

St. James Parish

Epistle



June 2022

Rector's Message

The night is passed and the day lies open before us. Let us pray with one heart and mind.

We are at the precipice of electing a new Bishop for the Episcopal Church in Connecticut (ECCT). There is a formal process – when a Bishop retires – which is long, formal, and too much for me to go into here. Bishops have a profound effect on the dioceses they serve, just as a pastor has, for better or worse, on his or her own parish. The process surrounding the election of a new bishop can be very political and factions can form around who supports this or that bishop candidate who may, in turn, represent some particular idea or agenda. So, looking for grounding, my mind drifted toward the above prayer offered near the beginning of the service of Morning Prayer for the Church of England. I really love this little prayer which says so much in a small amount of space (not always my forte, as you know), embracing the notion that God gives us, each day, a new opportunity to come together as prayerful people of one heart and one mind. Christ, in His command for us to love one another, also calls us to find ways to come together in real-world ways, not just as lip service but as a community brought together under Christ.

Being of one heart and one mind seems like a delusional pipedream, yes? Crazy talk even! I spend more brain wattage than I should (confessional time) on Facebook, a vice I vow in the depths of my heart to break. What I see there, which is reflected in news stories and in programming of other types, is a profoundly divided American public and, honestly, a conflicted world. We seem to be anything other

than “of one heart and mind.” We are so very far apart – liberal/conservative, Republican/Democrat, pro-choice/right-to-choose – and, whether we are aware of it or not, the powers that be like it that way. Politicians and other agenda-driven groups could not survive, not as they are, if we did not accept their narrative of division, blaming, complaining, and general negativity about everyone on the outside of their group-think mentality.

Jesus prayed, in John 17:20–21, “I am not asking on behalf of them alone, but also on behalf of those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I am in You. May they also be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.” We are not expected to all think exactly



*The night has passed at the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind.*

alike, dress alike, or look alike but we are to pray to Almighty God with one heart and mind and be connected, heart, mind, and soul to the reality that Christ died for us, baptized us into new life, and WE-ARE-ONE because of Christ. We do not get to

choose to reject another brother or sister in Christ, we simply do not have that option; God does not permit it. Yet, in order to come together, we must see with Christ’s eyes, love with His love, and forgive from His heart of grace. Impossible? It is not, actually. We will never bring our hearts and minds as close together as God commands. We can, however, make inroads and great strides by allowing God to heal us and let His love bring us closer together, the first steps of allowing God to build a new world in and through us. The night is passed, and the day lies open before us ...

In Christ,
Fr. George+

Warden's Corner

How frustrating that after months of things “opening up” we find ourselves taking a step backward into this seemingly never-ending pandemic. I write this as I am recovering from Covid, despite being a fully vaccinated, double boosted, mask wearer and yes, I’m more than a little disappointed too. But instead of focusing on the step back, I’d like to share a quick story I came upon in a devotional I subscribe to, about a boy who finds a large shining rock in a stream and brings it home to show his family. Seemingly unimpressed, they use it as a doorstop, walking past it numerous times a day ... for years! Ultimately, they discover the rock is actually a 17-pound gold nugget, and the gold rush was on. The author goes on to remind us of how often we too walk past a blessing and don’t even realize it.

Now, even I can’t make a case for this pandemic being a blessing, but I invite you to think about what positives have come from it and what a blessing our St James family has been throughout all of it. (Think streaming services to those homebound even without the pandemic!) With our 150th anniversary coming up, can you even imagine how many blessings this parish family has bestowed on everyone who has walked through our doors? There are many opportunities for all of us, with whatever gifts God has blessed



us with individually and collectively, to show those outside our parish family what a blessing

St. James and the Word of our risen Lord really is. Let us all use this time to look within and see how we might each contribute; is it making coffee on Sunday morning? Weeding the gardens on our grounds? Participating in Outreach? How can YOU, how can WE, honor the many blessings of St James?

Peace,
Kim Faubert, Vestry Co-Warden

Garden Clean Up Day Saturday, June 4th at 10 a.m.

Our church gardens are looking pretty good this year after the huge clean up we did last Spring. Yet gardens need periodic attention to keep them weed free and growing well. Our clean up day this year will involve removing leaves and other debris



from all the gardens, edging, weeding, and pruning where necessary. We would like to freshen up the memorial gardens

(the one under the large ash tree and the one on the hillside), the church wall garden, the church sign garden, the garden beds along the main entry sidewalk. We would love to have families join us. There will be work for all ages. Many hands make light work. Please bring gardening gloves and any garden tools you may have available.

Jim Wilkie, Co Warden

Summer Worship Schedule

We will hold a single Sunday worship service at 9:30 a.m. throughout the summer beginning June 19th. This service is open to in-person attendance and available online as well. It will be held outdoors on the parish front lawn when weather permits, otherwise in the church. Nursery childcare will be available during the summer. Weekday services continue: Morning Prayer on Monday at 9 a.m., Evening Prayer on Wednesday at 5 p.m., and Compline on Friday at 7:30 p.m. (Fridays Compline is Facebook livestreamed only).



Bible Study continues

The Bible study group is immersed in a 12-week exploration of the Book of Genesis. Study guides by Mitchell Kim are available in the office. \$12 is asked for your copy, simply reach out to Fr. George. As always, all are welcome! Note: we continue to use Zoom with Meeting ID: 810 0898 0546 and Passcode: 062552 to join us Sundays at noon.

From the Deacon's Bench

Sharing Life's Banquet

The folks at the early service usually didn't have music at their service. Perhaps they preferred Rite One every Sunday without the sound of music. But on Easter Sunday they were going to sing "Jesus Christ is risen today" accompanied by organ and the full choir, of which I was a member. As a compensation for our early arrival, the choir members enjoyed a wonderful breakfast between services. Everyone signed up to bring a variety of egg dishes, fruit, bagels, and sweets. One member of the bass section always brought champagne to make mimosas. These gatherings made me thankful to serve as a chorister in a wealthy Episcopal parish.

As the choir chatted and feasted, I noticed a woman enter our fellowship hall. Soon all eyes were on this newcomer. Table conversations died away. She didn't belong to the choir. She didn't even belong to the congregation. We soon realized that she was one of those "street people" who occasionally came into the building to use the restroom. That Easter morning, uninvited, she walked over to our buffet and piled her plate high with our food. She took a seat at an empty table and began to enjoy the same great meal we were feasting on. We looked at her and then looked at each other. There were some raised eyebrows and shrugged shoulders, but no one asked her to leave. I guess we knew it would be wrong to do that.

Then the rector saw the woman and approached her carrying his loaded plate. What will he do, we wondered? "Good morning", he said. She said



"Hello," as he sat down to share the table. There wasn't much conversation between those two souls that morning, but we knew that his

act of caring and sharing spoke volumes. I would like to say that the next year, we put a sign out front "Free Easter Breakfast," but we did not. A few people from the street did join us every year and we made them welcome. Perhaps we remembered Jesus' challenge to the well-to-do: "when you give a feast, do not invite your friends and rich neighbors. Instead invite the crippled the lame, and the blind."

The gospel teaches that there is more to the right choices than what will benefit us alone. The wisest choices include shaping our lives in ways that care for the strangers at the gate, the neglected on the margins, the lonely in the shadows, the hungry on the streets.

It's this lack of attention to life, passing through without deliberate intention to a moral life that led Henry David Thoreau to the radical decision to live alone for a time. Thoreau did not want to let life pass him by — he wanted to live it with full attention. "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately," wrote Thoreau in *Walden*, "to confront only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

This day, and every day, Jesus challenges us to live fully into our life by sharing God's banquet with a needy world.

Doug Engwall, Deacon

Faith & Fries!

We now gather on the 4th Tuesday of every month at **Five Corners Bistro & Craft Bar**, 354 Colt Hwy (Rt. 6) in Farmington. **We next convene on Tuesday, June 28th, from 7–8:30 pm.** You can come for dinner, have a drink or snack, whatever is comfortable for you. We will be exploring what do we believe? What tests our belief? We invite all to come as they are able and please, feel free to invite a friend, neighbor, or co-worker to the conversation! Call the church with questions or more information on *Faith & Fries!*



Church School

Our church school curriculum is taken from the program, *Weaving God's Promises*. The lessons of last year, the first year, titled *Weaving Our Faith*, covered the story of our salvation ... our story from the fall of humanity to our redemption by Jesus and how we, as individuals fit into this story. The theme was "God loves us unconditionally". The New Testament lessons came from the Gospel of Matthew and focused on building the Kingdom of God.

The lessons of this second year titled, *Weaving Together the Family of God*, covered the story of

how we became God's people and part of the household of God, the Communion of Saints. The theme was "Once we were no people, but now we are God's people". The New Testament lessons focused on the

Gospel of John, with its stories of the encounters of individuals with Jesus and how they were transformed through His Light.

We closed out our school year with a few activities to show our acceptance of, and understanding that, we are part of God's family. We made a banner at Easter to share with the congregation expressing our understanding of the Resurrection, made cards for Amberwoods residents, made small stuffed animals for the children receiving support services at the Friendship Service Center in New Britain and donated the money collected in Sparky, the dinosaur, to CT Humane Society and to Deep Seas Conservation Coalition.

We are looking forward to next year and the theme of being called by God to live in loving community with one another, to fulfill God's promises for us in the healing of all creation. The children will learn what constitutes God's beloved community, including the gospel values of welcome, inclusion, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, justice, and liberation.

We hope that many parents and other adults will recognize the importance of these values and will come forward to be a part of this exciting coming year.

We wish all families a restful, refreshing, faith filled summer.

Joyce Bettencourt & Evan LaPointe



Church by the Pond

It has been a good while since we've made lunches and joined in worship with the homeless in Bushnell Park in the Church by the Pond ministry. **We have agreed to bring lunches on Saturday, June 25th, for Church by the Pond.**

St. James Parish will provide healthy lunches with a sandwich, fruit, etc., bottled water, and will be available to help distribute the lunches. Our plan is to have folks donate ham, turkey, cheese, and bread, chips, and bottled water in the days leading up to June 25th (more on that in June). On the morning of the 25th, at 10 am, a group of volunteers will assemble in the kitchen to make the sandwiches and put the bag lunches together.

At 2 pm a group of St. James volunteers will meet at Bushnell Park to take part in a brief service of Holy Eucharist at which Fr. George will preside and deliver a short reflection.



Following Holy Communion, our team of volunteers will line up to distribute the lunches made that morning to the waiting folks. Church by the Pond is a wonderful opportunity for us to serve our neighbors, as Christ commanded, in a small but powerful way and to engage needy folks personally in surroundings that are familiar to them. Please join us in making lunches and/or sharing them with the homeless on June 25th. For more information or questions, please contact Fr. George.

St. Francis Guild

There has been some interest in a return of the St. Francis Guild. In the past, this group of parishioners organized to provide ongoing attention to the gardens after the big Spring cleanup. Teams sign up for one day a month (usually a Saturday morning) where they do spot weeding, watering, and minor pruning as necessary. If interested as individuals or as families, please contact Jim Wilkie. There will be suggestions of what to look for on the team's selected day. It's a fun way to serve our parish community and enjoy a return to nature.

Bibles in the pews

The Vestry and I have made the decision to replace the bulletin inserts we have been using with Bibles (NRSV) in the pew racks, beginning this fall. There are a number of reasons for this transition. First, the inserts have become more expensive in the last year, since they went to larger print. Second, and more importantly, the idea of moving to scripture references in the Bible, as opposed to the inserts, was an outgrowth of the *RenewalWorks* workshops and spiritual surveys we engaged in 2017. We, as Episcopalians, sometimes struggle with Scripture and we are certainly not alone. We read from Scripture every Sunday – the Old and New Testament, a Psalm, and the Gospel – but we may rarely engage that Scripture beyond the sermon or the readings themselves. Holding our pew Bibles and looking up passages in them may seem odd and maybe a bit intimidating at first, but in the end, we hope it will make us more aware of the blessings that the Bible has for us, beyond Sunday mornings.

Utilizing passages from the Bible will be a work in progress and we will start simply. The Lector will announce, for example, “A reading from the book of Genesis, page 104, Chapter 25, verses 10 to 14.” This will also be noted in your bulletin. There will be four Bibles in each pew, with extra available. Several large print Bibles will be available for any who need it. The Bibles we have selected for the pew is printed in a specially designed font for easier reading. Remember that we announce the readings for each Sunday a week ahead of time, if folks want to come prepared, maybe having even read the passages beforehand.

Going forward, the service bulletin will contain the opening Collect for the day that we pray together, and the Psalm, along with the usual notations for hymns and announcements. So, we won’t be adding an extra thing for you to juggle, merely replacing inserts with Bibles.

We understand that a change like this might be daunting and we are not be at all deaf to your concerns and you always have a voice; please let yourself be heard, if you like the idea or need/desire to no more.

Celebrating June Birthdays!

Matt Brockman
Bruce Brown
Olivia Paré
Owen Wahl
Wendy Ives
Josh Martin
Sarah Torrence
Ed Preneta
Rocco Guglielmo
Joey Guglielmo
Rocco Guglielmo
Tracey Roberts
Gideon Pereira
Lisa Solomon
Mark Riemer
Carmen Propescus



Farmington Food Pantry Collection month!

Every year the St. James family commits to provide non-perishable food items, household items and funding to the Farmington Food Pantry for the months of January and June. The Farmington Food Pantry and the 215+ local families that it currently serves depend greatly on these donations. Each month the pantry provides deserving families with 7,000+ pounds of non-perishable items. All clients are pre-qualified through Farmington Social Services (FSS).

The donated items are delivered to First Church, Farmington where the Pantry is housed. The Farmington Food Pantry is affiliated with CT Foodshare which allows the Pantry to use any monetary donations to purchase supplemental food at a significantly reduced price.



Throughout the month of June, please place your donations in the grey bin marked *Farmington Food Pantry* located in the narthex. The St. James Outreach Ministry thanks you for your generous and continued support of the Farmington Food Pantry.

Care & tending our Memorial Garden

Many of you have noticed that, in recent years, the Memorial Garden has sometimes looked a bit overgrown. Once upon a time there was a committee and a really committed parishioner (Alice Willard) who kept the Memorial Garden weeded, watered, and looking beautiful. We have had wonderful help in people like Joyce Bettencourt, Jim Wilkie and the occasional clean-up day, but the work and our lives are such that one or two people cannot keep up anymore.

Someone made a really wonderful suggestion to me earlier this year and reminded me last month. We wondered if it might be possible to create a loose confederation of folks who have a loved one in the Memorial Garden, who might be willing to help, as a community, to keep the Memorial Garden in fine fettle? Big jobs – like mulch delivery and distribution, cutting things down, etc. – could be taken care of by Building and



Grounds, while the work of tending the Memorial Garden area outside the patio would be the work of this special community of concerned folk.

We are in the process of trying to identify folks with a loved one buried in the Memorial Garden who may be interested in helping maintain the area. Please let us know if you are willing to help and, even if you have no loved one yet interred in the Memorial Garden, your help is always appreciated. Our Garden needs some regular tending from April to October and it really would be a labor of love!

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.

Probably the most frustrating thing about learning to pray is that we often want answers to our prayers, and we want them now ... or at least, reasonably soon ... and we want the answers to come in the way we intended!

Consider this quote from theologian and author Frederick Buechner. Its simplicity stopped me in my tracks. Think about it...

God himself does not give answers.

He gives himself.

Frederick Buechner

St. James Prayer Team ...

Praying together for you

Always available, always confidential

Pat Clark

Carol Kirkwood

Donna Paye

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.

Minutes of the Vestry of St. James: April 21, 2022

Present via Zoom: Fr. George Roberts, EJ Ososki, Carol Kirkwood, Jim Wilkie, Kim Faubert, Tom Nelson, Anna Whilby, Kathy Bullard, Bob Sudell, Bonnie Sudell.

Absent: Foster White, Maina Rice
Meeting called to order 7:02pm

Minutes of March 17, 2022, Vestry Meeting

Jim moved to accept the minutes. Seconded by Bonnie. Unanimous vote to accept the minutes.

Ministry Reports

Finance/Treasurer's report – March 2022

Summary of Report via EJ Ososki

- Finances in good shape' we are 2K favorable to budget.
- Last month pledges were behind this month pledges ahead by 5K
- Heating and snow removal only items off budget

Motion made by Kathy to accept the March financial report as submitted with a second from Kim F.

Discussion - Kathy asked about process for parish hall rentals. Currently no formal advertising is done. A few groups do rent for annual occasions. Rental contract is signed, and usually alcohol is not served, if alcohol is present Fr. George investigates circumstances and a certificate of insurance is required if allowed. Fr. George and Vestry open to think about outside the box possibilities for rentals for groups etc. Unanimous vote to accept the March financial report.

Outreach

- Need for people to step into leadership role for outreach oversight; for now working on a few events as possible

Building and Grounds

- Jim discussed siding project for areas above kitchen and rear entrance. Jim contacted 6 companies to have them look at job and give a quote – difficult to get people to come out to look at area. Some companies do vinyl work siding only, not wood /shingles for siding, for some job is too small and some never called back.
- Small Jobs Well Done – Dave Buttons submitted an estimate of 5K for both areas.

- Original boards were 5 ½ inch, those size boards no longer available 8-inch boards would need to be used.
- Anna has another contractor contact and will get that information to Jim.

New Business

Discussion of Ministry of Invitation by Nancy Davidge

<https://www.ecfvp.org/vestry-papers/article/584/a-ministry-of-invitation>

- Need to engage in discussion about Leadership – Challenging to get people to step into leadership roles. Reminders to Vestry we are all spiritual leaders
- “Post Covid fog” has affected all of us things have slowed down, people are not coming forward as easily.
- 5 Marks of Mission
<https://www.episcopalct.org/gods-mission/five-marks-of-mission/>
- During 150th Anniversary of St James there will be opportunities for people to share their stories of being at St James
- Making of disciples beyond St James
- Discussed a little about Evangelism – “been given a bad name,” not seen as a positive, i.e. People think it is just related to being on the streets – born again....
- It is not about getting people to attend St James but a Welcome to share God together – Getting out of where we are to engage invite welcome, i.e., Offer our 150th Anniversary events / Pentecost Picnic to others to attend
- Get to know people, invite people into leadership. Be enthusiastic
- People very happy to have Coffee Hour return. Bring back name tags – Vestry needs to be the role model and be sure to wear your name tag.
- Meet people where they are at – non-judgmental
- This is much in the world to be anxious about – talk about it as it is a shared feeling by so many.
- We have what they seek;
<https://www.ecfvp.org/blogs/3941/we-have-what-they-seek> Ken Kroohs
- Well over 70% believe in a higher power. People want to know what we believe while we give them the freedom to have their beliefs. People have needed Jesus.

- Evangelism – help others know God's love better – Reach out
- Examples of trials to further engage welcome - Outdoor Christmas Service with fire pits, Christmas tree, kids dressing in pageant costumes, and hot chocolate – went well and a great deal of positive feedback was conveyed regarding how the service had such powerful meaning to those in attendance.
- Keep trying - it will not be perfect – don't strive for perfect- sometimes there will even be failures – Keep trying new things.
- Another example was the Veneration of the Cross at Good Friday evening service – parishioners who paused at the cross to place their candle down and any thoughts prayers etc. they chose to leave at the cross - was a last minute idea by a parishioner and was very meaningful and powerful

Old Business

Bibles replacing bulletin inserts

- Look at starting in September 2022; 2 Bibles in each pew back
- Have a few copies of large print Bibles in narthex if needed
- Do dedication option for purchase and book plate acknowledgement of donors and dedications in memory of
- Lector would give page, chapter, verse with a pause to look it up – Collect and Psalm will be printed out in bulletin
- Kids could color bookmarks with Bible figures stories printed on heavy stock paper that can be in narthex or pews to be used to mark readings

Rector's and Warden's Thoughts

- June 4 Cleanup Day!!! at St James
- June 5 Pentecost Celebration and Picnic - retired CT Bishop Jim Curry will be with us – Swords to Plowshares Ministry Network
- June 16 Vestry meeting IN PERSON? or optional Zoom)

Adjourned at 9:02pm

Respectfully Submitted

Carol

Carol Kirkwood, Clerk

Novena for Pentecost

St. James will support your efforts to prayerfully enter into the season of Thy Kingdom Come with two new resources this year. One is a novena cycle of prayer that you can acquire online. The Novena is available in the narthex or at <https://bit.ly/TKCNovena>. Please contact the parish office if you would like a printed copy mailed to you. A novena (meaning 9) is a traditional way to pray for a specific intention leading up to a major feast day or season (there are novenas leading up to Christmas, Easter, and for focus on certain issues). The Novena booklet gives you instructions on how a novena is prayed and prayers for the days leading to Pentecost on June 5th.



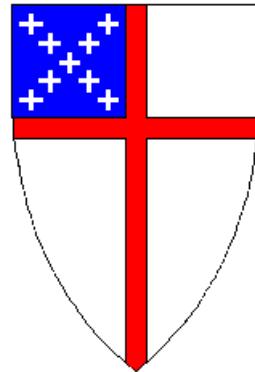
Prayer Journals

Journaling is a way that some people focus on their prayer life, writing down questions about faith, moments of awareness, thoughts about prayer or family life. During the season between Ascension and Pentecost, we invite you to use a prayer journal, which we've made available in the narthex or at <https://bit.ly/TKCJournal> Each day (eleven, including Ascension and Pentecost) has a short scripture passage, brief reflection, and a little prayer for you to use as a central part of your prayer life during that time. A deeper spiritual life is possible for anyone who wishes to have one and sometimes a journal can aid us in finding a disciplined life of prayer that may have eluded us in the past. Each reflection has ample room for writing down thoughts, observations, things you notice that may be new and exciting, and anything else that comes up for you. Please contact the parish office if you would like a printed Prayer Journal mailed to you

St. James Parish

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MISSION STATEMENT:

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

STAFF

The Rev. George C. Roberts	Rector
The Rev. Douglas Engwall	Deacon
Blake Hansen	Director of Music
Susan Deming	Parish Administrator
Anthony Nauss	Sexton
Laura Vacca	Nursery Supervisor

OFFICERS

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

VESTRY

2022	2023	2024
Thomas Nelson	Kim Faubert	Kathy Bullard
Foster White	Maina Rice	Bonnie Sudell
James Wilkie	Anna Whilby	Robert Sudell

St. James Parish

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