

# St. James Parish

## WITH ST. MARK'S MINISTRIES

# Epistle



SEPTEMBER 2025

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### Rector's Message

*But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.*

2 Corinthians 4:5 (NRSV)

Not too long ago I wrote of an amazing piece of music that arrested my attention and stirred deep spiritual grace and longing in me. Let me briefly repeat it, as it has become very important to me. The piece of music is called *The Corinthian Song* and it was written by Micah Stampley (and performed by him) in 2008, as a Gospel praise song, and has been covered by other Christian singers since then. The version that I came across was an arrangement by British singer/composer Sam Robson and it was stunning. The refrain, which is repeated over and over throughout, is "I'm a vessel full of power, with a treasure from the Lord."

What I didn't notice until now was that most versions of the text from 2 Corinthians 4:7, which inspires *The Corinthian Song*, remind us that "this treasure" is in "jars of clay" (see top of the page). So, our bodies are temporary, and we are sinful, broken vessels. Certainly, it is God's treasure that gives us power; God's treasure, not ours. What is the treasure that is the power that fills us, these "jars of clay"? Paul says, in 2 Corinthians 4:6, "God ... has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Then verse 7 begins, "But we have this treasure [the glory of God in Christ] in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us." We are imperfect vessels, in other words, filled with the overwhelming and



perfect power of God in Christ. We are vessels full of God's holy power, unrelenting and hopeful love in Christ, the creative Spirit that can drive us to accomplish amazing things through the power of God.

The world is on fire, or so we may think. We live in a hopeless age, where people are so often nasty to one another. Our planet, our culture(s) knows nothing but greedy, power-grabbing, ego-tripping maniacs who would use violence or any other means to get what they want. Well, every generation – let's look back at the 20<sup>th</sup> century – has had its tyrants, power hungry people who are willing to do anything to make things that do not belong to them theirs. We can so very easily succumb to fear, paralysis, anger, and name-calling, and completely forget that we are, in

Christ, vessels full of immense power that God has given us. We have the power of Christ in us, the light and energy of God's resurrected goodness. We are not powerless, nor should we be – ever! – hopeless or lost in the face of life's cruelty or a useless clawing for power, wealth, or recognition. "For God has poured into our hearts the Holy Spirit, who has been freely given to us" (Romans 5:5). We are not huddled, tortured, helpless souls but vessels built by God, filled with God, and overflowing with hope and possibility. Christ has died for us and made us free from the tyranny of anger and sin. My hope, this program year, is that we can really hold onto, develop, discuss, and channel the reality that we have agency, a hope given to us, put into us, by God's power that is, in fact, **God's power**.

In Christ, Fr. George+

## Warden's Corner

Dear Lovers of Christ:

You probably noticed the addition of the orchestral chimes from St. Mark's Church in New Britain now hanging in our sanctuary next to the lectern. Above that is the icon of St. Mark that Bishop Laura Ahrens gave to our merged parish. It is fitting, I think, that icons of St. Mark and St. James are now across from each other in our sanctuary. In order for St. Mark's Parish to be ready to merge with St. James we went through a process of loss, of giving up things that were very important to us. The same has been true of folks from Christ Church in Avon and for folks from Good Shepherd Parish in Bristol, where they went through a long merger process, and then many of them lost that, and are with us.

For those adept at the art of "positive spin," they can make the worst of things and situations seem wonderful. I have often thought that Christianity is the ultimate positive spin effort. If you don't know, biblical scholars tell us that the passion narratives were the earliest stories about Jesus that circulated in 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestine. Compelling narratives they are! But how does one derive a religion of faith, hope, and love out of stories of suffering and death?

As lemonade season comes to an end, it is good, I think, for us to consider what we are doing with all the lemons that come our way. Some people have a positive outlook dispositionally. That can be great, but it can also be irritating, as for many of us, making lemonade is not the first thing we think when faced with life's lemons. It requires careful thought and reorientation—as it did for the first generation of Christians. Seeing the negative and complaining comes naturally to many of us. It does to me. But as a boy, I vividly remember Father Winkler, the priest sent to our parish to build a new church. I mentioned something as a problem. He looked at me and said: "Stephen, there are no problems, only opportunities." That is how I try to live my life, not always successfully, but that is how I suggest we all approach our life together as the People of God. Lemonade is not just for summer.

Peace be with you,  
Stephen Hard, Co-Warden

## Celebration Sunday

On Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, we return to two services, at 8 am and 10:15 a.m. After the 10:15 am service we will have our Annual Celebration Sunday Picnic, with hamburgers and hotdogs and fun things for the children to do! Please signup in the narthex or parish hall to bring a side dish or dessert to share with the community and pray for good weather. We are only a few weeks away, so sign up now or contact the office to let us know what you will bring to share.



## Church School returns!!

Dear Families – Hopefully everyone had a good summer and the children's transition back to school and formal learning was painless and successful. Our parish is also off to a new start with *Celebration Sunday* on September 7<sup>th</sup>. There will be lots of fun things for all to do including an opportunity to engage our amazing children in the knowledge and love of God. **As part of our celebration, we will have a special activity for all children in the church library from 10 am until about 10:45 am.** This year's theme is "I am a vessel full of power, with a treasure from the Lord."



We will have lots of fun initiating this theme, making Play-Doh pots representing them and filling these pots with affirmative sticker messages representing God's love and care. We will be melting mean-spirited rocks (baking soda) representing situations that confront us in our daily lives with bottles filled with faith, love, hope, peace, and kindness (vinegar)! Should be interesting! Hope your children can join us.

## 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.

## Women's Ministry

The Woman's Ministry offers the following to the women of the parish. For questions/more information, please see Kathy Bullard, Deb Butler, Gabriela Henry, Linda Mason, Tracey Roberts, Molly Sherman, Nancy Thompson, or Anna Whilby.

**Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m.** Morning Coffee at Gabriela's. Gabriela Henry has graciously invited the women of St. James Parish to morning coffee at her home. Our coffee gatherings have been quite successful and are a great opportunity to get to know each other better.

**Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup> – Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup>**  
***Women's Retreat at Camp Washington.*** Our retreat last year was a great experience and we hope all women of St. James will consider attending. (See separate article for details)

**Tuesday, October 21<sup>st</sup> at 7 p.m. Book Club.** Meet at the church to discuss *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. See Tracey Roberts for more information.

**Ongoing: Women's Support Group.** For those who have lost a family member or friend and would like a safe, supportive place to talk with others and share your experiences. The Group is coordinated by members of St. James, Nancy Thompson and Donna Paye. Resources, books, and poetry are available.

## Men's Breakfast

On **Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup> at 8 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. We've moved our regular 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month gathering due to the *Fall Fair* on the 13<sup>th</sup>. 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. Join in fellowship with Fr. George and a great breakfast!

## Worship committee inaugural conversation

On **Thursday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 pm**, anyone interested in sharing input around worship, the desire to plan special worship



events, talk about trends and music, is invited to come to our first conversation.

Decisions are not being made at this meeting; it's just a beginning. All are welcome, via Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8111587312?pwd=pFRz2vpIQIM07Se0FonxFkucarQxVv.1> with Meeting ID: 811 1158 7312 and Passcode: 146672.

## Light Work Day!

On Saturday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, at 9 am (should be done before 11 am), we are inviting folks to participate in a light work day, mostly weeding in the Memorial Garden on that side of the parish hall. The following day, September 7<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate going back to two services, a new program year, and our Celebration Sunday picnic after the 10:15 am service. Then our *Fall Fair* is the following Saturday! A lot has been done this summer, so this would help take another step to sprucing things up!!



## Lenten Devotional planned

Plans are in the works for preparing our own Lent 2026 devotional book. Who, what, when, etc.? Curious about this? Ask Dianne Antos how to get involved. On **Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup>**, anyone interested in a Lenten writing/reflection project is invited to join us. We will hold a conversation between the services at 9 am and after the 10:15 am service, as well.





## Save the Date: October 5<sup>th</sup>: *Blessing of the Animals*

On Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, at 3 pm we will hold our annual Blessing of the Animals. Bring your animal pet with you for a short set of prayers and a blessing from Fr. George. We gather also in commemoration of St. Francis of Assisi, lover of animals whose feast day is on October 4<sup>th</sup>. Bring your furry friend (or scaly, or whatever, as long as it is not venomous or aggressive) for a blessing! See you then!



## 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 ...

I am writing this on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August, a day that suddenly feels like Fall is almost here! No more suffocating heat, but gentle warmth. The transition is beginning, I think, as it always does ... ushering in cooler weather, and eventually, Winter.

Transitions, change of any kind really, can sometimes be hard or at least unsettling. Changes in health, changes in family, changes in our country ... there is so much going on, isn't there? I admit I am a card-carrying member of that club myself: "Anxiety Anonymous!" Yet I know that worry yields nothing of value and only compounds itself.

*Jesus said, " Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself, Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

Matthew 6:34

In other words, one day at a time, and trust in the Changeless One to carry us. I found the following prayer and offer it to you.

*Lord Jesus, as the leaves fall gently from the trees, may we too release our worries and burdens into your hands. Help us embrace the beauty of letting go and trusting in you. Fill our hearts with peace and assurance, knowing that you are always with us. May we find solace in your presence, now and forever. Amen*

## Thursday Morning Mingle

Starting at the end of October and continuing until April, St. James will provide a *Thursday Morning Mingle* at South Church in New Britain. We will provide a hot breakfast to anyone who attends. We will set up at 6:30 a.m. and serve breakfast from 7–9 a.m. We will clean up and leave by 9:30 a.m. each Thursday. This *Mingle* is funded by the Smith Fund.

We are looking for volunteers to support this mission. Ideally, we will have two teams of 8, who will provide meals every other week. Volunteers will cook, serve, and clean up after the breakfast. If you are interested in volunteering for this mission of St. James, please contact Dave Tompkins at [dtompk2000@aol.com](mailto:dtompk2000@aol.com) or call at (860) 836-5788.

## Celebrating September birthdays!

Sarah Alligood  
Brenden Wahl  
Brad Ives  
Joseph Ososki  
Jordan Howe  
Jay Hostetter  
Charlotte Vacca  
Seth Howe  
Mason Lucas  
Elle Lansing  
Pat Clark  
Noah Howe

Mia Grieco  
Jane Begin  
Ben Thomas



Ben Roach  
Bob Bogino

## First Sunday Breakfast returns!!!

**First Sunday Breakfast returns on Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup>** (after the 8 am service). All are invited to breakfast for pancakes, sausage, bacon, eggs, lots of coffee (with juice and tea available) and much good conversation. So, join



us, bring your family and neighbors, and share in the great food from our Men's Group, and a new season of life for our parish!

## Sunday morning Bible Study

Join us for our weekly Bible study at noon via Zoom. Beginning Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 pm, we will begin a new Bible study on the first and second letters of Paul to Timothy. The second letter is often seen as Paul's final testament and encouragement to his young disciple as Paul awaits execution in Rome. The study guides will soon be available for pick-up in the parish office at \$10 per copy. Zoom gathering info is: Meeting ID: 815 4332 7235; Passcode: 982548. We hope you join us!

## Pastoral Care Ministry

On Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, at 9:30 am, we will hold an informal gathering to discuss pastoral care ministry. Anyone who thinks they may be called to a ministry of presence, sitting with



homebound folks, visiting people who are in continuing care or in the hospital, to provide companionship, are encouraged to come, listen to possibilities, and share ideas. No

one will be asked to commit to anything, we will simply be starting a conversation. Coffee and light refreshments will be provided.

## Faith & Fries!

We usually come together on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at **Puente American-Latino Pub at 81 South Main Street in Unionville.** We will next gather on Tuesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, from 7–8:30 pm. Come for dinner, have a drink or snack, whatever is comfortable for you. We are going to explore the reality that we struggle “not against the rulers, against the authorities, but against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). C. S. Lewis will be our guide in this conversation. We invite all to come as they are able and please, feel free to invite a friend, neighbor, or co-worker! Call the church with questions.



## For All Ages invitation!

St. James parishioners and Farmington residents are invited to enjoy a sweet afternoon of connection and community at a free Community Scoops and Smiles Ice Cream Social on **Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, from 1–3 p.m.** at New Horizons Village, 37 Bliss Memorial Drive, Unionville.

Held on the indoor pickle ball courts at New Horizons Village, this inclusive event offers neighbors of all ages the opportunity to enjoy a cup of ice cream, explore one of the Farmington Valley's premier indoor sports facilities, and connect with others in a welcoming setting.

Highlights of the event include:

- Free ice cream for all attendees

- A demonstration of adapted pickle ball skill-building, showcasing inclusive recreation

- A brief video and quiet space for conversation about community and inclusion

- A visit from Officer Tony Ruggiero and Nash, the Farmington Police Department's therapy dog

This event is hosted by the partners of the Farmington Social Connections Project, a community impact initiative facilitated by *For All Ages*, the CT nonprofit empowering people to foster real connections that improve health and life outcomes. This work is generously supported by the Farmington Greater Together Community Fund of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

No registration is required, but attendees are encouraged to use the link to help organizers plan for ice cream quantities:

[https://farmingtonct.myrec.com/info/activities/program\\_details.aspx?ProgramID=29906](https://farmingtonct.myrec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=29906)

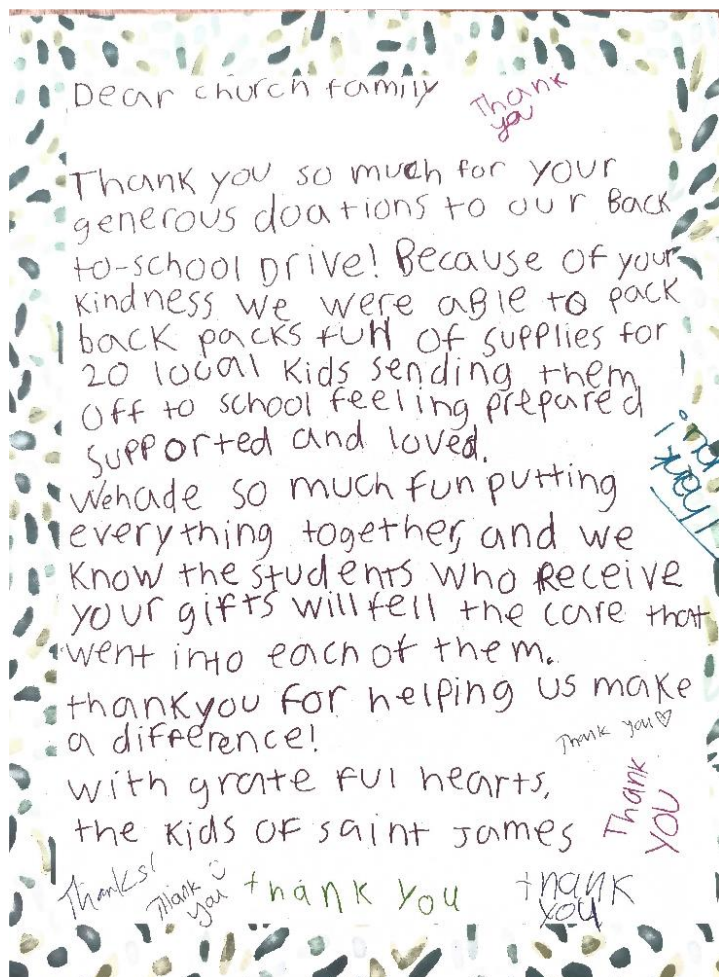
St. James has taken the lead with the Town of Farmington and New Horizons Village to bringing people together in small, meaningful ways. This event is creating space for neighbors to connect, relax, and enjoy something as simple and joyful as a cup of ice cream.

The project brings together local partners including New Horizons Village, Farmington Public Schools, the Farmington Land Trust, Farmington Public Libraries, First Church of Christ (Farmington), St. James Episcopal Church, and the Town of Farmington to build a stronger, more inclusive community.

*Ed Preneta*

## Backpack Project thanks

Thanks to all who donated backpacks, supplies, and helped fill them, as we served 30 children this year in Farmington Schools. Thirty children will have school-ready backpacks because of the generosity of St. James – with supplies and backpacks left over!! Thanks to the Ososki family for organizing the backpack project for the third year in a row!!



## I Am a Vessel of God's Power: Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at Camp Washington, Lakeside, CT

We are very excited about the Women's Retreat being planned for this fall for the women of St. James Parish! We are so blessed to have as our retreat leader

The Rev. Canon Susanna Cates Mother Susanna received her Master of Divinity from the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest in 2013 and has served as an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Northwest Texas, the Diocese of Newark, and now in the Diocese of New Jersey. She's married to William and is a joyful "bonus parent" to her five stepchildren. Originally raised in the Jewish tradition, she rejoices in the diversity, openness to questions, and welcoming spirit of the Episcopal Church – and she loves to hear about everyone's faith journeys!



Our retreat is centered around *The Corinthian Song* and its Scriptural source, 2 Corinthians 4:1–15. We may sometimes feel as though the bodily "jars of clay" that house our spirits are fragile, cast down, battered, and full of confusion. But God has created us, fills us with God's own Holy Spirit, and calls us to empty ourselves through the work of discipleship and service—and as we are emptied, we are continually refilled and strengthened! Join us as we pray, honor our own ministries, find new paths of service, and celebrate God's joyful power in each one of us.

Our time together begins Friday evening at 6 pm as we arrive at Camp Washington for dinner and our evening program. We'll continue our workshops and prayers on Saturday morning, welcoming those who are joining us just for the day, and conclude by 4 pm Saturday afternoon.

The weekend includes all meals, materials and supplies, and lodging for those arriving on Friday. The cost for the weekend is \$150.50 for a single room or \$200 for a double. If you can only come on Saturday, you will miss some programming, but the cost is \$63. **We do not want cost to prevent anyone from coming**, so, if you need assistance, please check in with Fr. George; help is available. If you need a ride, check in with Fr. George or Kathy Bullard.



# Fall Craft Fair

*Free, Free, Free!!*

*Free Food!! Free Stuff!!*

*The Fall Craft Fair is nearly here!*

*AND it's Freeeee!!!*

NOW THAT I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION....

Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 9 am–4 pm

🍂 A Craft Fair, featuring regional crafters, artisans, and vendors inside and on the lawn!

ALL ON DISPLAY FOR YOUR REVIEW FOR *Free*

🍂 An absolutely awesome Bake Sale! (Most items are not sugar-*Free*)

🍂 The return of our Raffle Table! With many *Free* items!! (Just buy some tickets to play \$20 for 30 tickets, \$10 for 12 tickets.

🍂 *Free* Hamburgers & Hotdogs for lunch! (Just buy a paper plate and napkin for \$10 and get 1 or the other). Includes Potato Chips are that are completely *Free* of any nutritional value whatsoever!

As you can imagine, it will require many hands working together (for *Free*) to support this event. The people of St. James are extremely *Free* with their generosity! So be thinking *Free* of how you may be able to help in the following areas:

🍂 *Free* Donations for lunch items – watch for the signup sheet in the narthex to come. Absolutely no charge to signup. It's *Free*! Crazy, right?

🍂 Donating *Free* Item(s) to the raffle table  
\*\* see note on next page!

🍂 Baking for the Bake Sale – YOU do the baking; no cost to us ... in other words, *Free*

🍂 Set up / packaging for Bake Sale

🍂 Building Setup on Friday – No building permits required ... Yup, *Free*

🍂 Assisting arriving vendors for *Free*  
Friday 4–7 pm &/or Saturday morning 7:30–9 am

🍂 Working (FOR *Free*) the day of the Fair, especially during lunch hours 11 am–2 pm

🍂 Clean-Up Crew- Saturday at 4 pm



*\*\* Note on donating to the Raffle Table:* This is an extremely popular part of the Fair, so be thinking of what you would like to donate. It can be a theme basket ... art? coffee? garden? baby? kids? (Ummm, no, actually, you can't donate babies or kids – sorry!), Reading? Décor? Seasonal? Those are just a few ideas, but be creative! Just be *Free* thinking! Also popular are gift cards/certificates to local shops and restaurants. No alcoholic beverages can be accepted for the Table. Please email Tracey Roberts at [robertsrus6@gmail.com](mailto:robertsrus6@gmail.com) to let her know what you are donating ... as long as it's *Free*!

Signups will be available soon ... and stay tuned for further announcements!

*And remember that, unlike most agricultural fairs, our fair is barnyard–fragrance *Free*!*

Stay tuned folks, more *Free* stuff to follow in the coming weeks!

## Summary Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of June 19, 2025

**Present:** Fr. George Roberts, Kathy Bullard, Stephen Hard, Linda Mason, Skip Mason, Doug McDowell, EJ Ososki, Ed Preneta, Molly Sherman, Bonnie Sudell and Bob Sudell. **Absent:** Dave Tompkins.

**Meeting called to Order:** 7:08 pm.

### Minutes of 5/15/2025 Meeting

Linda made a motion to accept the minutes. Ed seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

### Ministry Reports

*Finance/Treasurer's Report – May 2025 – EJ*  
Summary of EJ's Report

- Income is \$16,000 ahead of plan, driven by pledges and investments and early craft fair income
- Expenses are \$6,000 under budget, driven by our diocesan contribution being incorrect
- Overall, we are on track from both an income and expense standpoint.

Skip made a motion to accept the report. Linda seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

### *Patio Update – Fr. George*

Soil was removed this week. Materials are at Dunning. We are waiting for pricing on stair repair, which should be completed before the patio is laid.

### *DR Update – Fr. George*

\$6,000 was raised through fundraisers. Leaving June 27<sup>th</sup> for eight days. The plan is to build 20 pews and participate in Vacation Bible School.

### Old Business

*Growth and Discipleship: where do we go from here?*

Discipleship for Episcopalians – Fr. George is considering starting a new cohort in the fall to do the program again that was previously done during COVID. Considering if it would be beneficial to have a consultant come in with discipleship at the center of the conversation.

### *Stewardship*

Looking for leadership to have a summer meeting

### *Parish Life Ministry*

Will meet in September. How do we engage more parishioners in ministries? Suggestion to feature each ministry monthly, perhaps at the *First Sunday Breakfast*.

### New Business

#### *Accessibility Report*

The report prepared by Stephen Hard based on a meeting with Molly, Zach Capitao (Molly's son-in-law who requires a wheelchair) and consultation with David Britt (who has been worshiping with us and also requires a wheelchair) was reviewed.

Stephen made a motion that the St. James Vestry establish an Accessibility Committee to investigate and make recommendations for improving the accessibility of our buildings and activities to those with impairments. Bob seconded it. The motion passed unanimously. Stephen will solicit members to participate. One idea under consideration is to alter the pews to provide half pews in locations other than the rear of the church.

Bob motioned to adjourn. Skip seconded it. Motion passed unanimously. Adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted  
*Bonnie Sudell, Clerk*

## Looking forward ....

Mid-week Eucharist is returning this fall.

**Beginning October 15<sup>th</sup>, each Wednesday at 11:30 am**, there will be a brief service of Holy Eucharist (about 30 minutes), with prayers for healing. Following Eucharist, anyone who would like/can stay is invited to bring a bag lunch and join your pastor for conversation in the library. We will wrap up by around 12:30 pm.





## St. James Parish

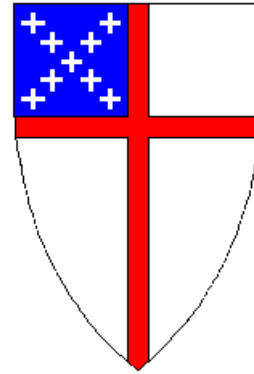
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Website: [www.stjamesfarmington.org](http://www.stjamesfarmington.org)



### 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 | <i>Rector</i>                        |
| Lee Febos                  | <i>Clergy Intern</i>                 |
| Blake Hansen               | <i>Director of Music</i>             |
| Susan Deming               | <i>Parish Administrator</i>          |
| Cheryl Rusczyk             | <i>Admin., St. Mark's Ministries</i> |
| Ray Smith                  | <i>Sexton</i>                        |
| Kim McLaurin               | <i>Nursery Supervisor</i>            |

#### OFFICERS

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

#### VESTRY

**2026**  
Stephen Hard  
Skip Mason  
Robert Sudell

**2027**  
Kathy Bullard  
Doug McDowell  
Molly Sherman

**2028**  
Linda Mason  
Ed Preneta  
David Tompkins

## St. James Parish

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

