

St. James Parish

Epistle



November 2021

Rector's Message

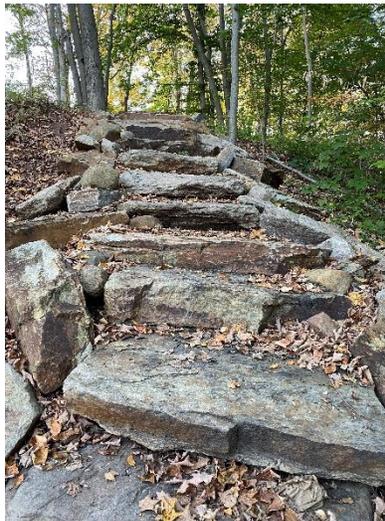
Fall. Fall is that time of year when trees shed their leaves, having turned brilliant red, gold, and orange, and prepare themselves for winter. The squirrels hop and forage amongst the dead leaves to find food for a long winter when there will be less food to find. Geese honk their way toward more southerly climes, bear begin to take to their caves and hollows after fattening themselves for winter, while the woodpeckers attack the rectory with even greater intensity; they never rest. Autumn is a strange, yet glorious time of year when I am personally reminded of how blessed I am. Fall is my favorite season, with winter a close second, and I truly revel in the change of the time, the passing of green to brilliant color, and the silence of winter. Fall is Christ's entry into Jerusalem, the last brilliance of His earthly ministry, when he shone the brightest, the last blush of Jesus' life before His death and entombment, then embraced by winter for a short season, until the Light of spring awakens His Resurrected splendor. Christ emerges changed, yet still Christ.

Christ's life, death and resurrection may not remind you of fall but when I think of Jesus's earthly arc, which bends heavenward and then back again toward us, His beloved, I cannot help but think of thanksgiving. Eucharist, as most of you probably remember, means "thanksgiving," our remembrance of our Lord who died for us and by dying, blessed us. Our

gratitude, our thanksgiving for Christ's falling into death for our sake, must change us as people of God. Thanksgiving may conjure for you, as it does for me, scenes of thanksgivings past, when family and huge amounts of food were common to us. Thanksgiving for many people is a stark reminder that they do not have enough to eat, no place to sleep, few people that are mindful of them, if any, and a terrible loneliness that permeates their lives. Might Thanksgiving and this season of change help us to remember our struggling brothers and sisters in the world? May our support and love of St. James Parish be a reflection of God's continuing, never ceasing arc of love in Christ? Christ endured, after all, the winter of death for our sake. And Christ brings with Him the loving words of Resurrection that calls us to be reborn to a new life of service, hope, and mercy. Fall is fully here.

Thanksgiving, Eucharist, is a time to see the Body of Christ, sacrificed and risen for us, and to prepare – in the way of the squirrel and the bear – for the year and life to come.

In Christ,
Fr. George+



Warden's Corner

Every year at this time I think back to when I met and started dating my wife Donna. It was fall, October to be exact that we went out on our first date. It brought back fond memories of us dating and getting to know each other. The start of a new journey for both of us. It was a special time indeed.

It also brought back the memory of us beginning to look for a church. We had both felt that we needed church to be a part of our lives as we went forward and neither was attending on any regular basis. So, as some may call it, we began to church shop. Although we did not visit many we stumbled into St James. The building on the outside was gorgeous and was one of the key factors that drew us in. Once inside we were welcomed, first by the smiling ushers, then later by the rector and, finally, by a few more people, afterwards at coffee. Everyone we met were so light and cheery. As time went on, and our attendance at St. James continued, we had the chance to meet so many other people. It did not take long for us to feel at home.

Today, as a member of the Vestry, with Donna on Altar Guild and as both of us as Ushers, I am reminded of my early experiences here at St. James. I do my best to welcome all newcomers and try to spend a little time to chat it up with people I already know and those I don't know so well.

As we head into our Stewardship season, as a Vestry member, I urge all members of St. James to keep an eye out for those newcomers and to welcome them into the parish with open arms. It worked on us and sure it will work for others. We need to build St James bigger together.

Thank you!

Jim Wilkie, Vestry Co-Warden

Church School update

In October we explored lessons from the Old Testament including Abraham and Sarah receiving God's promise and Joseph's Story. We made Joseph dolls with beautiful dream coats, we learned about the story of Joseph and his dreams in many ways!

For the month of November we will continue our work with the *Weaving God's Promises* curriculum and explore lessons from the Old Testament including Moses and the Blazing Bush and Gideon and the trumpets. We will also talk about the season of gratitude and how we can show God's love through gratitude.

We will also continue with Deacon Doug and our Children's Choir as we prepare to sing on Youth Sunday in December!

As always, please feel free to email me with any questions at amy.siyouthminister@gmail.com !!

Teen Bible Study

In November, due to the Thanksgiving break we will meet on Sunday, November 14th and Sunday, November 21st following the 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!

As always, please feel free to email me with any questions at amy.siyouthminister@gmail.com !!

Confirmation Corner

After a year of hard work and faith exploration please join us on Sunday, November 14th, to witness our four St. James confirmands become confirmed by Bishop Suffragan Laura Ahrens! We look forward to recognizing Lila, Ben, Lindsay, and Kevin as they take the next step in their faith journey! Also, please join us after for refreshments and celebration!



From the Deacon's bench

Living through Change

On a trip to Ireland, our tour guide told us about the cultural impact created by switching from the Irish pound to the Euro. Many people thought that prices had been improperly raised by merchants taking advantage of the confusion created by the change in currency. For five years, most retailers continued to show prices in both Irish pounds and Euros, enabling shoppers to compare prices. Old age pensioners still believed they were being cheated. When asked, many wondered why the change couldn't have waited until after they were all dead! Although the Irish government proclaimed the country was sailing into a bright future, many seniors felt they had been left at the dock.

In Bristol, the place I call home, the city has decided to revamp Memorial Boulevard. This tree-lined roadway was established



100 years ago as a memorial to men who lost their lives in World War I. A tree was planted in memory of each veteran with their names engraved on an obelisk, the park's central feature. Over the years, other monuments have been added, listing the names of



veterans who died in other conflicts. I invite you to visit this beautiful park on Veterans' Day or any day, but you might want to wait until next year. City planners also decided the old bridge over the

Pequabuck river needed to be replaced, closing a major roadway for most of the year. As I wait in traffic jams on the remaining route out of Bristol to the rest of the world, sometimes I get frustrated with the need for change. I suppose it would be great if we could snap our fingers and all the improvements would happen magically. In reality, we have to endure some inconvenience to bring about change. Perhaps it's true that no one likes

change, but we live in a world that is constantly undergoing it.

I'm currently reading *Sapiens: A brief history of Humankind* by the Israeli anthropologist Yuval Noah Harari. He proposes that our success as a species arises from humankind's ability to create and respond to change. Neanderthal societies probably existed for thousands of years without any major adaptations. Our species thrived by developing a culture open to change while the Neanderthals did not. Please be kind and don't bring that up in your next conversation with a Neanderthal co-worker.

Religious institutions often can be a very conservative element of society, representing a strength and a weakness. We enjoy singing familiar hymns and saying traditional prayers. But a deacon friend of mine likes to caution that the seven last words of the church are "we have always done it that way." As faithful followers of Christ, we must enjoy preserving traditions but remain responsive to the needs of society. We must be open to singing new songs and saying new prayers as we seek to find new ways to serve God and neighbor in an ever-changing world.

Doug Engwall, Deacon

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!

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.

Feast of All Souls

All Souls Day is called an “optional” feast day in the Anglican tradition. All Soul’s is primarily, in Western Christianity, commemorated on the 2nd of November. All Souls is generally considered to be part of All Hallowstide which includes All Hallow’s Eve (October 31st, called Halloween by most in the West), All Saints Day (November 1st) and All Souls (the 2nd). All Soul’s goes back at least to the 10th century when it was set aside from the All Saints celebration. In the Catholic tradition, All Saints is specifically for those who, because of the virtue of their life and being canonized by the church, have bypassed purgatory and are in the heavenly realm with Christ and the angels. All Souls, in that same tradition, is for everyone else: those who have died but must go through the cleansing time of purgatory. All Souls commemorates the Faithful Departed, all those who have gone to the next life in the faith (usually) of Baptism. It should be said that most Episcopal Churches I have been a part of and know of, commemorate All Souls (without specifically mentioning it as such) on All Saints Day.



During and after the

Reformation, All Souls lost some of its following, but on the continent, especially in Finland, Germany, Croatia and elsewhere, All Souls is a day to remember those who have gone before us, to visit graves and cemeteries, and observe local custom. Some will leave a place at table for those who have gone before, our leave a cake or bread in a special place. In places like Mexico, *Dia de Los Muertos* celebrates Allhallowtide in a number of ways, often with festivals, parades, visits to relatives, and dressing in traditional costumes (skulls called *calaveras* in Spanish, or skeletons called *calacas*). Small altars are made and food left there for the dearly departed or left at gravesites.

All Souls celebrates our connectivity to those who have gone before us and to the reality that in Christ we are saved. We pray for the faithful departed who are either in heaven or on their journey heavenward. **On Tuesday,**

November 2nd, All Souls, we will have a special in-person only service with special prayers and absolutions for the dead at 9 a.m.

We invite you to send in the names of the departed loved ones in your lives and to send them by Monday, November 1st to the parish office at st.james.church@sbcglobal.net and we will read their names and pray for them during the service.

Sharing the Feast: Thanksgiving Basket Project

St James Parish is once again working with the Town of Farmington to supply 10 families in need with food for their Thanksgiving meals. Due to COVID-19, we have chosen to accept only monetary donations. Community Services will then shop to provide the families their meal items. **We ask that parishioners send monetary donations to the church, noting that they are for Thanksgiving Baskets.** You may also use PayPal from the main page of the parish website at www.stjamesfarmington.org, please let the office know that your online donation is for the Thanksgiving Baskets.



All donations must be received by St James by Thursday, November 11th so that a check can be delivered to Farmington Community Services. Thank you for your generosity!

Save The Date: Youth & Families Advent Wreath Making

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!

Please join us on Sunday, December 5th following the service to enjoy wreath making, crafts, and some treats! All are welcome to attend!

Annual Convention of The Episcopal Church in CT

Each fall in Connecticut, clergy and lay folks of the Episcopal Church in CT (ECCT) come together for Annual Convention with the intent to review and pass new legislation, engage in fellowship and conversation, and touch base on what is happening in the larger church and world. Delegates are elected from each parish (two each nowadays) to represent their communities with “voice” (they can speak to the resolutions on the agenda and in any session of Convention) and vote on policies and resolutions that come up for a vote. Each Convention is different, but all have an address from the Bishop on the state of the affairs in ECCT and small group conversations on topics of concern (such as racism, young people in the church, etc.). You were also, for the first time, able to watch the entire ECCT Convention online. Our delegate this year is Michele Briganti and Tracey Roberts as our alternate. We encourage everyone to go to <https://ecctconvention.org/> for everything you may wish to know on resolutions, conversations, and much more.

Annual Appeal for Stewardship

Our Annual Appeal for Stewardship for 2022 officially begins on November 7th, All Saints Sunday (as commemorated), as we start the effort to support our parish needs to continue and grow her mission in Farmington and around the world. We will have a parishioner sharing their experience of stewardship at St. James and we will celebrate a Baptism,

which seems so very apropos. Our stewardship is our response to God’s goodness and blessings in our lives, so please open your hearts and minds to the possibilities of your supporting St. James in the 2022 program year.



Celebrating November Birthdays

Susan Kramer
Mimi Hostetter
Mitchell Ives
Catherine MacKay
Betsy Stott
Gavin Stein
Kathy Bullard
Michaela Flynn

Rebecca Tuttle
Chris Hillemeir
Jim Wilkie
Sheila Church
Erica Amato
Janice Riemer
Jay Buth



Adult Christian Formation: Conversations on World Religions & Faith

Last month, we had a wonderful overview of our program year as Mimi Hostetter introduced us to some of the themes and the religious traditions we will be discussing and exploring in the 2021-22 program year. On **Tuesday, December 7th, from 6:30–8 pm**, Rabbi Michael Pincus from the Congregation Beth Israel, West Hartford, will join us again (he presented on the Psalms a number of years ago) to discuss Judaism. We will have additional program opportunities in early 2022, as we learn more about Buddhism, Islam and, we hope, Hinduism. Please put December 9th on your calendar please and join us via Zoom.



Movements in Faith

We've resumed the once monthly (4th Sunday of every month) worship celebration called *Movements in Faith*. *Movements in Faith* was developed last year, but went on hiatus due to COVID-19. *Movements* is a worshipful time intended to serve people with special needs and their families, playing simple, but fun and worshipful music, playing a game to open, hearing a reading from scripture, and all can join in with special instruments that anyone can use! All are welcome and invited, no matter where you are on your spiritual journey, no matter your need, no matter your tradition. For these colder months ahead, we have moved indoors to the parish hall. Many families with a member who has special needs have felt unwelcome in church settings in the past. Again, all are welcome. **Our next *Movements in Faith* gathering is Sunday, November 28th at 2 pm.**



Music Notes

About 2 years ago St. James welcomed the CT Virtuosi Music Academy into the building, where they could teach private lessons in our wonderful space to students of all ages and abilities. Since then we have hosted two wonderful summer festivals with multiple outdoor concerts, expanding our music activities at St. James. Looking forward, we are excited to begin in partnership with the CT Virtuosi a concert series at St. James. This will be a great opportunity for St. James to once again host musicians of international acclaim within our beautiful space. Keep an eye out for information as we begin building this wonderful series! All the musicians that come



to our space are always so complimentary of our church space, and they enjoy using our wonderful instruments.

Last year the staff at St. James came up with an idea for a Christmas service that we could host outdoors. Unfortunately, due to weather

and stricter Covid regulations, we were not able to make it happen outdoors or indoors. This year we will once again attempt to create this outdoor experience as our early Christmas Eve service, which promises to be fun for the whole family. Caroling, hot beverages, tree decorating, fire pits, the Christmas Story, all combined into a celebratory service for the whole community. We will follow the arc of the Christmas Story from the Old Testament to the New, all interspersed with music from the choir and from the congregation. We will have a tree in the front lawn, upon which everyone can place an ornament that they have crafted, or that has some significance. Look for further announcements on this special occasion!

Blake Hansen, Director of Music

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 ...

Sometimes we need help ... (OK, I always need help!) to stay on a good path, and to not be overcome with the anxiety that is prevalent everywhere, it seems, these days.

This collect speaks to Christ as the One who surrounds us with arms of Love. It is from the New Zealand Prayer Book.

A Collect

Christ be within us to keep us,
beside us to guard,
before us to lead,
behind us to protect,
beneath us to support,
above us to bless. Amen.

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: September 16, 2021

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

Meeting called to order 7:08 pm

Minutes of June 17, 2021, Vestry Meeting
Foster moved to accept the minutes. Mimi seconded. **Unanimous vote to accept** the minutes.

Ministry Reports

Finance/Treasurer's report – August 2021
Foster moved to accept the report. Mimi seconded.

Discussion: Reported that Invested funds are following all Diocese requirements as St James oversees own investments vs having Diocese oversee.

Unanimous vote to accept the financial report.

Capital Campaign Project Feasibility Update – Improving Building Accessibility

Discussion: It is a slow process – it has been more difficult than anticipated getting subcontractors to come out and give quotes for project. Since building is old, original schematics not necessarily accurate. Once any testing is done and something is found, it would have to be removed, as it was now disturbed in testing. What will it all mean for costs? What options are there?

Motion made by Mimi seconded by Jim that a small task force/committee be formed to look at options to make parish building more accessible and then bring the information to the full Vestry for review. **Unanimous vote to proceed with motion** to form a task force to investigate options to improve accessibility of parish building.

Stewardship Project

Parishioners Kim Pereira, Anna Whilby, Linda Larkin, Mimi Hostetter, and Fr. George completed online stewardship training in April 2021. They have been working on Stewardship Appeal plans for this Fall. Lots of creative

ideas will be implemented including a Stewardship logo.

Youth Ministry & Church School

The first Church School class was held on Sunday September 12th where 10 children attended and 1 youth helper. Grades K-6 are combined for this school year. Teachers are volunteering from the parish and Amy Steele, Director of Children & Youth Ministries providing support and guidance. Grades 7-12 are combined with 3-4 youth so far starting a Bible Study led by Amy Steele. Nursery is available, supervised by Laura Vacca.

New Business

How are folks doing?

- Choir glad to be back even if outside.
- Things are a bit tricky and can be stressful – given that all was going in a positive direction with decrease in COVID outbreak and then a setback with an uptick. Not having kids vaccinated is stressful. What will attendance be like when we move to all indoors services?
- Concerns about whether people come back to church – what will happen to church in the future? Hartford Seminary is currently doing a study on this.
- Church school is social distancing inside for class, being mindful to allow kids time outside as much as possible.
- Prayer Team struggles with not having prayer time in person with people. Open to ideas.

Old Business

St Mark's – New Britain

- St Mark's is continuing to look at what is in their future and Fr. George has met with parishioners from St Mark's in a listening capacity. Over the past year or so we have had parishioners from St Mark's transfer to St James.

Jim made a motion to adjourn. Foster seconded. Unanimous vote to adjourn. We adjourned at 8:39 pm and closed in prayer.

Respectfully Submitted

Carol

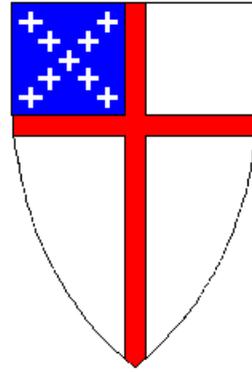
Carol Kirkwood, Clerk

St. James Parish

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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 & Dona Waugh, Wardens		
Amelia (Amy) Steele	<i>Dir. of Children & Youth Ministries</i>	EJ Ososki, Treasurer		
Blake Hansen	Director of Music	Jerry Hess, Asst. Treasurer		
Susan Deming	Parish Administrator	Jessica Watkin, Parish Clerk		
Anthony Nauss	Sexton			
Laura Vacca	Nursery Supervisor			
		2020	VESTRY	2022
		Julia Grieco	2021	Mimi Hostetter
		Rebecca McFarland	Kim Pereira	Thomas Nelson
		Dona Waugh	Robyn Shover	Foster White
				James Wilkie

St. James Parish

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

