

Epistle

SUMMER 2018



Rector's Message

*So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away;
see, everything has become new! [2 Corinthians 5:17]*

Paul talks a lot about the glory of heaven and how the suffering that the Christian community was facing in the 60's AD was nothing compared to the wonder and blessedness of the salvation of Jesus Christ. But I would like to think that Paul was also talking about how we are constantly being challenged and encouraged to see ourselves as renewed creations because of Jesus. Paul lived, hoped, and made his way through serious adversity because he truly believed, seemed to know, really, that his work was to show people a new way of looking at the world. Gazing at our lives and the complicated messiness of the world through the eyes of Jesus is a game-changing step in becoming the will of Jesus. And if we can see God's people as Jesus saw them, then maybe, just maybe, we will find a way to act as Jesus did.

There is a video making its way around Facebook. It involves a young boy who is at an audience with the Pope, at which people could ask Pope Francis questions. And the little boy, who couldn't have been more than seven or eight, rose up to ask the Pope a question, but he began to cry and kept saying to those who encouraged him to speak, "I can't do it." And finally, Pope Francis called the boy by name, "Emmanuelle, come to me." And the little boy came up to the Pontiff and Francis embraced the little boy in such an easy manner and let the boy whisper what he wanted to say. He told the Pope that his father had died recently and the little boy was afraid and upset because his father was an atheist; the young lad was not sure that his father would go to heaven. And Pope Francis said, "Only God can decide ... but your father, though he was not a believer, had all four of his children baptized ... he was a good man. And our God, who has a father's heart, would he turn away one such as your dad, who loved his sons enough to baptize them even though he did not believe?" And the crowd around yelled "No!" And Francis encouraged the boy that God does not turn away from any of his children, not even a non-believer who, in spite of his unbelief, tried to love his children the best way he knew how.

I love much of what Pope Francis says and does and, in that moment, he was looking at the world of this little boy through the eyes of Jesus Christ. The way that Jesus sees us, in spite of our faults and challenges, is always with love, compassion, and a desire to renew us, regardless of where we are in our rough and tumble life's journey. Renewal in Christ requires a serious hope in God's love for us and a desire to live more fully into God's presence. Jesus brings us nearer to God and that closeness allows us to look through God's lens and act with Christ's hands to build a world predicated on love, not hate, blessings, not curses; light that chases away the darkness.

In Christ, George+

Warden's Corner

Happy Summer to you all, I hope you have many fun things planned for these next few months and that all your journeys find you safely home.

Jamie and I had the honor of attending the beautiful wedding of Elizabeth (Alligood) and John McBride in May. As always I am brought back to the day of our own wedding and all the craziness that seems to surround the day. In the end the only thing that matters is that at the day's close you become the second half of a whole.

Not only were the bride and groom asked to share their commitment to each other, but those in attendance were asked to "uphold" them in their marriage. Throughout the ceremony the attendees were called to "bless them" and to help them keep their promises they were making. Also, as part of the Prayers, it was said "Grant that all married persons who have witnessed these vows may find their lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed"

It occurred to me for the first time how important it was to not only be there as a solid and steady guide for the newly married couple, but how we must reaffirm our strength in our own commitments to our significant other. Relationships are often a difficult road to navigate, but can also be the greatest of all joys, not just with your partner, but any one you love. We must remember that these relationships are a blessing and we must cultivate them in the garden of our lives.

I write this because I have been guilty of not always doing these things and I am so thankful to days like Elizabeth and John's wedding to bring me back to "center" in my marriage and relationships.

It seems to be the norm for me now to end each of these with a challenge for each of you, so here goes: I challenge each of you to cultivate a relationship in need, whether it be with God, significant other, family member, friend ... Be present and focused; listen without interrupting (Proverbs 18); answer without arguing (Proverbs 17); forgive without punishing (Colossians 3:13), trust without wavering (Corinthians 13:7)— you get the idea ... now ... GO!

Until next time,
Cathie Martin, Co-Warden

Summer Worship Schedule

Beginning Sunday, June 24th and continuing through Labor Day weekend, we will have a single Sunday worship service (Rite II) at **9 a.m.** No nursery or childcare will be available through the summer. Wednesday Prayer & Eucharist services at 10 a.m. continue throughout the summer. Beginning June 29th the parish office will be closed on summer Fridays through Labor Day weekend.



Join us for St. James Day Brunch

On Sunday, July 22nd, immediately after the 9 a.m. service, we will celebrate and feast to our Patron Saint: James, the Apostle. Please join us for a time of celebration and bring something to share: berries, cut fruit, quiche, breakfast casseroles, pastries/muffins, juices, etc. Coffee, sausage and bacon will be provided. Please join us for worship at 9 o'clock, invite a friend to share the morning with us, and be prepared to have a good time in a summery mode after worship!



Church School Year 2018-2019, we need you!

We are looking for teachers and hall monitors for next year. Please consider teaching for a month or two to help the young people of our Parish. The curriculum is easy to follow and we have lots of craft



ideas and supplies. The schedule is flexible and we do our best to accommodate your preferred grade level. Class sections for next year are Pre K/K, Grades 1–2, Grades 3–5. Hall monitors are the eyes for the hallway to assist children to/from classrooms, find supplies for teachers, greet new families, and lead children into church service. **Please email Julia Grieco (jmgrieco@sbcglobal.net) to let her know what grades and months work best for you.** We appreciate your commitment!

Prayer Team

From time to time, the Prayer Team shares something that we have found helpful in the life of faith, in the hope that you may find it helpful, too.

People have long practiced specific actions designed to sharpen spiritual awareness, challenge bad habits, and create accelerated spiritual growth. These patterns of behavior have been called "spiritual disciplines".

Familiar disciplines, such as prayer, bible reading, and personal worship, have been pursued alongside some less familiar (perhaps) disciplines like fasting, silence, and study.

Spiritual disciplines are chosen pathways of spiritual growth. They are actions we take to train the soul. They are decisions we make to develop spiritual sensitivity to God.

In Jesus, God has come toward us ... But "closeness" to God requires movement on our part ... What are we doing to move in His direction?

Max Lucado, from *Life Lessons*

Altar Flowers

Altar flower donors are needed for a few open dates through the end of the year. We have openings available in August, September and December for anyone who would like to donate altar flowers. Please signup on the poster in the narthex (to the left of the doors as you exit the building).



St. James Prayer Team ... Praying together for you

Always available, always confidential

Armen Slusarz: armenmichalak@sbcglobal.net, 860-674-9206

Carol Kirkwood: ckirkwood@snet.net, 860-793-2247

Donna Paye: djp2947@att.net, 860-673-0097

Pat Clark: jardinage45@yahoo.com, 860-243-9334

Adult Formation: Who is Jesus to me, really?

Beginning on Sunday, September 23rd, we will begin our adult formation programming for the year. A Bible reflection will meet, dealing with the theme, “Who is Jesus to me, really?” We will use the wonderful study guide by NT Wright called *For Everyone* and, over the next two years, we will move through the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. You have two options to be directly involved in the conversation. You may come to the time between the services (9 a.m.) on Sunday morning or you can come at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday evening. Our time will be limited to an hour (a little less on Sunday morning). More info will be available later, but our hope is that each member of the parish will begin to reflect on where and how he or she might grow in more vibrant and close in their relationship with God.

Speakers, TBA, will complement our exploration over the next couple years as to how we understand and think about Jesus. We hope, in the course of it all, we will look at Jesus through different eyes and hearts.

Church by the Pond update

A report from the coordinator at the Cathedral:

{June 16th} was another lovely day to celebrate God's presence in our lives at Church by the Pond. Thirty-eight congregants gathered for our Eucharist celebrated by Dean Miguelina Howell. We were also joined by our new Canon for Congregational Life, The Rev. Jorge Pallares. Canon Jorge visited us during his discernment process, so it was a joy to welcome him again.

Dean Lina's reflection on the Gospel and Corinthians spoke to us of the small size of the mustard seed and small amounts of faith which can both grow to be so much more. We were reminded that we can ask God to bless us with faith at times we struggle.



Canon Jorge presented a stole from Mexico as a gift to Church by the Pond. We will look forward to seeing the beautiful stole during Holy Week and Pentecost.

We had an abundance of blessings today. Trinity Episcopal, Hartford brought lunches and St. James Episcopal, Farmington brought personal care packages. Our 45 guests were delighted.



St. James crew (Harriet Odlum was also with us, but missed out on the photo!)

Save the date

On **Saturday, September 22nd, at 6:30 p.m.**, we will have a movie night at St. James. We will show *Paul, the Apostle of Christ*, a film dealing with the last days of the Apostle Paul and the work, crisis, and ministry of the early church in Rome. Powerful and illuminating for our own time, come and share a good movie, fellowship, and maybe some conversation afterward. Popcorn and drinks provided.

Celebrating July & August birthdays!



Eoin Chekas
Amelia Mason
Charlotte Paré
Gene Goodwin
Jessica Watkin
Alexis Palais
Jane Torrence
Alda Debboli
Joan Sussler
Kaye Robertson
Roland Therrien
Jay Palais
Maryalice Widness
Linda Larkin
Emma Kate Johansen
Sally Levin

Drue Pines
Steve Cakouros
Helga Schramma
Dona Waugh
Neil Clark
Tom Nelson
Cam Dudzik
Ian Manton
Carol Calladine
Michael Rosenthal
Grant Manton
Phil Schenck
Nancy Papanek
Ray Madorin
Alissa Buth
Lora Madorin

Maggie Ososki
Bert Geuser
Michael Pines
David Hadlow
Annemarie Lucas
Geoff Manton
Charlotte Buth
Christine Bogino
Betty Dugan
Vivian Lane
George Roberts
Abby Crawford
Skip Mason
Susan Pollard
Barbara Hess
Matt Roach

RenewalWorks Report to the Vestry & Parish

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4:4

The report is in and the *RenewalWorks* team has completed its work! Last fall, 3 parishioners and I attended a *RenewalWorks* program presentation given by Executive Director, The Rev. Jay Sidebotham. We were all impressed by the program's focus on spiritual vitality and growth at the congregational level. So, we brought our energy around *RenewalWorks* back to Vestry who agreed it was a good idea for us to utilize the program to find out where we might exert positive energy toward a growth of the spirit in our members' lives and in the community at large. Now, some 9 months after first sitting down for that workshop in New Canaan, St. James has taken the *RenewalWorks* Spiritual Life Inventory (SLI). We assembled a team of committed St. James members who met 4 times in workshop to discuss the findings of the SLI, to see where it might be calling St. James in the future. And now we have the final report on the *RenewalWorks* Team's findings, recommendations, and conversations to present to our parish. Please look for the *RenewalWorks* Report in your email next week. If you desire a paper copy of the report, please let Sue Deming or Father George know; we will have a copy available for you.

Please read the report with a few things in mind. First, all of our *RenewalWorks* conversations were generated by the data results of the SLI. The *RenewalWorks* team did not get together to "fix" whatever ails St. James (St. James doesn't need fixing!), but to look at what the SLI said were areas for potential growth. Our areas for stated growth, as you will see, lay mainly in the areas of spiritual life and practices. Engaging scripture and prayer in new and creative ways were distinctive areas of focus. We understand that there are many directions St. James might go, but the *RenewalWorks* process is about maintaining focus on a few things at a time, specifically and intently. Going in too many directions at once would make it challenging to get anything meaningful done.

Please take the time to carefully read our report. A lot of time was spent by dedicated folks to put it together and to engage in the workshops, too. There is a wonderful opportunity now for us to have a deep conversation about the most important journey in our lives: the spiritual path that leads us more fully to the One who made us. The way has the potential to be vital and exciting and we are all in it together. We have so much to gain! Please keep an open mind as we move forward, ask questions, and come to the forum on Sunday, September 16th between the services and Wednesday, September 19th, from 6:30 – 7:30.

Summary of Vestry Minutes – May 21, 2018

In attendance: Fr. George Roberts, Chris Roach, Rebecca McFarland, Dona Waugh, Bill Raymond, Jessica Watkin, Julia Grieco, John Smith, Ann Monroe-Baillargeon, plus Amy Moffat and EJ Ososki. (Absent: Cathie Martin, Todd Root.)

MINUTES FOR APRIL, 2018

No questions or discussion. John moved to approve the minutes, Julia seconded, unanimous vote to approve.

MINISTRY REPORTS

Finance/Treasurer's report – April, 2018

EJ reports: "The numbers have improved vastly. ... The gap in pledge income is closing. In March the pledge income was \$9,000 behind but it is now \$4,000 for April. Quarterly dividends have also been received and the actual income is only \$2,000 behind budget. Expenses are nearly \$9,000 better than the budget. This is primarily driven by the timing of some items, so we will ultimately incur these expenses (property insurance, repairs & maintenance, local outreach, and stewardship). Are people usually true to their pledges? Yes. We know that receipts flatten out in the summer. Bill moved to approve the report, John seconded, unanimous vote to approve the report.

Youth Ministry

Our new Youth Minister, Amy Moffat, presented a handout on her overall goals, what we want our youth to learn, how to address the learning goals, and characteristics we want to develop in our youth. Some ideas are pairing up with a youth group in another parish or having pen pals somewhere from a parish that is different from us. This also fits in with renewal. It would make sense for Amy to come to Vestry to present to us a couple of times a year. We would like to help our youth articulate what they need (as opposed to want) to feel safe in the world.

Exploring capital projects to be done, progress – John Smith

There has been a lot of progress. We will steam clean all the carpets in the building for \$772. Quote of \$3,800 for the roof issues; repairs will start in a couple of weeks. Painting: we have two quotes, both around \$10,000. One is also to repair the entryway after the roof is fixed. In the library do we paint trim and not spend money taking down wallpaper which is in fine shape. A mason coming to look at all the bluestone, a landscaper is coming to look at shrubbery, someone is coming to look at the wood floors in the church. We have two quotes about the Rectory driveway, including re-grading; both in the \$7,000 range. Someone is coming to look at the landscaping at the Rectory as well. We are also in conversation with the Historic District about vinyl siding on the Rectory, and John will look at the deck. This summer we can rent a dumpster and clear out the attic of the church. We should look into painting the lines in the parking lot.

DR update

Received over \$11,000 in donations from contractors in the area. Most of them were small, less than \$1,000, FIP gave more, and we still might get a little bit more. This has been substantially helpful. Fr. George has been in touch with the priest in the DR about Bible School.

OLD BUSINESS

RenewalWorks

The workshops are completed. Full draft report will be ready for our June meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Stewardship

We need to assemble a team and call leadership. Let Fr. George know if you have ideas, what has worked for you and what hasn't, or if you are willing to get together and brainstorm. In June we'll finalize that group. Trying to keep the window small – 5 weeks or so. How does the average parishioner know that we have these expenses related to the physical plant? They don't, unless we tell them. People might be willing to give a little bit more knowing that we have these bigger expenditures, and if they feel included and that we are being transparent.

Ann Monroe-Baillargeon's departure

Ann is moving to Iowa. We will need a replacement Vestry member. Our By-Laws give us the authority to approve someone to fill the post until the term is up, which is ~18 months, and then they could stand for Vestry for three more years (which can't happen at the end of a full term).

Fr. George and trip to Honduras with Food for the Poor

He & Michael Slusarz traveled in May; it was good to see the three houses that we built. They are doing grassroots work to power and heat the houses. If we are going to be committed to the DR, we don't want to spread ourselves too thin, but we will talk more about Honduras in the future.

Website and logo

We are in the process of building a new website to launch in June. Laura Vacca has done the work pro bono and will be one webmaster, and Fr. George and Sue will also be able to adjust content. Harriet has been our resident photographer and now we are looking for more people, including Andrea Harris, to take photos more often. To fully integrate the "message," we will switch to the new logo on everything (*Epistle*, letterhead, business cards, etc.), so that we're known in the community by it.

Facilities Use Agreement

Dona has put together a document with some language from Porter's rental contract. Julia also requested specific items she thought we could use. Once we have a satisfactory draft, we will have an attorney review it for us.

RECTOR'S THOUGHTS

- Possible dates for social in August: Friday, 24 (evening); *Saturday, 25 (afternoon)*; Saturday, September 8 (afternoon).

Jessica moved to adjourn, Chris seconded, unanimous vote to adjourn. We closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Jessica Watkin, Parish Clerk

Your picture in a brochure or on the 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.

ST. JAMES PARISH

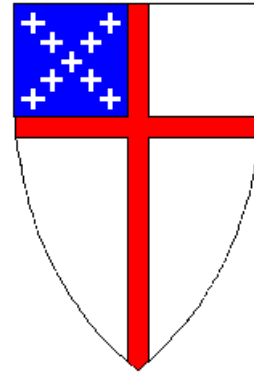
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Website: www.stjamesfarmington.org



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

The Rev. George C. Roberts	Rector
Amelia (Amy) Moffat	Youth Minister
Blake Hansen	Director of Music
Susan Deming	Parish Administrator
Kelly Nauss	Sexton
Kimberly Tuttle	Nursery Supervisor

OFFICERS

Cathie Martin & John Smith, Wardens
EJ Ososki, Treasurer
Jerry Hess, Asst. Treasurer
Jessica Watkin, Parish Clerk

VESTRY

2018

Bill Raymond
Chris Roach
John Smith

2019

Cathie Martin
Ann Monroe-Baillargeon
Todd Root

2020

Julia Grieco
Rebecca McFarland
Dona Waugh

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

