

St. James Parish

Epistle



February 2022

Rector's Message

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. John 10:11

I have been thinking a good bit about Jesus' claims in the 10th Chapter of John's Gospel. Jesus makes the case, in John 10, for the life that He offers as opposed to the life that the world so often offers. Jesus alternately refers to himself as "the good shepherd," "the gate for the sheep," as the One who "lays down my life for the sheep." The forces of the world ("the wolf," and the other "gates") try to scatter, destroy, and harm the sheep but Jesus, the Good Shepherd, leads His own through the narrow gate, and only wishes to offer "life abundant" to His sheep, His own.

One of the reasons I have been mulling over John 10 is because there is so much scarcity out there, as opposed to abundance. I recently went to North Carolina, where I grew up and the place my father and siblings still reside, to visit and take a little time away. The rural NC of my youth is still primarily a poor place, with old houses and buildings. There are, however, signs of growth, new housing developments where people, mostly from outside the community and even NC, are moving into nice homes where farms once were. The poor are still poor, and those with "abundance" of material things are still rich in the way of resources and apparent blessings. I have had an unusually extensive number of people connecting with me lately about difficult diagnoses, while others are ravaged by the vagaries that old age can bring into the lives of any person. The COVID pandemic has most of us still ducking for cover, too, and there seems to be no end in sight. The



abundance that Jesus speaks of seems to be in hiding, taking a holiday, while so many in the world, as has always been the way, are reaping a bounty of tears and pain.

Jesus did not wear rose-colored glasses; He saw the world as it was, fractured and broken, sinful and selfish, occupied by those who would claim their "abundant life" at the expense of those who were poorer and considered weak and useless. Jesus speaks of an abundant life that blossoms into existence the moment we realize that He is all the world, all we need to find our worth, hope, and love. Jesus tells us that all can lay claim to His abundant life but will find it only in His loving gaze, His blessed arms, and through listening to the truth and hope of His call. My father, growing old and not feeling terribly well, finds his blessing and abundance in God's assurance of eternal life in Christ. The poor in the Dominican Republic find

Christ's bounty in worship together and making a joyful noise in music and praise to God. Christ's voice, which promises the "life abundant," does not speak to us through materialism, power, or even creature comforts, but through the truth and promise of love, the beauty of

Creation, and the hope that in Him we are never alone nor forsaken. We can find joy in Christ's abundance, which is a radiant love and an overflowing of forgiveness and mercy, which cannot be purchased or stolen. Jesus came that we might have life in abundance, and it may be about time for us to embrace what that abundance truly means.

In Christ,
Fr. George+

Warden's Corner

Three years ago I met with Father George for coffee and little did I know how much my life would change. I was invited to join the vestry for a three year term, but I never imagined all that I would learn. I feel so blessed to have been your warden for the last two years, and to have worked with such capable co-wardens, Dona Waugh and Jim Wilkie.

Being on vestry taught me the intricacies of what it takes to run a church and it also led me on a path to learn more about discipleship, stewardship and all the reasons why St. James matters to all of you. I never expected to be a zoom warden, and I was constantly awed by the bravery of Father George, Blake and others as they dove headfirst into the world of virtual services. They kept our doors open when many other churches were closed and found creative ways to try to keep everyone involved in person or virtually.

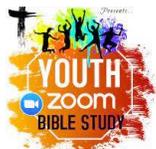
Thank you for trusting me with this great responsibility. I was so honored to serve, but I know that the church is in very capable hands. Many blessings to you all!



With deepest appreciation,
Kim Pereira, Ed.D.
Vestry Co-Warden

Teen Bible Study

In February, Teen Bible Study will meet on Sundays, February 13th and 27th following the service. All students in high school are invited and encouraged to participate! Bible Study books will be provided with some at home continuation throughout the weeks! We will be working on "Weeks 15–18" in our Bible Study Book.



As always, please feel free to email me with any questions at

amy.sjyouthminister@gmail.com !

Church School update

Although we went back to virtual Church School in January, we learned about the first followers of Jesus and how they chose to believe and follow Jesus. We also learned about Daniel and David and children were able to still complete fun crafts and activities thanks to fun take home bags with all the materials!

For the month of February we will be learning Lessons from the Gospel of John including the Jesus Shows His Power in Cana and at the Temple, Nicodemus Pays a Secret Visit, and The Woman at the Well Spreads the Word. We will also be continuing with Deacon Doug and our Children's Choir as we learn new songs and music!

There will be no Church School on Sunday, February 20th in observation of Winter Break. The decision of an exact return date to in-person Church School is still to be determined. Please look in the bulletin and e-flashes for any updates regarding the location of Church School. As always, please feel free to email me with any questions! amy.sjyouthminister@gmail.com

Faith & Fries returns!!

In November, 2019 we launched a new community conversation called *Faith and Fries*. In concert with First Church of Christ, Congregational, Farmington, our aim was to invite our two communities, along with the wider Farmington Valley community, to have conversations around faith and culture, faith and society, and the spiritual life, in general. We really were building some momentum, holding our gatherings at Taprock in Unionville, in growing the *Faith and Fries* community, when COVID came along and ... you can guess the rest.



Please join us as we gather for *Faith and Fries* on **Monday, February 28th, from 7–8:30 pm**. Folks are invited to gather at Taprock Beer Bar & Refuge, in Unionville for a drink, you can grab some fries or a meal, if you choose, and share our thoughts about how cultural events and ideas intersect faith. Invite your neighbors, friends who don't go to church, whomever you think might enjoy stimulating conversation around culture and faith (or a lack of it).

From the Deacon's bench

Discerning God's Call

Although we serve in parishes, deacons “belong” to the bishop. Every three years Bishop Ahrens suggests that a deacon start discerning a new calling. For many years I volunteered at the Seabury Active Living community, while my parish ministry remained at St. Marks in New Britain. Eventually the time came to find a new parish with new outreach ministries. Although never an easy transition, my journey led me a wonderful new parish home at St. James. Once here, Father George and I discussed some possible outreach ministries, but the best laid plans sometimes are overtaken by unforeseen events. You could call this serendipity, but I like to think it's an act of the Holy Spirit.

My new avenue of outreach ministry begins with my relationship with Hope and Bill Eakins, former priest of this parish. The three of us served together at St. Marks, New Britain and at St. Johns, West Hartford. Several times they've help me try out new ministries by providing opportunities. In the summer of 2021, Bill Eakins asked me to cover a Sunday service at the Duncaster retirement community in Bloomfield. Bill explained that he and Hope began holding services at two units of Duncaster during the pandemic. The first worship service takes place in the main meeting room for residents in independent living, while the second is held upstairs for residents in assisted living. Both ecumenical services contain hymns, readings, prayers, and a sermon, but the offering of communion would not be appropriate for these diverse congregations. The structure of the services, however, allows for them to be conducted by lay ministers and deacons like me.

Leading these worship sessions turned out to be a real joy and I offered to help should the need arise. In the fall, Hope and Bill took a trip Morocco, so I served for two Sundays in a row. Next, they began to imagine how future Sundays would be covered during an upcoming 5-month cruise. Since deacons generally only take off one Sunday a month to attend their “home” parish, Father George and I agreed that my commitment could be no more than that. This left Hope and Bill in need of locating additional lay ministers.

Just when Bill thought he'd exhausted all avenues of assistance, the Holy Spirit made its move. Trinity Church on Sigourney Street in Harford, another former parish of the Eakins, had been conducting a Sunday service at the medical care facility of Duncaster. The pandemic had shut down their access to the medical residents, so the team offered to take over the sessions at the units covered by Hope and Bill.

The Eakins asked me to coordinate the ministry while they're travelling and, of course, I agreed. Rather than finding my new ministry, it found me. Now with a team of four preachers (including me), we've mapped out a schedule for Sundays from the beginning of January until the end of May. Each week I prepare the bulletins by selecting hymns, readings, and prayers. At

Duncaster, staff and residents print and distribute the bulletins and serve as ushers, readers, and flower arrangers. Each week this team works together to make sure we can worship together. Perhaps opportunities may arise for more

people from St. James to become involved in this ministry at Duncaster. Let's hope that, as the pandemic wanes, more aspects of this ministry may emerge.

Reflecting on my fifteen years as a deacon, I've concluded that God opens doors of ministry in unexpected ways. Often, I've imagined one path and God has shown me another. Perhaps these ways are mysterious in my mind but I'm sure they are not in God's. Let us be thankful that Jesus continues to call us “o'er the tumult, saying Christian, follow me”.

Doug Engwall, Deacon



Candlemas, the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord

On **Wednesday, February 2nd, at 5 p.m.**, instead of Evening Prayer, 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.

Sunday Adult Bible Study

Sundays at noon we gather virtually for our Bible study with the Letters from Paul to the Philippians. Contact Fr. George if you do not have the study guide. Please do not worry if you cannot afford to pay for books; no one will be left out, just let Fr. George know. All are welcome!

Prayer Team

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

Do not look forward to what will happen tomorrow; the same Everlasting Father will take care of you tomorrow and every day. Either He will shield you from suffering, or He will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace; put aside all anxious thoughts and continually say..."The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart has trusted in Him and I am helped.

He is not only with me ... but in me ... and I in Him.

St. Francis de Sales

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

Pat Clark
Carol Kirkwood
Donna Paye

Conversations on World Religions & Faith: Islam

This Spring, as part of our continuing series on World Religions, we will host an imam to share with us a presentation and discussion of Islam. Stay tuned for details as we firm up the date and content.



A word about Outreach

...whatever you did for one of the least of these my brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.
Matthew 25:40

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the last two years have made it hard, to say the least, to do Outreach in the way we are accustomed. We have sent money to a vast array of organizations and done what we could, in person, during the pandemic. There have been many people doing the work of outreach in their own way, too, both through St. James and outside of it; I could cite many examples. Since the departure of our last Outreach chair, we have, honestly, struggled to cohere as a ministry whole around Outreach. My hope is that as COVID numbers drop and/or we learn how we will live in the world with COVID around, we will find new ways to reach out beyond our walls, as well as rely on some of the old traditions, too. Please know that every member of St. James Parish is considered a member of Outreach and we are all bound to share the Good News of Jesus Christ crucified and risen out in the wider world. One of the ways we declare Jesus is by visiting the sick, assisting the poor and imprisoned, giving food to those who need it, and so much more.

We need you in our Outreach efforts. We need one person, or several persons, to find in themselves a leader, one who wants to lead us in organizing our outreach efforts, so that we can do the most we can, as lovingly and faithfully as we can. There is much pain in the world and our work, as part of sharing the Gospel, is to sit with people in their pain and to offer them joy when and where we may. Join me in 2022 to discern how and where God is calling us into life as people in the world, folks within this community. Touch base with me and see how you might be able to make a difference, through our community, beyond our community.

Fr. George+

St. James Parish Annual Meeting

- This *Epistle* should reach you before we hold our Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 30th at 11:30 a.m. The meeting will be held as a hybrid gathering, in-person and online. You are welcome to attend in-person as the meeting follows the 10:15 worship service
- OR you may attend online via Zoom. The info you need to attend the meeting on Zoom is available from the parish office upon request.

Shrove Tuesday Chili!

This year, since we cannot yet bring back our much-loved *Chili Cookoff*, we're still planning to make chili, **a lot of chili!!** And we'd love you to help make it and we'd really love you to buy some, too!

Whether you like your chili with beef, turkey, or just loads of veggies, we hope to have you covered! Watch for details about our Chili Fundraiser!

We'll have chilis and cornbread available to order before Shrove Tuesday, March 1st for you to pick up and enjoy a tasty supper at home with your family!



Minutes of the Vestry of St. James: December 18, 2021

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

Absent: Robyn Shover

Meeting called to order 7:04 pm

Minutes of November 18, 2021, Vestry Meeting

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

Ministry Reports

Finance/Treasurer's report – November 2021

Summary of Report via EJ Ososki. Overall, we are looking pretty good. Pledge income is nearly \$12,000 ahead of budget. We are a little short in other income areas, but the income is still \$6,000 ahead of plan – not bad for the uncertainty of the environment. Expenses are about \$9,000 under budget due to a variety of things. In total we are \$15,000 ahead of plan going into December.

Foster moved to accept the report. Mimi seconded.

Discussion/Questions

- All larger pledges are in except for 1 which often comes in end of the year.
- Jerry Hess consulted about mutual funds and next budget to better reflect that some pay out dividends and others reinvest vs seeing it as a deficit.
- Loose plate offering goal for December will most likely not be met due to decrease of in-person attendance.
- If all stays on target year end, we will be at smaller projected deficit.

Unanimous vote to accept the financial report.

Stewardship Project

- As of this meeting date there are 74 pledging units totaling \$253,500. There are 18 outstanding pledging units. If they gave at 2021 level, we would be at approximately \$276,00. Budget goal is \$288,00.
- Incoming pledges will continue to be watched and some Vestry/Stewardship members may be called on to make phone calls to those who haven't yet pledged.

New Business

Budget for 2022

Preliminary summary via EJ Ososki. Our pledges will likely come in lower than last year, due primarily to the loss of a few parishioners. Looking at a budget set at \$275,000.

- This budget does not contemplate staff raises. The last increase was 2% in 2019 for the sexton and parish administrator. George's last increase was in 2018. This is a difficult message, considering the effects of inflation, but due to shrinking income, it's hard not to work in an increase.
- Removed the fundraiser from the income side for the 2nd year.
- There is no amount budgeted for streaming equipment despite vestry's approval
- There is no amount budgeted for significant building repairs. With an old building, unexpected repairs are always looming.

As presented, the budget shows a 7.6% draw on invested funds which is higher than we want to be. The target is under 5% to maintain fund principal. As always, there is no "fat" to be trimmed from our budget. We can tweak things here and there, but none will make a significant impact. If we continue to shrink financially, we will need to make changes that fundamentally effect the way the church operates.

Discussion/Thoughts

- Concerns of inflation of at least 2–3%.
 - We could forgo the streaming equipment we had approved and just go with purchasing a computer and camera which will still be an improvement (hopefully) at a much lower cost.
 - Sexton already comes in 2 days a week vs 3.
- Further discussions to take place in coming weeks and at Vestry meeting January 20, 2022.

2022 ANNUAL MEETING will be held on Sunday, January 30, 2022, following the 2nd service.

Vestry Retreat Saturday February 5, 2022, 9 am–3 pm in Parish Hall or Online

- Rev. Canon Rebekah Hatch, Rector, St Albans Simsbury and ECCT Interim Dean of Formation has been in discussions with Fr. George to lead us; theme – Small Churches making an Impact.
- Day would be broken into Morning session / Lunch / Afternoon session / Eucharist

Old Business

New Vestry Members

- Notice has been put in bulletin for any interest
- Vestry Members have also been in discussion with some possible candidates
- Discussed 1 Convention delegate and 2 alternate delegates to be on ballot

Audiovisual Equipment for automated streaming

- If we really want to go forward with getting a system with some costs to it, we need to be creative with raising \$\$\$, such as Go Fund Me or any ideas others have. What target to do we realistically want to go for \$2K/\$14K/\$26K?
- We could think about doing the system ourselves with buying just a new camera and computer as it would be less money
- Would need about 4 or more people trained to help run the system. Training not complex.
- Internet is at par, but like with all, it can be unstable, but all has been done to fix issues.

Next Vestry meeting, January 20, 2022, at 7 pm via Zoom

Jim made a motion to adjourn. Foster seconded. Unanimous vote to adjourn. Adjourned at 8:55pm

Respectfully Submitted

Carol

Carol Kirkwood, Clerk

Celebrating February Birthdays

Foster White
Jeff Dugan
Donna Paye
Molly Greaves
Ethan Lucas
Charlotte Sullivan
Jamie Baldwin
Daniel Roberts

Siggi Ingimarsson
Connor Hillemeir
Joyce Bettencourt
Marjorie King
Francesca Flynn
Betty Marino
Marjorie Bingham



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.



Your picture in a brochure or on our website?

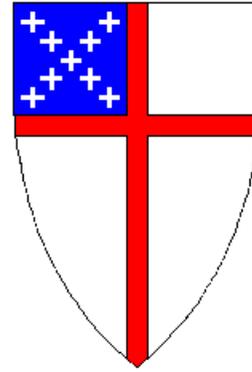
St. James Parish uses candid photos of various church activities on our website and in publications (like this *Epistle*). If you prefer that your photo NOT be displayed, please contact the parish office; we maintain a list of members whose likeness is not to be shared.

St. James Parish

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Website: www.stjamesfarmington.org



MISSION STATEMENT:

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

STAFF		OFFICERS		
The Rev. George C. Roberts	<i>Rector</i>	Kim Faubert & Jim Wilkie, <i>Wardens</i>		
The Rev. Douglas Engwall	<i>Deacon</i>	** EJ Ososki, <i>Treasurer</i>		
Amelia (Amy) Steele	<i>Dir. of Children & Youth Ministries</i>	** Jerry Hess, <i>Asst. Treasurer</i>		
Blake Hansen	<i>Director of Music</i>	** Carol Kirkwood, <i>Parish Clerk</i>		
Susan Deming	<i>Parish Administrator</i>	2022	VESTRY	2024
Anthony Nauss	<i>Sexton</i>	Thomas Nelson	Kim Faubert	** Kathy Bullard
Laura Vacca	<i>Nursery Supervisor</i>	Foster White	Maina Rice	** Bonnie Sudell
		James Wilkie	Anna Whilby	** Robert Sudell
		** to be voted on at Annual Meeting 1/30/22		

St. James Parish

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

