

St. James Parish

Epistle



December 2021

Rector's Message

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us. Luke 2:78

You will be reading this article as Advent is just beginning. Advent is often spoken of as a time of expectant hope, waiting for the coming of our Savior, who has in fact already come. We are caught, or so it would seem, in the waiting in between Christ's coming among us and Christ coming again. Yet there is much standing between us and our realization of Christ's advent. Truly, just for instance, we are all exhausted of talking about COVID; God knows I am! COVID, nevertheless, continues to hold us back in a variety of ways and simply will not let us out of its grasp; not just yet. Mask wearing (so sick of it!), social distancing (*not being able to properly pass the peace!!*), meeting via Zoom (*sigh*) and so much more threaten our spiritual survival and can, if we are not careful, steal away our hope. A friend was talking recently about the Song of Zechariah – while we are on the subject of hope – which comes straight out of the Gospel of Luke and is one of the Canticles we can pray during Morning Prayer.

Zechariah, you may recall, is the father of John the Baptist. Luke explains that Zechariah, a Levite priest who does periodic duty in the Temple, has been rendered mute by God. He did not believe the angel who came to him, around the same time as the Annunciation to Mary, and told him that he and his wife, childless and in their old age, would have a son. So, God took away Zechariah's ability to proclaim his great joy when his wife becomes pregnant but his hope, hope for a brighter

future for Israel and himself, has been restored and strengthened. John is born and God lifts Zechariah's mute tongue into sudden praise and he utters what has become known as the Song of Zechariah. The "song" is a blessing and reflects a hope that can be ours, as followers of Jesus, even in a time of potential dread, darkness, and endless Zoom ... I mean, doom.

The Song of Zechariah has wonderful words of hope in it, such as "[God] promised of old that He would save us from our enemies ... set us free ... Free to worship Him without fear ... To give people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins. In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death." Advent reminds us, as does the Song of Zechariah, that God has not and will not forget us and that God keeps His promises to save us, we who reside in places of darkness and death.

I will be honest, there have been times in the last nineteen or so months where I have felt entombed, deadened, exhausted and holding onto a fragile hope: God is with me, with us, and He will not abandon us. Advent is a season of expectant hope that God will do all that has been promised: He has sent and will send a Savior, a king of all times, all peoples, a man of love with marks of blessing on His hands, feet, and in His side. Advent reminds us that we are waiting for something that has

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already happened; Christ has come. We should also be mindful that the best is yet to come and God has never and will never leave us to our sadness, despair, anger or deprivation. Christ has come and Christ will come again so, for now, we wait, but “the tender compassion of our God,” His love and mercy, will “shine on those who dwell in darkness.” Take heart; the light is coming. Open your heart; the light is already here.

In Christ,
Fr. George+

Warden's Corner

As we head into the holiday season, we all get busier. Most days I feel like I'm in a pinball machine, bouncing from one commitment to another. Adding onto this craziness is the reality that every decision we make these days involves another level of risk-assessment. We all feel it, although to different degrees. As a working parent of young children, I'm in an acute season of craziness, but I know I'm not alone. For me, that's where St. James comes in. Now that I have returned to in-person church, and my children are having so much fun in Church School, I have one peaceful hour to myself where I can sit in our beautiful church and connect with God. As Bishop Laura talked about during her recent visit to St. James, being in physical church matters and it's good to be back. In this season of stewardship, I hope you will take some time for yourself to reflect on why St. James matters to you, and that you will join me and my family in supporting this special community that can offer us the peace that we all so desperately need these days. As my three years on vestry and two years as your “zoom” Warden come to a close, I want to thank all of you for making St. James such a special place. It's been my honor to serve.

Kim Pereira, Vestry Co-Warden

Church School update

In November we explored lessons from the Old Testament including Moses and the Blazing Bush and Gideon and the trumpets.

For the month of December we will be continuing our work with the Weaving God's Promises curriculum, but moving away from the Old Testament. We will be exploring what Advent is, learning about Zechariah and



Elizabeth, parents of John the Baptist, John the Baptist himself, and of course when Jesus is Born!

We will also be continuing with Deacon Doug and our Children's Choir as we

prepare to sing for your Children and Youth Sunday in December!

Friendly reminder there will be NO Church School December 26th or January 2nd due to Christmas and winter school breaks. We will resume Church School January 9, 2022!

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

amy.siyouthminister@gmail.com !!

Teen Bible Study

In December, Teen Bible Study will meet on Sundays, December 12th and December 19th following the 10:15 a.m. 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 6-8" in our Bible Study Book. As always, please feel free to email me with any questions at amy.siyouthminister@gmail.com !!



From the Deacon's bench

Christmas Comes to a Frozen World

Through a door in the back of a wardrobe, four children enter another world, a world bewitched, where winter never stops and Christmas never comes. The inhabitants of this world are oppressed under the power of an evil witch, turned Queen. Those who oppose her will be turned to stone. The children discover that the future of this world depends on their actions. They must find the courage to battle against the forces of the coldhearted Queen. But they are not alone in this battle. Friendly animals tell the children about Aslan, a kind and fierce Lion who may yet return to liberate this world, the world of Narnia.

Narnia, as we enter it through book and film, is a land of endless cold and snow. Spies are everywhere. The inhabitants don't know whom to trust, even a member of their own families might betray them. But the crown sits uneasily upon the head of the self-proclaimed Queen. She knows of an ancient prophecy wherein four human children may come to Narnia and free the land from her icy grip.

The good people of Narnia cling to the hope embodied in this prophecy. Someday four children, sons of Adam and daughters of Eve, will come to free the land. On that day Aslan will again be abroad in the land to help the children save Narnia from the evil that blankets and chills the land.

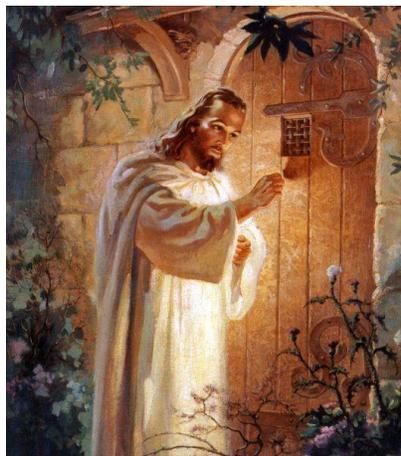
Although the Chronicles of Narnia is a fantasy book written for children, most Christian readers will find the familiar story of our faith. Unlike Narnia where Christmas never comes, for us Christmas comes once a year. In this season we celebrate Jesus coming into our world, preaching the good news, and, by his death and resurrection, assuring our salvation. Jesus, the Great Lion of the Lord, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, comes to proclaim the good news that sets us free.

Both Jesus and Aslan bind up the brokenhearted, liberating captives, releasing

prisoners, and proclaiming a time of favor. They come to break the power of evil rampant in the land, and for those good creatures with sadness in their hearts, and those that mourn – they bring joy. They come loving justice and hating wrongdoing. They come forgiving those who repent.

At the end of the story, the children return to their own world through the same doorway that they entered Narnia. In later books in the series, the children will find other doorways back to this magical kingdom. Through these doors, they are called by Aslan to new life, where they face moral challenges, and challenges of faith and courage.

Perhaps you recall, as I do, a painting of Jesus standing outside a door that can only be opened from the inside. There are many versions of this painting, based on a passage from the Revelation of John (3:20). "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come into you and eat with you, and you with me." That is the best news of all, that there is a doorway into a new world for all of us. The gateway into this new world is Christ. "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate," says Jesus.



Now I'd like you to take a few minutes to imagine a sequel to the picture of Jesus standing outside the door. Once you've opened the door to Jesus, what happens next? Perhaps you sit with Jesus and share a meal. Then what? Perhaps you imagine accompanying Jesus back through the door and out into the world. Many in the world are still oppressed and in need of hearing

good news. Many captives still look forward to hearing liberty proclaimed. Those in mourning await gladness and the faint of spirit desire encouragement. In your new painting, how do you picture yourself? What do you see yourself doing to melt the winter away and bring new life to the world? During this advent season, imagine how you might spread the healing warmth of the good news into your world.

Doug Engwall, Deacon

Youth & Families Advent Wreath Making

Please join us on Sunday, December 5th following the 10:15 a.m. service to enjoy wreath making, crafts, and some treats! As we



look forward to the Advent and Christmas seasons, we invite all St. James parishioners to join us for a

fun Advent Wreath Making Party. We will provide all the supplies including live greens and candle making stations to create a beautiful advent wreath for your home!

We will also need a few crockpots to make the candles, so if anyone is willing to bring theirs in before the service, please let us know ASAP so we can plan accordingly!

RSVPs are appreciated, but not required, so we can try to ensure enough materials per family! Although hosted by Youth and Family Ministries, all are welcome to attend! Please email amy.sjyouthminister@gmail.com with any questions or to RSVP!

Children and Youth Sunday

Join us on Sunday, December 19th as the children and youth of St. James participate in the 10:15 a.m. worship service with music, readings, and more! We will be practicing music in Church School leading up to service and are looking for youth to volunteer for readings!

Please email amy.sjyouthminister@gmail.com with any questions

Sunday Adult Bible Study

Sundays at noon we gather virtually for our Bible study with a set of Letters from Paul: Ephesians and Philippians. The study guides, *For Everyone*, are available in the office with a cost of \$17 for both (1 book for each Letter). 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!

Music Notes

Get your caroling hats on! With Advent and Christmas just around the corner, our favorite seasonal music will start making the rounds at St. James. We are looking forward to Christmas Eve, where the choir (and congregation!) will be caroling during our weather-permitted outdoor service, inspired by old world festivities and community activities which will be joyful and celebratory! We are looking forward to hot beverages, tree decorating, caroling, and of course the Lessons and Nativity story, from the Old Testament to the New.



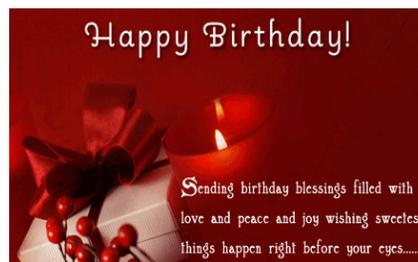
Planning behind starting a concert series at St. James has been ongoing. We hope to host concerts of small ensembles during this time of Covid, including concerts of Jazz, Folk, Classical, and Vocal music. We look forward to presenting these intimate, informative, and entertaining concerts!

We welcome your feedback about our logistical changes during service. Trying to stay safe, but provide the best music we can, we have moved the choir to the loft space above the narthex. Your input will be helpful as we continue to make adjustments.

Blake Hansen, Director of Music

Celebrating December Birthdays

<i>William Rice</i>	<i>Gloria Flis</i>
<i>Nicholas Tuttle</i>	<i>Blair Connelly</i>
<i>Kevin Ives</i>	<i>Kim Faubert</i>
<i>Robyn Shover</i>	<i>Elijah Howe</i>
<i>Jennifer Rosenthal</i>	<i>Jim Clifford</i>



Christmas Eve Celebrations

As hard as it is to believe, even as we are planning our Christmas services, we are still in the grips of COVID-19. We will not, however, allow COVID and all of its attendant challenges to rob us of our Christmas spirit! We are planning two services for Christmas, as is our tradition, one outdoors and one indoors, with something for everyone.

Beginning at 4:30 pm, Christmas Eve, December 24th, we will gather outdoors, on the front lawn of St. James. We will have firepits for warmth and warm ambience, warm drinks, and cookies to share, all prepared in such a way as to minimize COVID risks. We will hold there a Service of Christmas Lessons and Carols, featuring our choir and lots of singing from the congregation. We will hear the Nativity Story from Luke's Gospel and our children will have the opportunity to dress up, if they choose, as a shepherd, wiseman/person, an animal, or a shepherd, and participate in a visual telling of the Nativity story. A Christmas tree will occupy part of the



space, and we encourage folks to bring an ornament or two, something that has meaning for you, to share on our community tree. We will decorate the tree, which will be aglow with lights all

during Christmas night into Christmas Day, and sing as we decorate. Join us for a festive evening of Christmas joy. There will be no Eucharistic celebration at this service. The service will be held indoors, in a more limited fashion, if we have inclement weather.

At 9 pm on Christmas Eve we will hold a festive, traditional celebration of Holy Eucharist, with the reading of the Nativity story, and traditional music of the season, with singing lead by a cantor. The service is always beautiful, so join us if you are able.

At 10 am on Christmas morning, December 25th, we will have an in-person, come as you are Holy Eucharist, celebrating the Nativity of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Angel Giving Tree for Friendship Service Center & Farmington Community Services

The mission of the Friendship Service Center (FSC) is to provide friendship and direct service to those in Central Connecticut who find themselves in need, including the operation of a soup kitchen and ownership and operation of housing for those experiencing homelessness. The Farmington Community Services (FCS) provides support to residents experiencing financial, physical and psychosocial hardships.



The St. James Outreach Committee asks you to help provide Christmas gifts to approximately 25 individuals from the FSC and 10 children from the FCS. The Christmas ornaments representing each gift are now hanging from the Christmas tree in the Narthex. **We ask that you select one or more ornaments, sign your name on the appropriate sign-out chart, purchase an appropriate Christmas gift for your chosen recipient, and return the gift unwrapped by Sunday, December 12th, to the Parish Hall with the ornament attached serving as a gift tag.** If you are unable to come to the Church, you may sign up to participate by choosing your gift to purchase at <https://bit.ly/StJamesTree21>

This is a wonderful opportunity for St James to share joy with those in need in our community. Please note that **the deadline for gifts is Sunday, December 12th.** If you have any questions, please see or call Dona Waugh (914 714-0964) or Linda Larkin (860 404-2240). Thank you very much!

Join us for Greening of the Church

On Sunday, December 19th, immediately following the 10:15 service (roughly 11:30), we will commence with the *Greening of the Church* for Christmas!! Yes, this has been a rough year but, as we think of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, gather with us, socially distanced and wearing your mask, for our traditional Greening. **We are doing more than usual outside this year**, as our early Christmas Eve family service will be outdoors. So if you are more comfortable being outside, there will be “something green” for you to do! Many hands make light work. Please bring your clippers as we only have a few pair, and we will have coffee (if it is cold enough for it ☺). We also plan to have a Christmas tree for our outdoor service that will be decorated. If you would like to donate a tree for outdoors, please let Fr. George know. We invite everyone to bring an ornament or 2 to hang on the tree Christmas Eve. Blessings and we look forward to seeing you soon!



Christmas Decoration Fund

When we celebrate together during holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas, we are poignantly aware of those who are no longer with us. If you would like to make an offering for Christmas decorations in memory of loved ones, please complete the form below and return it to the parish office. Offerings may also be made in thanksgiving for our many blessings. **The deadline for donations is noon on Monday, December 20th.** Make checks payable to *St. James Parish* marked “Christmas Decorations.” After Christmas, the flowers will be distributed to the sick and shut-in. If you would like to help with that ministry, please call the parish office (860-677-1564). Thank you.



Please print as you wish the donation listed in the Christmas Bulletins

In memory of

OR In thanksgiving for

Given by



Movements in Faith Christmas



Come celebrate the holidays with **Movements in Faith on Sunday 12/5 from 2-3 pm.** We will have worship, cookies, games and lots of music!

We will be meeting at **First Church of Christ Congregational, in Porter Memorial, at 75 Main Street, Farmington.** Hope to see you there!



Movements in Faith is a music and faith based program for those with special needs and their families to worship, meet new people, and make music. All are welcome and encouraged to come!

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.

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.

Conversations on World Religions & Faith: Judaism

As part of our Zoom series on world religions this year, on **Tuesday, December 7th at 6:30 pm**, we will be blessed by the Rabbi



Michael Pincus of the Congregation of Beth Israel, who will guide us through a preliminary exploration on Judaism. Rabbi Michael gave a

wonderful presentation for us years ago on the Psalms. Rabbi Michael puts things this way: "I became a rabbi because I believe that the stories and wisdom of our tradition can guide our lives. I experience God in the beauty of nature and in the meeting of others. I believe we need to be part of a community. For me, Judaism can help us discover the meaning of our lives. I look to help others study, reflect, and work together to repair our world. I don't have all the answers, I don't think anyone does. But I do believe that together we can find them ... I invite you to join me finding our way through this wilderness." Signup at <https://bit.ly/StJamesJudaism> so that you receive Zoom info.

Thanksgiving Basket Thanks

St James Parish once again committed to supply 10 Farmington families in need with food for their Thanksgiving meals. Due to COVID-19, the Town did not accept donations of food items, but only monetary donations. **Thanks to your continuing generosity, we were able to donate enough to provide Baskets for more than 15 families' Thanksgivings! Thank you all!!!**



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 ... As you read this, we will begin the Advent season, with the busy-ness of Christmas not far behind. I will try this year, again, to allow Advent to be Advent ... expectant, light-filled, leading to a stable, and a holy Christmas!

Here is a prayer that speaks to that ...

Your Peace

God, who is more than we can ever comprehend,
help us to seek you, and you alone.
Help us to stand before all that we could do,
and seek what you would do,
and do that.
Lift us from our need to achieve all that we can be
and instead,
surrender to what you can be in us.
Give us ways to refrain from busyness
that will put us on edge and off center,
give us today your peace.

Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark

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

Always available, always confidential

Pat Clark: jardinage45@yahoo.com,
860-243-9334

Carol Kirkwood: ckirkwood@snet.net,
860-793-2247

Donna Paye: djp2947@att.net,
860-673-0097

Minutes of the Vestry of St. James: October 21, 2021

Present via Zoom: Fr. George Roberts, Carol Kirkwood, EJ Ososki, Kim Pereira, Jim Wilkie, Mimi Hostetter, Kimberly Faubert, Tom Nelson

Absent: Robyn Shover, Maina Rice, Foster White, Anna Whilby

Meeting called to order 7:06pm

Minutes of September 16, 2021

Jim moved to accept the minutes. EJ seconded. Unanimous vote to accept the minutes.

Ministry Reports

Finance/Treasurer's report – September 2021

Kim P moved to accept the report. Tom seconded.

Discussion

- Budget is on track with minimal variances as of Sept 2021.
- Craft Fair not held, budgeted for \$3500.

Unanimous vote to accept the financial report.

Stewardship Project

- Stewardship timeline calendar currently in effect and dates for events in place. November 7th starts pledge appeal. Vestry members to pledge as early as possible. All of Vestry should encourage pledging and positivity of doing so. If any concerns are noted, be sure to address with Fr. George or Wardens.
- Video project during Annual Appeal for Stewardship has begun and parishioners are being asked to submit a short video segment with the theme of What do you love about St. James? Youth Minister Amy Steele will then compile them into a / Love St. James video.

New Business

Bishop Laura Visit on Nov 14th 10:15 am service, followed by meeting with Vestry

- There are 4 confirmands for Bishop Laura to confirm during the service.
- Bishop Laura would like part of discussion with Vestry to revolve around 2 letters written in 1963 "A Call for Unity" written by 8 Alabama white clergy and the

response of Dr Martin L King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail".

CT Virtuosi @ St James

- CT Virtuosi (thevirtuosi.org) is a premier professional chamber orchestra with a broad membership of musicians. Usually, 4-5 members perform various concerts in the area. They are currently looking for space to call home for student lessons, recitals, Summer Institute, held here summer of 2021 and concert series.
- Many pros for St James as it will give us publicity, concerts, considering start of a community chorus, musicians for services on occasion, and logo to be dual CT Virtuosi at St James to name a few.
- They will also look to make connections in the community including Miss Porter's.
- As of now talks in progress, looking at the logistics including insurance coverage, etc.

Motion made by Mimi – To accept having CT Virtuosi at St James pending insurance approval. Second by Jim. Unanimous vote to accept the motion as stated.

Old Business

Audiovisual equipment for automated streaming

- Looking at 2 different systems PASCOM (\$27K) and Wassman (\$13K)
- Jim and Fr. George went to St Pius in Wolcott to look at the PASCOM system. We currently have PASCOM speaker system installed 10 years ago in the church.

Motion made by Jim – Propose that the Vestry approve expenditures of no more than 26K for an audio/visual system in 2022 budget.

Second by Kim F

- Discussed pros and cons of each system. Discussed Vestry looking for other ways to fund including donors.

Unanimous vote to accept the motion

Evangelism

- Continue to think about who are we? Who might we be? Need to discuss further *Where are we going?* How has COVID changed this trajectory? What do we do **for the time being?**

- Might what we do with Discipleship Team and Bible Study figure into this?

Mimi moved to adjourn. EJ seconded.
 Unanimous vote to adjourn. Adjourned at
 8:58 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Carol

Carol Kirkwood, Clerk

Notes from the Parish Office

IRS reminder: as the end of the 2021 rapidly approaches, many of us choose to make charitable gifts. In order for you to receive credit for a tax-deductible donation on your 2021 tax return, **the donation must be received by St. James or postmarked on or before December 31, 2021.** Donations made or mailed after that date, even if the check is dated in 2021, cannot be included in your 2021 Contribution Statement issued in January, 2022. Please contact the parish office if you have any questions about the status of your 2021 pledge.

The 2022 Altar Flower Chart is now in the narthex. Please sign-up for a Sunday when you would like to donate and dedicate the flowers for the day's services. Note that there will be no altar flowers during the Lenten season.



If you pledged for 2022 and requested envelopes, the boxed envelope sets will be labeled and ready in the narthex for you to pick-up on December 12th. Please contact the parish office if you would like your envelope set dropped off at your home.

Christmas Services

Thursday, December 24th

4:30 pm Service of Christmas Lessons & Carols with Nativity story & Pageant
(outdoors as weather permits)

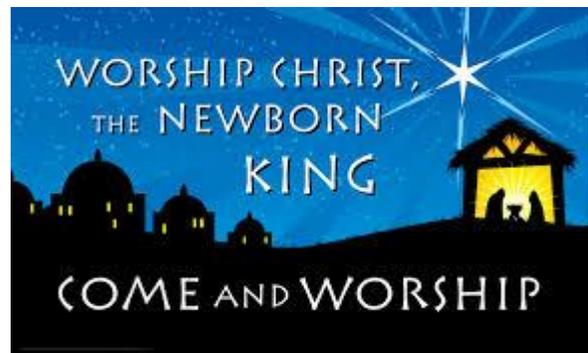
9:00 pm Festal Eucharist

Saturday, December 25th, 10 am Christmas Day Eucharist with Carols

Sunday, December 26th First Sunday of Christmas

8 am Holy Eucharist Rite I

10:15 am Holy Eucharist Rite II, with music



St. James Parish

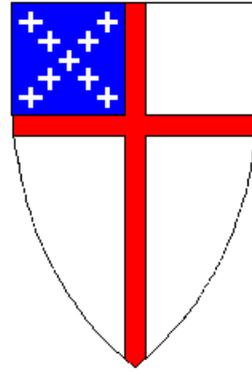
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Fax: 860-677-8219

Email: st.james.church@sbcglobal.net

Website: www.stjamesfarmington.org



MISSION STATEMENT:

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

STAFF		OFFICERS		
The Rev. George C. Roberts	Rector	Kim Pereira & Jim Wilkie, Wardens		
Amelia (Amy) Steele	Dir. of Children & Youth Ministries	EJ Ososki, Treasurer		
Blake Hansen	Director of Music	Jerry Hess, Asst. Treasurer		
Susan Deming	Parish Administrator	Carol Kirkwood, Parish Clerk		
Anthony Nauss	Sexton	2021	VESTRY	2023
Laura Vacca	Nursery Supervisor	Mimi Hostetter	2022	2023
		Kim Pereira	Thomas Nelson	Kim Faubert
		Robyn Shover	Foster White	Maina Rice
			James Wilkie	Anna Whilby

St. James Parish

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

