

St. James Parish

Epistle



November 2022

Rector's Message

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all. Hymnal 1982, #405

The Blessing of the Animals is one of the special days in our church year that I look forward to a great deal. We sing “All things bright and beautiful” and remember the role that animals can play in our lives. For many millennia folks have been simply wild about their dogs or cats and many folks wonder why? I am not a natural dog person, as my family was not able to have dogs when I was growing up. My wife and children are crazy about our dogs, and I have learned a lot of “why” in the years that Tracey and I have been together. Dogs love unconditionally, fervently and even if they are mistreated, they will so very easily forgive and return to those they love all over again. Their canine spirits are grounded in an awareness of Divine love, somehow, and they channel that love, always seeking approval (and a scratch under the chin or rub on the belly). I recently officiated at a funeral of someone I met only once, when I was asked to come to the hospital and say Prayers for the Dying with him. He died the next morning. His family told me about his love for animals, particularly his beloved cocker spaniels, one who made it all the way to the Westminster Dog Show. At his funeral, his brother spoke about many things, but one thing he made clear was that the deceased loved his dogs and his dogs, well, they loved him back.

I cannot help but wonder how the world might look if we loved each other like a dog loves his/her people? We would love without condition, without boundaries, only seeking to please each

other, which would not be a problem, because we would be loved in return. Now, imagine how much God in Christ loves us. If we have ever been loved unconditionally by an animal - who we feed, after all, and take care of – then we have but an inkling of what it means to be loved by our Creator God. God loves us so much, so wildly, recklessly, and unconditionally (too many adverbs in a row, I know) that He gave His only Son. Jesus, remember, was perfect in all things, human in all but sin and it is that One that God offers on the altar of our imperfectness. We love, if we love at all, because God first loved us and showed us what it means to love. If we aspire to love as God loves, knowing we cannot meet God halfway ... in our aspiration to love as God first loved us, we would change the world with that kind of love.



We are entering our season of Appeal for Stewardship. We give to St. James out of love for the place we call our spiritual home, but also out of love for one another. We desire to give what we can to equip each other to love the world and all those in need. We become servants to our fellow humans because God first loved and, in Christ, served us. November is a time of thanksgiving and love. Let us love to the fullest, with God's help, our imperfect human friends and siblings in Christ.

In Christ,
Fr. George+

Warden's Corner

Fall has arrived and although the colors are beautiful and the weather still nice, I realize my time on the golf course is coming to an end. Overnight on November 5th we change our clocks and soon enough we will wake up in the dark and eat dinner in the dark. Although I do like Fall, the season is just too short. We all know what comes next ... Winter, which for me is just too long. This year I plan to start going to the gym on a regular basis as soon as golf ends to fill that void. If I do so regularly, then there will be no need for New Year's resolutions come January.

The good news is that more and more people are coming back to live services. In early October we welcomed twelve or so members of St Mark's Episcopal to our service. While upstairs running the video for our online participants, I couldn't help but notice that nearly every seat was filled. It was awesome and thank you for your support in welcoming and making the folks from St Mark's feel comfortable both during and after the service at coffee hour.

We also had our First Sunday Breakfast for the first time since March 2020. This event was also well attended, and we actually had more people than we'd anticipated – a sure sign that people are feeling more comfortable being around each other. The next Breakfast will be on October 30th. This is not the first Sunday of November, but there is a special All Saints Day celebration scheduled for the 6th.

The new streaming system has been up and operational for about a month now and I am really impressed with the quality as well as how easy it is to operate. We would like a few more volunteers to join the rotation as Video Operators. Ten to fifteen minutes of training is all it takes and, if I can do it, then anyone can! Anyone interested in learning and joining this new team, please let Fr. George know; we can use the help. The sanctuary streaming system was a generous gift from Nancy Thompson in honor of her late husband Jim and we cannot thank her and her family enough.

We invite you all to attend live services and attend our many events in person if you can and feel comfortable doing so. Livestreaming of many services will continue to be available!

Blessings,
Jim Wilkie, Co-Warden

First Sunday Breakfast!



Find delicious food and fellowship at the First Sunday Breakfasts cooked by a great crew of men of the parish, led by John McBride: pancakes, waffles, sausage, bacon, eggs, breads, juice and coffee as good as Mom made. The menu may change from one month to the next.

SPECIAL NOTE: Come join us in the Parish Hall at 9 a.m. on Sunday, October 30th. On our regular first Sunday, November 6th, we'll hold a special Coffee Hour in celebration of All Saints Day.

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. **A signup with the list of Thanksgiving foods is posted in the narthex.** Please sign up for one or more items. Non-perishable foods may be left in the box labeled Thanksgiving Meals. **All items must be delivered to St James by Sunday, November 20th.** Food for the Thanksgiving meals will be delivered to Farmington Community Services who will then distribute the meals to the families. Any questions? Please contact Barbara Hess with questions. Thank you for your continuing generosity!



Faith & Fries!

We usually gather on the 4th Tuesday of every month at **Five Corners Bistro & Craft Bar**, 354 Colt Hwy (Rt. 6) in Farmington. To move out of Thanksgiving week, **we next convene on**



Tuesday, November 29th, from 7–8:30 pm. You can come for dinner, have a drink or snack, whatever is comfortable for you. This month's theme is *More than enough: how do*

we cultivate the notion of "abundance" in the world? 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!*

A BIG Thank You!

Although this was written before the Fair took place, (deadlines being what they are), we want to thank each and every one of you who helped with the Fair in any way! And let's not forget to thank everyone who shopped!

This was the first Fair since 2019, and you proved, beyond a doubt, that the people of St. James Parish continue to give generously of themselves; their time, their talent, and their treasure. Because of you, the Fair was a success, and our Outreach ministries can now help others in more ways than ever! We will publish the results as soon as we have all our receipts, but in the meantime, again, **thank you!**



Church School to Confirmation

This year's church school theme is "All are equal in God's Eye and welcome in His House". As a response to that, we've begun a new youth greeter ministry here at St. James. At the 10:15 service, children join the ushers in welcoming parishioners and distributing bulletins. Some children have already shown an interest in being a part of this. Youth greeters meet in the church hall at 10 am then go as a group to the narthex. They greet people and then they join the procession after the crucifer and proceed down to the church school to join their classes. Please contact Joyce Bettencourt at jjvbet@comcast.net if you would like your child to be a part of this ministry. The youth greeters are listed in the weekly bulletin.

Prayer Team

From time to time, the Prayer Team shares some of what has been helpful to us, in the hope that you might find it helpful too.

Today I have taken the very familiar prayer that begins each celebration of the Eucharist, and changed a few pronouns, making it a personal prayer. This could be a great way to begin each day ...

Almighty God, to you my heart is open, my desires known, and from you no secret is hidden: Cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that I may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ my Lord. Amen.

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

Pat Clark
Carol Kirkwood
Donna Paye

Celebrating November birthdays!

Susan Kramer
Chris Watkin
Mimi Hostetter
Chris Hillemeir
Mitchell Ives
Jim Wilkie
Catherine MacKay
Sheila Church

Gavin Stein
Erica Amato
Janice Riemer
Kathy Bullard
Jay Buth
Michaela Flynn



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.

Feast of All Souls

All Souls Day is called an “optional” feast day in the Anglican tradition. In Western Christianity All Souls is primarily commemorated on the 2nd of November, part of *All Hallowstide* which also includes All Hallow’s Eve (October 31st, called Halloween by most in the West) and All Saints Day (November 1st). All Souls 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) on All Saints Day.

During and after the Reformation, All Souls lost some of its following, but for many still, All Souls is a day to remember those who have gone before us, to visit graves and cemeteries, and observe local custom. Some leave a place at table for those who have gone before, or leave a cake or bread in a special place. In places like Mexico, *Día de Los Muertos* celebrates All Hallowstide 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 and, in death, are reborn into the Communion of the Saints in light. We pray for the faithful departed who are either in heaven or on their journey heavenward. **On Wednesday, November 2nd, All Souls, we will have a service with special prayers and absolutions for the dead at 5 pm.** We invite you to send the names of the departed loved ones in your lives to the parish office at st.james.church@sbcglobal.net; we will read their names and pray for them during the service..

An Advent time of quiet

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined. Isaiah 9:2

On Saturday, November 19th, from 9 am to noon, we will hold an Advent time of quiet, a morning of quiet reflection. Advent, believe it or not, begins on Sunday, November 27th, during Thanksgiving weekend. The Feast of Christ the King, the last Sunday after Pentecost, is on November 20th!

The Episcopal tradition gives us a wonderful liturgical arc of the seasons which begins each liturgical year with the first Sunday in Advent. Advent means to wait and, traditionally, we wait for the coming of Christ: both the Christ Child - God Incarnate - at Christmas and in the long-awaited return of Christ the King, who will come again. What do we do as we wait? Advent gives us wonderful scripture lessons, all meant to prepare us for the joy of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus. I have never held a quiet time before Advent and this year, I thought, why not? Maybe we can gather for just a few hours of reflection, quiet time, and preparation for the season of Advent, which is a gift for us. We are given the privilege of using Advent as a time of intentional prayer and hope, as we anticipate the Christmas coming of Jesus all over again.



I invite you to join us at 9 am on Saturday, November 19th, to spend some time with the Advent sonnets of the Rev. Dr. Malcolm Guite. Malcolm is a well-recognized poet and priest in the Church of England. He is a teacher, musician and, until recently, Chaplain of Girton College, Cambridge. I will offer a few of his Advent sonnets to choose from and you will select one. We will spend some time together in reflection and some quiet time on your own. We will have coffee and refreshments to start at 8:30 a.m. with our reflective time beginning at 9. We will not be quiet the entire time ☺. There will be time together as a group and time on your own, with the sonnets and things that they conjure up for you. Please let us know by contacting the office and we will have an online signup soon, too. For a peek at some of Malcolm’s work, you may go to his blog page at <https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/>.

Annual Appeal for Stewardship

Stewardship has a very interesting meaning: how we care for the things that have been entrusted to us. So, we have two different ways as church to look at stewardship. First, we each pray and reflect on how we as individual family units can take care of St. James Parish. St. James has a paid staff of four, an aging physical plant, regular maintenance to perform, equipment to service and pay for, insurance, apportionments to the Diocese, etc. None of these necessities is glamorous but essential for us to remain at 3 Mountain Road and to continue to minister from this place.

Second, St. James is called to be steward of the resources that have been entrusted to us by our parishioners. We provide pastoral care to the families that care for us, and we attempt to bring the love of Jesus Christ to not only our members but to all others we meet along the way. We also desire to do more with Outreach and Mission, blessing the world, in Christ's name, through the stewardship resources provided to us, from Farmington to the Dominican Republic. The Vestry has made a commitment to provide a minimum of 2% of our budget for outreach and projects with a hope that it will be more.

All of us know that we have been through two-plus years of pandemic and uncertainty. We have attempted to meet the needs of our parish, to steward folks through the difficult times, and find creative ways to reach out to parishioner and sojourner alike. We held our first Fall Fair in three years this fall and our attendance has grown in the last few months, so there are encouraging signs of new birth.

Holding all these things together, as both parishioners and parish alike attempt to faithfully steward our path forward, is that we do so from a place of abundance, not scarcity. Our theme for Stewardship this fall is *More than Enough*. We are called to hold onto faith God will provide us what we need to fulfill our lives and ministry, like Jesus with the Multiplication of the Fishes and Loaves in Luke 9. Jesus is presented with 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread to feed 5,000 people! Jesus does not fear because, well, He's Jesus, but He has faith that God will bless the people and provide. We are



called to act in faith and bless each other and the community we all love.

Inflation, as we pivot here, has taken a toll on the cost of nearly everything. Fuel and snow removal have become particularly expensive in the last year. Our staff has not had a raise in several years. And, on a celebratory note, we will be commemorating our 150th anniversary in 2023, a huge milestone in the life of our parish community. Our hope is to hold numerous events and special days that will remind us of how much longevity St. James has had and that there is much to be excited about. We also hope to set aside a minimum, see above, of 2% of our overall income for Outreach. Our goal, then, is to grow this year's pledges by 7% which would take us to a pledge goal for 2023 of \$294,250, an admittedly substantial increase. We hope that you will continue to reflect and pray about how you can help steward St. James Parish into the future with your gift in 2023. Please reach out to Fr. George or a member of the Vestry or Stewardship Team if you have questions.

Stewardship Team, 2022

Kim Faubert, Chandler Howard, Jerry Hess,
Donna Paye, Dona Waugh, Linda Larkin,
Mimi Hostetter, Anna Whilby, EJ Ososki

Christian Imagination!

Christian Imagination, how it can bring us closer and deeper into relationship with God in Christ, is our theme for Adult Education for the 2022-23 program year. St. James Parish, as a community, will explore how art, poetry, drama, photography, music, and architecture can stimulate our imaginative instincts and, by the nature of their presentation or context, bring us directly into contact with Jesus Christ. We may easily assume that set prayer, worship, and more obvious practices alone speak to us of God, but we are going on a journey that reminds us – from the beginning of the Christian movement – that artistic expression has been a conduit to knowing Jesus more fully and, perhaps, in a richer way than we have previously imagined. Please let us know if you have an area of artistic expression that you would like us to explore. We invite you to join us on our journey of discovery and, just maybe, we will find new forms of prayer than we could have ever dreamed that tap more powerfully into who we imagine Christ to be.

Minutes of the Vestry of St. James: September 15, 2022

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

Absent: Jim Wilkie, Foster White

Minutes of June 16, 2022, Vestry Meeting

Bonnie moved to accept the minutes as submitted. Seconded by Kim.

Unanimous vote to accept the minutes as submitted.

Ministry Reports

Finance/Treasurer's report – August 2022

Summary of Report by EJ Ososki

- On the income side our pledges are ahead of plan by 16K. Our income items are also mostly favorable putting us over 20K ahead of plan.
- Expenses are mixed with the same usual suspects (currently heating and roof repairs). Total expenses are about 10.5K unfavorable to budget
- Overall, we are about 10K favorable to our budget. This is a good place to be as we go into winter. Suspect heating oil will be a burden.

Motion made by Kim to accept the August financial report as submitted, second by Bonnie. Unanimous vote to accept the August financial report as submitted.

150th – 2023 Celebration Update

Fr. George gave an update: a slogan has been adopted, with a tentative logo. Logo being done by Elizabeth, a Senior student at Miss Porter's as part of her Graphic Arts class taught by St James parishioner Grier Torrence. Vestry shown logo and feedback given.

New Business

What is the church? Where is our energy coming from?

- <https://www.thebigconversation.show/episode-2-conversion-cross> Vestry given this podcast to listen to Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury engage with author Paul Kingsnorth on his adult conversion to Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Paul and Rowan talk about the spiritual longings that still exist under the surface of secular culture and whether ancient forms of Christianity may provide answers to today's generation.

Thoughts/ Questions brought up by Fr. George and Vestry

- God is very unprincipled, and God will give us any opening to gain entry into our lives
- Pay attention – be attuned to God's wisdom around us
- What is driving us at members of St. James – church attendance pre COVID average 96 post COVID average 55 with high of 70
- Community Outreach important - Suggestions of having series with topics such as Post Covid and the world we see today - How do we deal with life? – with difficult people? and have compassion. Look at life's challenges – perspective of stress and faith / Embracing All People'
- Stress Management – Diversity – Inclusion
- Monthly *Faith & Fries* conversation may be a place to have some of these discussions and ponder the questions
- ENERGY – How do we pay attention to our energy? How do we Re-Energize – overall in the world there is a decline in church attendance – it's obvious since COVID and World changes energy has been depleted. Think about how to energize and share with others. Energy is also individualized
- Where do we go? Where is Christ calling us?
- Our denomination is diminishing – How to be faithful with that reality. Bishop-elect The Rev. Jeffrey Mello says we are underselling – What do we have to offer?
- Who is Jesus in our lives? How is he calling us? Good News! What is our truth? How do we be disciples in an energetic and lively way? How do we equip ourselves with that energy?
- Pathways where have we been where are we going?
- Church can be a blessing to the world – How do we empower ourselves in this time, energy of being together and connected in the spirit of Jesus.
- Some suggestions brought up to have a parents discussion time to support each other – Bible study – hiking group – being together can happen in many ways.

Stewardship 2022

- Stewardship Team is full swing and has a timeline, along with a theme for Stewardship
- Theme: Fishes & Loaves – logo being worked on by Kim Faubert and Laura Vacca.

- Begins Sunday November 6th for 5 weeks and ends December 4th, the 2nd Sunday of Advent.

Fundraiser tied to 150th Anniversary

Fundraiser for Building and Upkeep – hold a fundraising event of Art Exhibit/Silent Auction in early 2023 sometime in Feb March or April.

Anti-Racism training – now required of elected leaders of Vestry

- Diocese offering training. Also looking at having a training with Fr. George and Rev. Canon Rebekah Hatch with vestries of St. James and St. Albans Simsbury.
- Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing in Atlanta also has a 1-day training that can be taken remotely. Kaleidoscope and Visions are also groups offering remote classes

Building and Grounds - Columbarium

Tabled to next meeting. Jim W will discuss with us

Old Business

Live Streaming

New equipment all in place and working. Integrating it with YouTube with link in Facebook will give the best viewing. Camera can now pan in and out and go to different areas of the church

Bible in Pews

- Bible that was chosen is out of print – Sue is researching similar Bibles from other vendors.

Adult Education Program

- Schedule to be out soon - Theme of Christian Imagination and the Arts, to include Art, Music, Theater
- Music piece to be commissioned with concert for the 150th.

Bob made a motion to adjourn. Kim seconded. Unanimous vote to adjourn. Adjourned at 8:53pm

Respectfully Submitted

Carol

Carol Kirkwood, Clerk

Pew Bible update

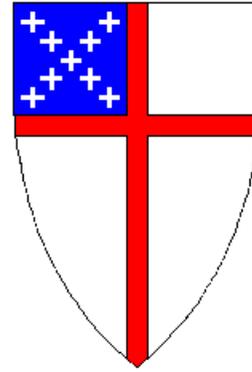
After much feedback and viewing of potential Bibles to utilize in worship, in place of the inserts in our bulletins, we have decided to wait on implementation of that plan. There are some folks who are still concerned that with the Book of Common Prayer, a Hymnal, and a bulletin, adding another thing to handle in worship would be difficult. We are going to pray a bit more about how we can better bring people to scripture as a more constant in their lives, an avenue of unlocking God's Divine presence in our lives. Holy Scripture is the foundational cornerstone of our faith and there is so much wisdom and strength to be mined within its pages. **I would love to hear from you about imaginative and creative ways that you would like to see us explore the Bible and please remember, we have Bible study each Sunday at 11:15 am.** We are exploring Deuteronomy at present and would love to have you join us. More to come!

St. James Parish

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Fax: 860-677-8219

Email: st.james.church@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.stjamesfarmington.org



MISSION STATEMENT:

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

STAFF

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

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

