

St. James Parish

WITH ST. MARK'S MINISTRIES

Epistle



SUMMER 2026

Rector's Message

"Calling out around the world, are you ready for a brand-new beat; Summer's here and the time is right, For dancing in the street ..." These words, first sung by Martha and the Vandellas, are a shout out to the dog days of summer, fun, freedom, carefree abandon, and a sense that something new is happening. I am rather partial to Van Halen's version of the song from their album *Van Halen II* which came out in my senior year of high school. High school, being in one's late teens, dancing the night away (even when your dance moves are very subpar), and feeling that the entire world is open to you, elicits that notion that everything and anything is possible. I was thinking last week about the young men who landed on the beaches of Normandy, June 6 (for them, 1944). They were mostly 18 or 19-year-olds who had never seen combat and, a year or two earlier, had been carefree teenagers who were now in a life-or-death struggle. Thousands of them did not make it off the beaches that day and many more bore in their bodies and even more in their minds, the sounds, sights, and wounds of that day. They were very far away from the sentiments of dancing in the streets and God bless them as we thank them for their sacrifice.

You may be wondering, "Hey George, where are you going with this?" A good and fair question. Our nature is to love the world and the life we are given. Think about a two-year-old whose eyes are wide open with wonder at the possibilities of the world and, if he or she is loved and nourished, that wonder will only diminish when the world blasts it away with its own angst, purposelessness, hatred, bitterness, poverty,

bombs and violence, etc. How can we, as people living in the world, hold onto - if not the innocence of youth - at least the hope and promise that God gives each of us by virtue of being born? Life is hard and it is nearly impossible to hold onto the sweet days of youth, the endless summers, or the innocence of holding the hand of someone you are smitten with for the first time. We age, see the world simmer with pain and anguish, watch the people that we love fall to illness and time, and we can lose sight of the hopeful beings God created us to be. Jesus says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." Jesus does not say this only to lay claim to be the true pathway to God's vision for us and the path to eternal life. He offers us a way to discovery, a never entirely straight yet wondrous line to His perfect love. Holding onto Jesus is not like clinging to our youth or the "good old days," it is facing the world, full on, with all of its "barbed wire and bombs," as John Lennox says, and still finding hope because we are loved by the God of all creation. The world is not always kind, but we are loved entirely by a Savior who is nothing but kindness and light. Jesus offers us a way to keep dancing, even if the world isn't playing our song. We dance to the music of Christ's love, a way to be forever young, forever free, and full of life even when the world seems against us.

In Christ,
Fr. George+

Warden's Corner

Our wonderful St James Parish is many things. It is a place for us to seek and worship God, to enjoy fellowship, to support each other, and hopefully be a sanctuary of peace in the midst of life's challenges. It isn't, however, immune from emergencies, whether they be fire, medical, natural or external disasters, or threatening or violent incidents. It is important for our church, and all churches, to provide a safe and secure environment for all the many people who pass through our doors. Having a safer church starts with the need to identify potential risks and make plans and procedures to address these emergencies should they occur. The goal is to protect the people who come to our church as well as preserving our beautiful and historic church home. With this goal in mind, we have started a Safety Committee which will be working to develop emergency action plans that will be communicated to the congregation and hopefully practiced well before any emergency may arise.

In the last few years, before we formally started this committee, we made some very important safety-related improvements. We have installed a continuously monitored smoke and fire detection system. This system allows an approximate six-minute Fire Department response time and hopefully prevent the loss of life or the loss of our building to an unfortunate fire. Additionally, we now have an AED, an automated external defibrillator, which is a device used, in addition to CPR, to help a person experiencing cardiac arrest. In case you hadn't seen it, it is housed on the wall across from the library, near the restrooms. Also, all our old and unsound exterior doors have been replaced with modern, lockable ones. And finally, we have installed all new windows (in the office and fellowship wings) which actually open for egress and lock for security.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Bob Sudell for the tireless work he put into making these improvements happen! Our new safety plan will include evacuation plans for every space in the building. It will be important that everyone knows the locations of all the fire alarms, fire extinguishers, the AED, and first aid kits. We will conduct fire drills and have "shelter in place" information. Additionally, we will offer CPR, AED,

and *Stop the Bleed* training in which we hope everyone will consider taking part. It is unfortunate to think about, but we will also be addressing our safety related to potentially disruptive or violent individuals. We spoke with a church security expert who suggested some changes that could be made to improve security. His company offers training to faith-based organizations, and he emphasized that security measures and training work best when the entire congregation is engaged and participating in the effort. We will continue to invite anyone who is interested or experienced in these areas to join the Safety Committee and make St. James a more secure place in the future.

Kathy Bullard, Co-Warden

Faith & Fries!

On Tuesday, July 28th, from 7–8:30 pm, you are invited to join us for *Faith and Fries* at Puente American-Latino Pub at 81 Main Street in Unionville. Come for dinner, have a drink or



snack, whatever is comfortable for you. We invite all to come as they are able and please, feel free to invite a friend, neighbor, or co-worker! How do we deal with doubts that we have re: our faith? What helps us when we feel the church fails us, culture/society is in disarray, and there seem to be few answers? Exploring the opening monologue of David Hare's 1990 play *Racing Demon*, which examined the Church of England, we will seek conversation and, maybe, a few insights. The play was part of a trilogy of plays that explored English culture, politics, etc. This conversation is not just for theatre lovers, we assure you, but should be fun and informative. Call the church with questions.

Women's Ministry

We have so many wonderful things planned for the year ahead. These are a few teasers for you to jot down on your calendar and to get excited about. Your participation is the key to making these activities extra special!

Daily Grind coffee gatherings: Summer dates will be announced in upcoming Sunday bulletins.

Monday, July 20th, 7 pm – Card making with Marge

Thursday, August 13th, 7 pm -Book Club. *God's Joyful Surprise* by Sue Monk Kidd - see, text or email Tracey Roberts for more information.

Saturday, September 26th, 9 am – Prayer Breakfast with Potluck, Parish Hall. We have a very special time planned!

October 3rd, 7 pm – St James Got Talent Show! , This will be a ton of fun! Any talent by anyone in our parish – let's have fun and laugh and cheer each other on. See Linda Mason for information.

Friday evening to Saturday, November 13th/14th at Camp Washington. Mark your calendar! Please see Kathy Bullard for more information regarding this time of togetherness and lifting our spirits up.

Monday, December 7th, 6:30 pm –Card making with Marge

Our group events are open to any woman in our St James Parish. If you have any questions or ideas for our ministry, please talk to any of us: Kathy Bullard, Deb Butler, Gabriela Henry, Linda Mason, Tracey Roberts, Molly Sherman, Nancy Thompson, Anna Whilby.

Men's Breakfast

On **Saturday, July 11th at 8:00 am**, all men of the parish are invited to join us for a time of conversation and good food at the



Crazy Pancake, 17 Whiting Street, in Plainville. Come as you are. Everyone is responsible for his own breakfast but let Fr. George know if that is a

challenge, as there is assistance available.

Fr. George will be away this month but please gather and enjoy the company of your fellow St. James guys!

19th Annual Ability Walk & Roll in Walnut Hill Park!

The City of New Britain for many years has sponsored a day to celebrate the abilities of those with disabilities in Walnut Hill Park. This year the date is **Wednesday, July 22nd**. It starts with a trek around the mile-long loop of Walnut Hill Park at 5 p.m. Participants walk or roll in their wheelchairs. It's definitely not a race, but it is a lot of fun. The event continues with visits to vendor booths and one of them has always been the St. Mark's Ice Cream Booth (do we know how to attract a crowd or what?) where we also take prayer requests. The event continues with a concert at 7 p.m. at the Darius Miller Band Shell.



This year the concert features the R&B and Funk music of "Rhythm City." The event is free (including the ice cream!) and everyone of any ability is most welcome! The event is especially appropriate for children. There is abundant free parking in the lots and on the lawn of the Park. **Anyone who would like to help serve the ice cream or take prayer requests is asked to email Dave Tompkins at dtompk2000@aol.com** This event will be part of our St. Mark's Ministries efforts and funded from the Smith Fund.

Notes from the Parish Office

The parish office hours have changed and are now **Monday–Thursday, 9 am–2 pm**.

This *Epistle* carries us through the summer. Please note the submission deadline for the very important **September Epistle** is **Monday, August 17th** and will include much Fall programming information.

The parish office will soon mail statements for the first half-year's pledge contributions. Take the time to review your statement, and, if you are not current on your pledge, please make every effort to catch up. It's important to stay as up to date as possible on your pledge donations throughout the summer as parish bills continue despite our stay-cations and travels. Thank you so much for your continued generosity!

B & G looking for volunteers

The Building and Grounds Committee (aka B & G) is seeking volunteers to help with the routine maintenance of our church. If you would like to participate, please contact Bob Sudell at 860-836-3124 or sudellrobert@gmail.com or Skip Mason at 860-438-6728 or skiphmason@icloud.com.

Also, if you have any concerns with the condition of the building or grounds, please contact either one of us.

Thank you
Bob and Skip

4th Annual Back-to-School Drive

The tradition continues! The youth of St. James are kicking off our **4th Annual Back-to-School Drive**, providing complete sets of school supplies, backpacks, lunch boxes, and water bottles to 20 local Farmington students who would not



otherwise have the means to start the school year with the necessary supplies.

Our school district partners are incredibly grateful for your years of support, noting that these gifts give families a massive boost and get the kids genuinely excited for the first day of school.

Want to help us reach our goal?

1. **Donate Supplies:** Click the link to see what items are needed and sign up: [Back-to-School Drive](#)
2. **Give Financially:** If you prefer to let us do the shopping, monetary donations are also wonderfully welcome! You can donate gift cards or drop a check made out to St. James (Memo: Back-to-School Drive) in the collection basket.
3. **Drop-off:** Please place all physical donations in the church narthex bins by **Sunday, August 16th**.

After the deadline, our youth group will meet to assemble the backpacks and add personal notes of encouragement. Thank you for your ongoing generosity and for helping every child thrive!

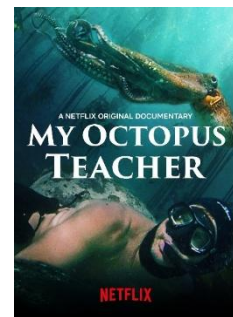
From *The Youth of St. James*

Summer Worship Schedule

We hold a single Sunday worship service at 9:30 a.m. throughout the summer until **September 13th**. This service is open to in-person attendance and available online as well. Nursery childcare will be available for the service during the summer. Morning Prayer will continue to be livestreamed on Facebook Mondays at 9:30 am during the summer and the Wednesday 11:30 am Holy Eucharist service will continue throughout the summer except during Fr. George's vacation – watch for updates.

Movie night on July 10th

On Friday, July 10th at 6:30 pm. please join us for our first movie night in a while with a stunning documentary called *My Octopus Teacher*. No, not the greatest name for a film, which was my first response to the title. too. But a friend recommended it to me and so I watched it on recent flight (alluded to in a recent *Feed My Sheep* article). I was blown away by the sheer beauty of the film, set off the coast of the Western Cape in South Africa. The film chronicles a documentary filmmaker (Craig Foster) who is struggling in all of his human relationships – including with his wife and adolescent son – and has even lost his zest for filmmaking. He begins to free-dive off the coast where he has a family home and encounters an octopus, animals who are notoriously shy. Over the course of weeks and months, the two creatures – human and invertebrate – begin to form a bond that begins, amazingly, to transform Craig's life. The film taps into this sense of grace that I hope we can focus on in the coming year. The film is not a religious one, but there are currents of grace flowing freely and powerfully all through it. The film is a spare 1 hour, 25 minutes. Join us for the movie at 6:30 pm in the parish hall. Bring dinner for yourself if you'd like and we will have drinks, popcorn, and dessert available. The film is appropriate for all ages; please feel free to bring a friend or neighbor.



Celebrating July & August birthdays!

Amelia Mason
Charlotte Paré
Alexis Palais
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
Maggie Ososki
Susan Rubin
Geoff Manton
Christine Bogino
Oliver Cadigan
Vivian Lane
George Roberts
Abby Crawford
Skip Mason
Barbara Hess
Matt Roach

Summer gatherings for our Pastoral Care Team

On **Saturday, July 18th**, at 9 am, your Pastoral Care Team will gather to discuss next steps forward as we prepare to begin serving the community as a Team. We hope to have a guest speaker sharing with us a bit about dementia and what services are available through a new ministry at Trinity Episcopal Church, Collinsville. Refreshments will be provided at 9 am, program will start by 9:30 am. All are invited to attend.

On **Saturday, August 15th**, again at 9 am, we will hold our second session for Eucharistic Visitors, with some hands-on work and more conversation around how this applies to Pastoral Care as a whole. If you did not come to our first training session, fear not; you may come to this one! Refreshments provided at 9 am with program starting by 9:30 am.

Your photo in print or on our website?

In the fall, we will begin, I pray, a new program year with the theme of grace. *Finding hope in Christ: God's grace for a weary world* is a working title for the adult education program year, seeking the extraordinary hope and blessing that we find in Christ's grace for a hurting world. We hope to equip ourselves, through prayer, programming, and focus, to seek, discover, and channel the grace of Jesus that can be shared with those who are struggling for purpose and meaning.

We will also begin a new cohort of *Discipleship for Episcopalians* and a talking session that will share with folks more about the process, program, and grace of this curriculum/series of conversations

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.

St James' 9th Annual Fall Craft Fair

Saturday, September 12th, 9 am–3 pm

Once again, we are holding our very well attended gathering of **local artisans, crafters and vendors** exhibiting their wares for your personal and gift shopping opportunities. (Early Christmas shopping anyone?)

We also will have a ***Baked Goods Table*** offering delectables baked by our own talented members.

Our very popular ***Teacup Raffle*** continues this year, where there will be a ***Raffle Table*** displaying our many valuable items for your chance to try your luck. Take part in our drawing to see what you may win!

Tickets are \$1 each, or Twelve tickets for \$10 or ***THIRTY*** tickets for \$20!

Last, but not least, grilled ***Hamburgers & Hotdogs*** for lunch!

**AND SOMETHING NEW FOR 2026!!
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
ON OUR CHURCH STEPS!**

**4 PIECE JAZZ COMBO & VOCALIST
11 am–2 pm**

Our vendors will have their booths set up outside, as well as inside. We have many reservations already and we anticipate another terrific event this year just like last year!

We invite our entire congregation to come out and enjoy this annual fall event and welcome the surrounding community to our parish home.

For further details you may contact Dave Schueler (Event Coordinator) at 571.594.9336 or dwschueler@gmail.com.

**HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!
BRING YOUR FRIENDS**



Prayer Team

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

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands... [Psalm 19:1]

This is shaping up to be a most beautiful Summer ... skies are blue and the flowers are glorious! Every living thing reflects the majesty and power, beauty and complexity of our God! And encourages humility in us. This is a prayer that expresses that sentiment.

Sending blessings to you and those you love,
The Prayer Team

Heavenly Father,

I praise You for Your majestic creation, that displays Your power, wisdom, and love. Thank You for the beauty of the earth, the stars, and every living being. Help me to honor Your creation by caring for it and reflecting Your glory in all I do. May my eyes see Your handiwork and my heart respond with gratitude and awe. I exalt Your name, O Lord, for Your creativity is boundless and inspiring. Let my life be a testimony to Your majesty, revealing Your greatness to others and glorifying You in all circumstances. Amen.

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Summary Minutes of Vestry Meeting of May 21, 2026

Present: Fr. George Roberts, Kathy Bullard, Dave Hrdlicka, Carol Kirkwood, Linda Mason, Doug McDowell, Molly Sherman, Bonnie Sudell, Dave Schueler (guest), Michael Slusarz, and Dave Tompkins.

Minutes of 4/20/26 Meeting

Dave T. made a motion to accept the minutes. Kathy seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Ministry Reports

Finance/Treasurer's Report – April 2026 – Summary of EJ's report

- Income is \$15,000 ahead of plan. Current year's pledges are ahead by \$10,000.
- Expenses are over budget by \$11,000. This is primarily due to snow removal, heating oil, the diocesan contribution and audit fees. Some expenses, including the youth minister and building and grounds expense are under budget.
- Overall, we are in good shape, running \$4,000 favorable to our plan.

Linda motioned to accept the minutes. Dave T. seconded it. There was some discussion on individual line items, including audit fees and church picnic expenses. The motion passed unanimously.

Roof

Our damage claim was denied by our insurance company. Dave Schueler obtained three quotes for roofing, gutters and siding. Linda made a motion to replace the roof for an amount not to exceed \$120,000. Molly seconded it. There was discussion on including siding in the proposal, but the motion was not amended. The vote was eight yes and one no.

Quick capital updates

Dave H. provided an update on our accessibility project. He has a bid package for the design work, including architectural components, electrical requirements and a structural engineer.

Outreach

- Kathy reported that the Walk Against Hunger raised \$2,180, with 18 participants.
- June is one of two months (January being the other) that we stress contributions to the Farmington Food Pantry.

Audio/Sound proposal from Wassman

We reviewed the proposed system upgrade from Wassmann Audio Video Inc. We discussed the age of the current system and ongoing technology updates. Dave T. made a motion to spend \$12,138.07 to upgrade our system. Carol seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Bookkeeper position

Brian Spooner was offered and accepted the position this week. He will start at the end of the month, with oversight from Jerry and Wendy.

Parish Administrator

Father George reported that we are near a decision on the position. He interviewed two candidates and expects that the individual will start mid-June and work with Sue until her retirement.

Building and grounds

Mike Slusarz will contact all existing members and those who have expressed an interest via email for availability for a first meeting.

New Business

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus at St. James? In the 21st century? What are our priorities going forward – Jesus, the building or something else?

This topic will be part of our strategic planning meeting June 15th.

Fall fair – touch base

Dave Schueler is coordinating the event on September 12th.

Vestry picnic in August

Bonnie will send emails to determine availability.

Molly motioned to end the meeting. Kathy seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie F. Sudell, Clerk

St. James Parish

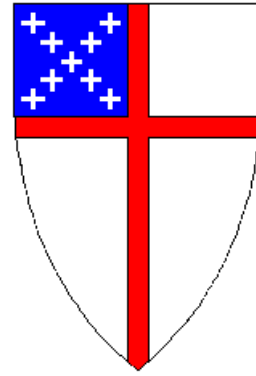
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Email: st.james.church@sbcglobal.net

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*
Blake Hansen *Director of Music*
Pam Sheehy *Parish Administrator*
Cheryl Rusczyk
 Admin., St. Mark's Ministries
Brian Spooner *Bookkeeper*
Ray Smith *Sexton*
Kim McLaurin *Nursery Supervisor*

OFFICERS

Kathy Bullard & David Tompkins, *Wardens*
EJ Ososki, *Treasurer*
Jerry Hess, *Asst. Treasurer*
Bonnie Sudell, *Parish Clerk*

VESTRY

2028

Linda Mason
Ed Preneta
David Tompkins

2029

David Hrdlicka
Carol Kirkwood
Michael Slusarz

2027

Kathy Bullard
Doug McDowell
Molly Sherman

St. James Parish

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

