

St. James Parish

Epistle



March 2022

Rector's Message

All the way back in 1985, a pop band called Mister, Mister recorded a song called *Kyrie Eleison*. The refrain/chorus went:

*Kyrie Eleison down the road that I must travel
Kyrie Eleison through the darkness of the night
Kyrie Eleison where I'm going, will you follow?
Kyrie Eleison on a highway in the night.*

So, the idea that we go into life by God's grace, in the shadow of God's mercy, permeates even popular culture. *Kyrie Eleison* means 'Lord, have mercy,' one of the responses we sing, instead of the Gloria, during the season of Lent we are about to embark on. Calling out to God for mercy, instead of singing praise, is our stance for the reflective season ahead, a time for us to be mindful of how God calls us in life and how we, despite our best intentions, may struggle with faithfulness to God's beckoning. "Lord, have mercy" is not only a Lenten cry for forgiveness but an acknowledgement that we are lost without God, twisting, fleshy dervishes in a whirlwind that can bend against God's designs.

I often think of mercy's deeper meaning, when I think of 'The Kyrie,' as we refer to it. Mercy means the "kind or forgiving treatment of someone who could be treated harshly" (Merriam-Webster). I remember the Oscar-winning and heartbreaking movie, *Schindler's List*. The movie not only chronicles the work and world of Oskar Schindler and the Jewish concentration camp folk he helped save during the Second World War. *Schindler's List* also depicts the merciless commandant of the Płaszów concentration camp, Amon Goeth. Goeth not only ordered the killing of Jews but killed them himself, taking some pleasure in their fear and helplessness. Oskar Schindler, who Goeth

seemed to admire, was able to convince the Nazi, for a short time, that he demonstrated his absolute power most when he showed mercy on those he had under his control. Goeth would often fly into a rage over menial things, like a young boy-servant who cannot seem to get stains out of Goeth's bathtub. Goeth smiles and says, "I pardon you," but later kills the boy anyway, his mercy having a very short life span.

The mercy of the world is fickle, often unsteady, and all too human. God's mercy is the "something" we seek, a grace we rely on, as we move through life, make mistakes, fall into challenging circumstances, and struggle with suffering, illness, and death. Lent's passage not only reminds us that we need God's mercy but, more importantly, God grants us that mercy. God's mercy showers upon us, like a torrent of blessing, not because we deserve it or because of

anything we have done. God's merciful response to our cry, *kyrie eleison*, rains down upon us because of God's love in Christ, His Son, a mercy forged in Jesus' sacrificial death, made real by the

Easter promise of Resurrection. *Kyrie eleison* is upon our lips and in our hearts, a Lenten lament that is transformed by the reality of God's healing love and mercy, given even before we ask. Lent reminds us that it is in asking, praying for God's grace-filled mercy, that we receive.

In Christ,
Fr. George+



Warden's Corner

"Never be too busy to pray. Lord without your presence in my life, today I would be barren.

"We don't choose how or when we will die, but we decide how we will live. Lord, forgive my frequent drifting and help me to see clearly the best path for me." – Anonymous

"If hugs could melt, if kisses were made of nothing but pure air, if talkers always agreed, and hearts all beat to the same drum, would we desire any longer to be truly each other? No two leaves on a tree turn the same way in the wind; no two fish in a school tread the same water; and no two people can live the same life. Therefore, when we hug, let's leave some space; when we kiss, let's allow each other to breathe; when we talk, let's permit each other to disagree; when we love, let's honor each other's rhythm and way. Is it our similarities or differences that make us want to know each other better?" – Anonymous

On February 4th Vestry met in person live for our annual retreat. It was the first live meeting since February 2020. We discussed how we were different, unique, and what we share in common with other churches. We learned a few things that we will try to put into practice over the coming year. We began to discover that the size of a parish isn't the most important factor relative to the impact we might have in the world. Sharing the good news of Jesus in a way authentic to us, to who we are and desire to be, is vital.

We are headed into a busy time of the year, Lent, Good Friday, Palm Sunday, and Easter. Please take time to seek God's blessing and to find ways of prayer and healing that give life to you. I thought you might want to know, as a final thought and a way for you to become involved, that a committee/team is being formed for the upcoming 150th anniversary of St James Church in 2023. More information to come on this and more volunteers are always welcome!

Jim Wilkie
Vestry Co-Warden



Church School & Youth!

We are very excited about coming back to Church school **in person** as of Sunday, February 27th. Students will be asked to mask initially; let's take it slow and see how things go with COVID in the coming weeks and months. We are going to do our utmost to make church school available online, too, so those who are not yet comfortable coming in person, we will try to include you and have every desire to do so. Evan LaPointe, one of our wonderful parents, will lead as teacher in church school for March, with Joyce Bettencourt returning to complete the school year for April and May. *Weaving God's Promises* will continue to be our primary resource for lessons. We will still meet in the parish hall for the time being, church school beginning at 10 am and the children and teacher(s) coming into service upstairs at the Peace. Our own Deacon Doug will begin to work on a song at the beginning of church school, with the hopes that the children can share the piece for us on Easter Sunday.

We recently had a wonderful meeting about Church School, with an eye to sharing how we move forward with energy, purpose, and joy, even as we say goodbye to Director of Children and Youth Ministries, Amy Steele. Amy has been a wonderful part of our staff for the last four years, a joy to be around, and we thank her for her service and wish she and her family health and joy. The group talked about how best to handle church school for the remainder of the year. We want to give our older children, at least once a month, a time to "break out" in their own group, after the music and *Weaving God's Promises* lesson. Several parents are willing to help us with this; we hope to begin trying that soon. We want all our children to have every opportunity to find a sense of true belonging and hope.

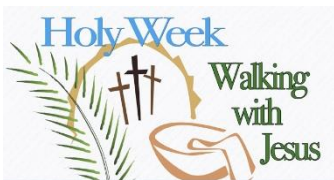
Please be patient with us as we adjust to new realities, while creating new opportunities, too. Keep your eyes open for a service project, likely dealing with our own grounds and gardens, in the early spring, something our young folks can do – with adults – together. More to come on the summer front, too, as we determine what we might do this summer to keep our children and families connected after church school ends. Our Church School group will meet again, probably in May, to plan for summer and look toward the 2022-23 program year. Thanks to everyone who has been involved in these conversations!!

From the Deacon's bench

Walking with Jesus on Good Friday.

On my first Good Friday at St. Marks in New Britain, I helped guide children in recreating Holy Week through "Walking with Jesus". This Good Friday children's liturgy is the brainchild of Rev. Patricia Hames, the longtime rector at St. Marks. Children were invited from surrounding parishes and many attended, including some from here at St. James. Years later, Hope and Bill Eakins carried the liturgy to St. Johns, West Hartford, and I was able to play a role there as well. Now Fr. George would like the children of St. James to experience "Walking with Jesus" here.

So let me describe this wonderful children's liturgy. *Walking with Jesus* invites children



to employ all their senses as they act out scenes from Holy Week. Adult leaders tell the story, while the children take on the roles of Jesus, disciples, Roman soldiers, and the people. Entering the church for the first scene, everyone receives palms and shouts "Hosanna" as a youngster playing Jesus "rides" down the aisle. The congregation sings *All Glory Laud and Honor* as the first musical selection. For the next scene, the Last Supper, another volunteer becomes Jesus to recreate Maundy Thursday's foot washing. Then Fr. George will explain the meaning of the Last Supper as a Passover Celebration. Children share a Communion of bread and grape juice.

Next, we move outside as a new Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane. Three "disciples" must be roused from sleep again and again. Now soldiers with spears enter to arrest Jesus and lead him away to Pilate's palace. The script calls for Pilate to be played by an adult who acts out, rather than just describing, the scene. As we move to the mocking of Jesus, Fr. George takes over the role while the children wrap him in a purple cloak and write a sign reading "King of the Jews". The purple cloak and crown of thorns are placed on a crude wooden cross. After the cross is set upright to represent the crucifixion, we process back into the church singing *Were You There*. The children reverently place the cloak away until Easter morning. We all are reminded that *this is not the end of the story* and whisper "Alleluia" as the liturgy concludes. On Easter

morning the children will find that the shroud has been transformed into an ALLELUIA banner to be carried in procession.

We invite you join us for this walk with Jesus at 10 a.m. Good Friday morning, April 15th. Please reach out to families from other churches and tell them that all children who attend will be invited to participate. From previous experience, I know everyone will come away with a deeper understanding of Holy Week.

Doug Engwall, Deacon

Chili Fundraiser for Missions!

To support our outreach ministries, we are offering chili and cornbread for takeout orders on **Mardi Gras – Tuesday, March 1st**. A \$6 order of chili (1½ cups of meat or veggie-based goodness) includes a piece of cornbread. Add on cheese, sour cream, or extra cornbread for a small charge. Then choose your pickup time. Orders may be placed by emailing a completed Order Form (available in the narthex or on our website homepage at www.stjamesfarmington.org to st.james.church@sbcglobal.net or calling the parish office at 860-677-1564.

Proceeds from this Fundraiser will go to outreach ministries of St. James Parish, both local and national. **Orders must be received by the Parish by Friday, February 25th**. ALL orders must be picked up on Tuesday, March 1st, 5–7 pm at St. James Parish. Payment in cash or check made payable to *St. James Parish* is due upon pickup.



Conversations on World Religions & Faith

This Spring, we plan to continue our series on World Religions. Planning discussions with



scholars and members of the Islam faith are still in progress. Stay tuned for details as we firm up a date and content.

Faith & Fries returns!!

Some of you remember that in late 2019, we launched a new ministry – in partnership with First Church, Congregational, Farmington - called *Faith and Fries*. The sole goal of *Faith and Fries* was (and is) to give folks a casual platform for discussing how faith and the world/life intersect. We had our first gathering in November of 2019 and were just getting momentum when COVID came along and we had to back away for a (long) time. Now, we hope to reboot *Faith and Fries*, but it needs to be on a different night as Taprock and many other restaurants are closed on Mondays. Due to a lot of factors, **we have selected the 4th Tuesday in every month to gather at Taprock Beer Bar and Refuge at 81 South Main Street, Unionville.**



Hoping that all goes well, we will meet on Tuesday, March 22nd, from 7–8:30 pm. You can come for dinner, have a drink or snack, whatever is comfortable for you. To stir up gentle, generous, and free conversation, we will use the “Ten Big Questions” developed by podcaster Kelly Corrigan. Please consider joining us in March or sometime this Spring!

Sunday Adult Bible Study

Bible study continues during Lent. Beginning on Sunday, March 13th, the Bible study group will begin 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. Use Zoom Meeting ID: 810 0898 0546; Passcode: 062552 to join us on the 13th at noon. All are welcome!

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.

Lent: a season

Lent is a period of 40 days (not counting Sundays; the Sabbath day superseding the Lenten fast, so we can eat chocolate or donuts that day 😊) that begins with Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday is the day we commemorate Lent’s beginning with Holy Eucharist and the Imposition of Ashes (see article on next page). Lent lasts from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday, the day before Easter, when we commemorate the passing of Christ from death into resurrection with a service of Vigil at sundown. We suspend the saying or singing of alleluias for the season of Lent, a highly symbolic way of reminding us we are in a time of intentional reflect. Lent should not be joyless or a “grit your teeth and bear it” kind of time. Lent is for reflecting and being intentional.

Lent is a time of reflection and we all can come to that in different ways. Some folks like to give something up for Lent (something simple like chocolate, alcohol, sweets, coffee – tried that one year; didn’t end well), something that we might miss in our everyday lives. Some folks also add something, maybe in place of something they have given up, like daily prayer or an additional time of prayer or just being more intentionally kind or more patient, etc. The purpose of fasting or adding during Lent is so that we can become, at least for a season, more mindful of how blessed we are and how much we can often miss the places and ways Jesus calls us in our lives. Lent might also be a time for us to remember how Christ suffered and why. Where do we need forgiveness or, maybe more importantly, to give offer it? The blessing of our church year is that it gives us time to think, reflect, and become more aware of where we feel God’s absence and presence in our lives. Lent is a gift and we should look on it as such.



Ash Wednesday, March 2nd

It is important to say that ashes are not the focus of the Ash Wednesday service, which dates back to the early days of the church, though some of the things we do on the Wednesday before the first Sunday of Lent were once done on the Sunday itself. Wednesday became the beginning of Lent later on, so that Lent (not including Sundays) could be exactly 40 days. Ashes have figured into Christian practice since well before the 4th century; in fact, ashes go back to the times of pagan religions (Egypt and Greece), before the time of Christ, when ashes sprinkled on the head signified mourning. In most Catholic countries outside the United States and Africa, in fact, ashes are still sprinkled on the head on Ash Wednesday, instead of the priest making the sign of the cross on a person's forehead. Ancient Christians, as a practice, might be separated from his/her congregations because of "notorious sins." If the congregant wanted to come back into Christian community, he or she went through a process. They would, on more than one occasion, confess their sins publicly, and would lay prostrate on the floor, as a priest sprinkled ashes upon their head.

We tend to focus too much on ashes on the Wednesday that begins Lent. Actually, ashes are a sign of repentance, as we understand that we have fallen away from the desires and design of God for our lives and wish to turn back to God. The priest says, as ashes are sprinkled on the head (or traced in the sign of the cross, more typical for us American Christians), "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Those words remind us that we bring nothing into the world and will take nothing from it but, whether we live or die, we belong to Almighty God.



We will have two Ash Wednesday services on March 2nd: one at noon and one at 7 pm, both with Holy Eucharist. If you

are not comfortable attending in-person worship, but would like to have ashes, you need only stop by the church between 9–11:30 am or between 2–5 pm. If you wish to have ashes and cannot make it to church, call Fr. George to schedule a very short visit for the imposition of ashes.

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.

Last week, our rector, George Roberts, shared the following poem with the Sunday Bible Study group. It is an exquisitely raw, haunting and beautiful statement of Christ's self-emptying Love ... of our need, and of God's response.

The Coming by R. S. Thomas

*And God held in his hand
A small globe. Look, he said.
The son looked. Far off,
As through water, he saw
A scorched land of fierce
Colour. The light burned
There; crusted buildings
Cast their shadows: a bright
Serpent, a river
Uncoiled itself, radiant
With slime.*

*On a bare
Hill a bare tree saddened
The sky. many People
Held out their thin arms
To it, as though waiting
For a vanished April
to return to its crossed
Boughs. The son watched
Them. Let me go there, he said.*

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

Pat Clark
Carol Kirkwood
Donna Paye

Minutes of the Vestry of St. James: January 20, 2022

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

Absent: Foster White

Meeting called to order 7:02pm

Minutes of December 16, 2021, Vestry Meeting

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

Ministry Reports

Finance/Treasurer's report – December 2021

Summary of Report via EJ Ososki. Overall, we did well. Pledge income exceeded the plan by nearly \$9,000. Traceable income noted that some members gave more than pledged and some gave without pledging. This helped our overall income exceed plan by \$8,000. The expenses were helped by a number of items and led to a result that is \$9,000 favorable to the budget. The initial budget planned on a deficit of \$48,568. We did much better than this and our deficit ended up being \$31,384 which was \$17,184 better than our plan.

Motion made by Jim to accept the December Financial report with a second by Kim F.

Unanimous vote to accept the financial report.

Stewardship

As of 01/20/2022 81 pledges have been received totaling \$270,813. Last year we had 90 pledges totaling approximately \$280K. Budget goal was set at \$288,000.

New Business

Budget for 2022

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

- To be noted Sexton position is at 2 time a week vs 3 times.
- No craft fair fundraiser is noted (uncertainty of crowd gatherings) possibility of a smaller type of fundraiser to be considered budgeted at less money than craft fair brings in.
- Discussed expenses of copier which is leased needed item and limited plans available.
- EJ to separate out snow removal at Rectory
- Miss Porter's in 2020/2021 did rent parish hall space to help with social distancing for

COVID protocols but no longer is needing the space for such. There is no anticipated increase in rentals for coming year.

- Budget shows a draw on invested funds of 7.6% which is higher than the 5% or less, that we have strived to be at and not go higher.
- Vestry exploring various budget options

Motion made by Kim P at 7:54 pm to go into Executive Session with a second by EJ.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Carol K at 8:44pm to end Executive Session with a second by Tom.

Motion carried unanimously.

Changes to budget to be presented at Annual Meeting will show a decreased budget in line with pledges that came in with operational staff changes included. This will leave budget at a deficit closer to 51,000 vs 77,000 keeping in line with staying in 5% range of draw on investments.

Review of Voting List for Annual Meeting

Motion made by Kim P to accept the voting list as submitted, seconded by Kim F.

- Note to Sue Deming to correct town listed for Olivia Roberts
- Review of members known to be unable to attend

Unanimous vote to carry motion.

Vestry Retreat Saturday February 5, 2022, 9 am – 2 pm in Parish Hall or online

- Rev. Canon Rebekah Hatch – Rector, St Albans Simsbury and ECCT Interim Dean of Formation to lead us with theme of Small Churches making an Impact.
- Day to be broken up into Morning Session / Lunch / Afternoon Session / Eucharist
- This retreat is also open to outgoing vestry members

2023 Sesquicentennial (150th year) Committee

- Fr. George has a group of 8-9 parishioners who will meet on February 8th to start planning. Anticipate that by Summer 2022 a timeline will be in place of events planned for 2023

Using Memorial Fund for Improving Equipment for Livestreaming

- Is it appropriate to use Memorial Fund for purchase of camera and laptop since it is a large part of worship? Memorial Funds normally used for worship purposes.

- Motion made by Jim to use funds from Memorial Fund for purchase of a camera and laptop. Seconded by Mimi
- Discussion that since the pandemic, livestreaming has played a large part in keeping connections and will continue to play a part in worship. Many advantages to livestream even when there are in-person services for those who are unable to attend or may not be in the area, but still want to participate, and at times visitors from all over can access service online.
- Unanimously the motion carried.

Old Business

New Vestry Members

Maina brought up a future bylaw proposal for vestry to consider in a future meeting, that if there was not a full slate of vestry members to present, to allow an outgoing vestry member to stay on for one (1) more year. This would avoid decreasing number of vestry members. Motion would need to be made, discussed, and voted on.

Nominees for Delegate to Convention

- Gabriela Henry is on the ballot to be replacement for her husband, Robert Henry who passed away in 2021.
- Linda (Reynolds) Mason is on the ballot as an alternate
- Delegate Michele Briganti will remain a delegate with Tracey Roberts as alternate. Both were voted in last year 1/31/2021.

Miscellaneous

- Kim P thanked all for the opportunity to serve the last 2 years as a Co-Warden. She enjoyed being on the Vestry “it has been fun” even during these unprecedented unique times.
- Fr. George thanked Kim P., Mimi, and Robyn for their service on the Vestry over the past 3 years. All three (3) have been giving of their wisdom, energy, insight, and he acknowledged the hard work they have put in over the past 3 years.

EJ moved to adjourn. Jim seconded. Unanimous vote to adjourn. Adjourned at 9:29pm

Respectfully Submitted

Carol

Carol Kirkwood, Clerk

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.

Celebrating March Birthdays

*Pierce Connelly
Rowan Connelly
Mitch Guglielmo
Lila Manton
Jane Inrig
Lillian Tuttle
Drew Alligood
Jerry Hess
Paul Ingram*

*David Paye
Nick Baldwin
Bruce Baldwin
Marisol Pereira
Anna Lapointe
Ev Lyons
Ella Ososki
Elizabeth McBride
Katherine Watkin*



Major dates of Lent

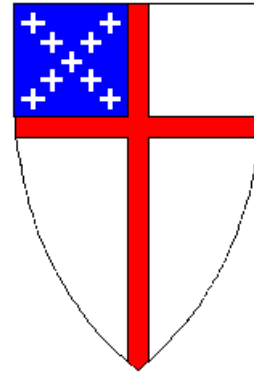
Wednesday, March 2nd, Ash Wednesday, services at noon and 7 pm
 March 6th, First Sunday in Lent, The Great Litany,
 April 10th, Palm Sunday, Procession of Palms,
 Wednesday, April 13th, 7 pm, Tenebrae
 April 14th, 7 pm Maundy Thursday
 April 15th, 10 am *Walking with Jesus*;
 11:30 am, Good Friday Contemplative Service; 7 pm, Veneration of the Cross
 Saturday, April 16th, 7:30 pm The Great Vigil of Easter,
 Easter, April 17th, Resurrection Sunday

St. James Parish

3 Mountain Road
Farmington, Connecticut 06032

Phone: 860-677-1564
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

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

OFFICERS

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

2022

Thomas Nelson
Foster White
James Wilkie

VESTRY 2023

Kim Faubert
Maina Rice
Anna Whilby

2024

Kathy Bullard
Bonnie Sudell
Robert Sudell

St. James Parish

3 MOUNTAIN ROAD
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

MARCH