We've brought along
Until even the camel has to go
And we're walking barefoot
On the desert sand.

There's no telling what will happen then.
But I've heard that someone,
Walking in this way,
Has seen a burning bush.

Francis Dorff

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

Always available, always confidential

Pat Clark
Carol Kirkwood
Donna Paye
Armen Slusarz

Easter Craft Bags Available!

We have put together craft bags for the youth and children for families to use over the Lenten season! They will soon be in the narthex for families to pick up anytime between now and Easter!

They have a variety of different crafts, all with different notes and lessons! You can make Holy Week Wreath Craft Kit, Easter Color Books, Easter Egg Magnet Craft Kit, Empty Tomb Prayer Box, and more! Please take one per youth/child.

If you can, please send pictures of completed crafts or crafts in action to amy.siyouthminister@gmail.com so we can share them with the congregation!

Annual Easter Egg Hunt 2021!

St. James families, you are invited to our new Saturday Easter Egg Hunt!

On Saturday April 3rd, from noon to 1 pm we will hold a COVID friendly Easter Egg Hunt! We are inviting all families to join us OUTSIDE (masked and observing social distance) for a fun hour of egg hunting, crafts, and socially distanced fellowship!

Eggs will be hidden on the front lawn for children to find and there will also be 3 craft stations (one family per station at a time). Also, we will provide snacks and drinks and craft bags to-go!

We hope you can all join us and, if possible, email amy.siyouthminister@gmail.com so we get a general head count! Also, we are looking for volunteers to help hide the eggs and run the craft stations!

We hope to see you there!! Rain date will be Sunday, April 4th, at 11 am following the Easter Service.



God Made Me Unique

Please enjoy our second review of a children's book tailored to address issues of race, disabilities, and God's love and blessing. Our own parishioner Michael Whilby wrote the review and we commend that book to you – for you and your family. We have not found many books that highlight and discuss both race/inclusivity and faith in God. We feel it is important to have both. Thank you so much, Michael, for taking the time to write this review. Blessings everyone!

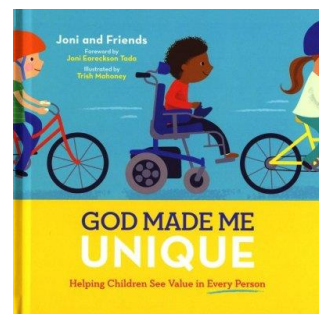
Second Book Reflection: *God Made Me Unique*

Author: Joni and Friends

Foreword by Joni Eareckson Toda

Age level: 3–6 years old

This is a much needed book that is artfully done to show that having a disability does not make you an outcast but is just one of God's plans which should be embraced by all of society. Parents



who read this book to their kids will quickly realize that part of the message being taught here is laying the groundwork of inclusion. As an individual who works to advocate for the human, civil, and legal rights of individuals with disabilities, inclusion is something that we fight for on a daily basis. Incorporating God's essence into this book, the authors are able to help children become more tolerable and empathetic each time they come in contact with other kids and adults with special needs. The foreword by Joni Eareckson Toda (as a person with a disability) gives a little insight into her motivation into writing this beautiful and powerful book. After reading it, I encourage all of you to go to her website: www.joniandfriends.org. You will be inspired!

Holy Week Schedule

Holy Week, which begins on March 28th with Palm Sunday, is the most important week of our liturgical year. Often called "Passion Week," the week following the Sunday of Palms should bring us to a fuller and deeper understanding and appreciation of how much God loves us and sacrificed for us. As Christians Holy Week accelerates our reflections on the



Passion and death of Jesus, even as we prepare for Easter. I encourage you to participate in as many services as is possible for you and your family during the course of the week.

Sunday, March 28th, at 9:30 a.m. Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday

Wednesday, March 31st at 7 p.m., we commemorate the light and darkness of Holy Week with a wonderful service called Tenebrae.

Thursday, April 1st at 7 p.m., we hold a service for Maundy Thursday. Anyone who wishes has the opportunity to keep vigil with Jesus for an hour overnight in the sanctuary where a station is set for the Blessed Sacrament. You may also keep vigil from home for an hour.

Friday, April 2nd, Good Friday, we have two services to commemorate the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ: an **11:30 a.m.** contemplative service and a **7 p.m.** traditional service.

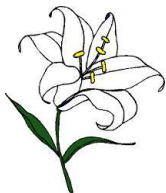
Saturday, April 3rd, noon– 1 p.m. Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 3rd at 7:30 p.m., we celebrate Jesus' passing over from death to life, from darkness to light in a wonderful service called The Great Vigil of Easter, beginning at twilight.

Easter Sunday, April 4th we celebrate at 9:30 a.m.

Easter Memorial Fund

God conquered death on Easter. Christ's rising from the tomb makes all the difference in the world because it trumpets the Good News that we matter, that we will always matter, that God is with us in life and in death. Easter is, then, a particularly appropriate time to remember loved ones who have died by giving flowers in their memory. The Altar Guild is careful about expenditures as the cost of flowers rises, and, although any contribution is welcome, a gift of **\$35** or more is asked to



cover the expense of the Easter flowers. **Names of memorials and gifts received by Monday, March 29th will be listed in the Easter bulletins,** and we will pray for those remembered throughout the Paschal season. Please use the form below to designate your gift. Make checks payable to *St. James Parish* marked "Easter Flowers". Thank you for your generosity.

Please print the information as you prefer it be listed in the Easter bulletins.

In memory of _____

OR

In thanksgiving for _____

Given by _____

Minutes of the Vestry Retreat of St. James: February 6, 2021

Present via Zoom: Fr. George Roberts, EJ Ososki, Carol Kirkwood, Kim Pereira, Jim Wilkie, Mimi Hostetter, Robyn Shover, Tom Nelson, Foster White, Kimberly Faubert, Maina Rice, Anna Whilby Rebecca McFarland former vestry member joined for the 1st hr.

Absent: Tom Nelson

New Business

Election of Co-Wardens for Vestry 2021

Foster nominated Km Pereira and Jim Wilkie as Co-Wardens for Vestry 2021, seconded by Robyn.

Fr George reviewed duties of Wardens.

Nominations opened: no further nominations

Unanimous vote to elect Kim Pereira and Jim Wilkie to Co-Wardens for Vestry 2021.

Review Vestry/Community Norms with Discussion

Added norms:

*Please bring your own challenges with Vestry action or anything that is troubling you, relative to the parish, to Vestry. It is good modeling for the rest of the parish.

*Email can be a way we communicate between Vestry; no need to wait for next meeting.

*Feel comfortable asking questions; there are no “unhelpful” questions. New folks lean into your mentor. It is okay to ask for a repeat or for clarification.

Community Building/Story Sharing

Opportunity for New and Old Vestry members to share a bit about themselves and “what gives us a window into your life with God”?

Resources to consider reading:

Walk in Love: Episcopal Belief and Practices by Scott Gunn & Melody Wilson Shobe.

Love is the Way: Holding onto Hope in Troubling Times by Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church.

The Vestry Papers/Episcopal Church Foundation
<https://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers>

Upcoming Vestry Conversations for 2021

Evangelism: Sharing the Good News of Jesus.

Focus Questions: What do we do well? Who are we and who do we wish to be as a Parish? Who is missing? How do we reach out more completely to the Farmington Valley? What age demographics are not the focus of churches in the area but could be our focus? What groups are represented or not?

Feasibility Study and the “radical welcome” it signifies.

What needs to be done to have an accessible building. Waiting on architects to give Fr George plans to review and consider. Would necessitate a capital campaign.

150th Anniversary / Sesquicentennial of St James Parish in 2023

2021 Create Task Force (5-6 people) some vestry members and parishioners have expressed interest in being a part of. Look at possibility of creating videos on historical items in the church such as altar, mural painting, lectern, and rood screen as starters.

2022 Get Action Plans set up and initiated for what events would take place throughout the Sesquicentennial year 2023.

Stewardship

Kim P. brought up during the past year with the Pandemic, the year ended strong with financials, along with keeping connections and parish engagement through social media, which gives way to a strong start to 2021. Stewardship to be seen not as a year-end event but to be a continual process and what will that look like? Fostering Gratitude, a significant component.

Old Business

Next Vestry meeting - continue to discuss what component St James Parish will take in the Episcopal Church in CT Bishop’s - Joining Jesus in a New Missional Age Fundraising Initiative. Link to Info on the Initiative can be found here:

<https://www.episcopalct.org/joining-jesus/>

Respectfully Submitted

Carol Kirkwood, Clerk

Celebrating March Birthdays

Pierce Connelly

Rowan Connelly

Mitch Guglielmo

Lila Manton

Jane Inrig

Lillian Tuttle

Jerry Hess

Paul Ingram

Drew Alligood

David Paye

Nick Baldwin

Bruce Baldwin

Marisol Pereira

May Nevius

Anna Lapointe

Ev Lyons

Elizabeth Ososki

Ray Madorin

Elizabeth McBride

Katherine Watkin



Help support our Cathedral's toiletries collection during Lent

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

There are always folks living in poverty who we can help, but COVID has created scarcity even for folks that normally would be "okay," *i.e.*, they would have enough to eat and buy the basic things they need. The Cathedral is attempting to help a group we don't normally think of as challenged with issues of scarcity: college students. Please read the letter below as the

North Central Region in the Episcopal Church in CT is trying to help address shortages of toiletries. **Beginning this Sunday and every Sunday through Easter (or during the week), please bring the items listed in the letter to St. James. There will be a box in the narthex for the collection of your donations.** The items asked for may seem like small things, but imagine you didn't have the resources to buy them? Be as generous as you can be and remember that the entrance to the church is always open. Drop by at your convenience.

Fr. George



Companions in Christ,

In the Gospel of Matthew 25:35 Jesus says to the disciples:

"for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me in." *The disciple's response: Lord when did we see you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink. In verse 40 Jesus replied; Truly I tell you just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.*"

Many university and college students across the U.S. report lacking access to a reliable supply of nutritious food, a concept known as food insecurity, which can affect their ability to learn, according to research presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association.

After a successful collection of food for Capital Community College (CCC) Food Pantry using a Reverse Advent Calendar, Christ Church Cathedral is inviting you to join in a Lenten Discipline of loving and caring for our neighbors.

Let us support our college students. The statistics are concerning. 41% of undergraduates and 48% of community college students suffer from food insecurity. Many of the students are beneficiaries of SNAP Vouchers (formerly called Food Stamps), which does not allow for the purchase of personal hygiene products.

Therefore, we invite your community and its members to weekly collect one personal care hygiene product for each week of Lent to benefit Capital Community College (CCC) Food Pantry. Please note, and share with your community, the Director of CCC Food Pantry has identified the most needed hygiene products:

- Soap
- Shampoo
- Deodorant
- Conditioner
- Men's and Women's Razors
- Feminine hygiene products
- Large size Poise and Depends products.

These items can be delivered to our Cathedral from Wednesday, April 7th to Friday, April 9th from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. or Sunday April 11 from 12:00pm to 2:00pm. Imagine what we as the North Central Region of ECCT can collectively accomplish for the students.

For more information contact Cathedral Deacon Bonnie Matthews at bmatthews228@comcast.net.

Faithfully,

Deacon Bonnie

St. James Parish

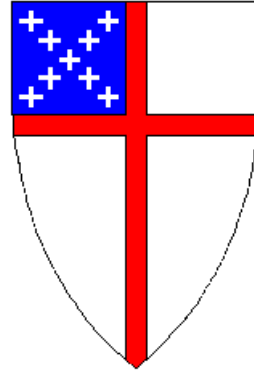
3 Mountain Road
Farmington, Connecticut 06032

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

OFFICERS

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

VESTRY

2021
Mimi Hostetter
Kim Pereira
Robyn Shover

2022
Thomas Nelson
Foster White
James Wilkie

2023
Kim Faubert
Maina Rice
Anna Whilby

St. James Parish

3 MOUNTAIN ROAD
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

