

St. James Parish

Epistle



December 2019

Rector's Message

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating ... Isaiah 65:17-18a

The above reading is from *Lessons and Carols* (see December 15th!), but it comes up numerous times over the course of our 3-year lectionary cycle (vv. 17-25, in its entirety). In fact, 7 of the 15 optional readings for *Lessons and Carols* come from the book of Isaiah. There are 66 books between the New and Old Testaments. Why so many readings from Isaiah? Well, to put it bluntly, because Isaiah is awesome! However, there are deeper theological reasons why Isaiah lights up not only *Lessons and Carols*, but many conversations about Christ's presence ("existence") in the Old Testament. Opinions vary amongst scholars, but many see Isaiah's words as directly anticipating the coming of Messiah into the world who is, of course, Christ himself. Sigh ... you are probably thinking (and with some justification): George is being a bit theologicky (not a word) this month. Pardon me, please ...

Advent and Christmas are bearing down on us in the most wonderful way. Year after year we move into the season of Advent, with hymnody and readings which anticipate the coming of Jesus. Yet, do we really pray and reflect on what Christ's coming really meant and continues to mean? Why the anticipation? Christ has come. Christ has died. Christ is risen. The end. But it isn't the end. Isaiah and the Gospels themselves remind us that we continue to live in the hope that this world of sin, anger, injustice, violence, and blame will somehow be transformed. We see glimpses of the new kingdom, the new heaven that Isaiah speaks of, don't we? We see it in the way we love our wives, husbands, children, siblings, and friends. We see it in the way that some reach out to help and listen to the neediest among us. The new movie *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* reminds us that people like Fred Rogers somehow channel the beautiful power of God's forgiving grace that can truly heal and change people's lives. Yet, we instinctively understand that the world is still shadowed by darkness, suffering, evil, and way too much anger and acrimony. The world, as yet, is not healed. Better put, the world has not learned to pull down the veil of heartache and power-grabbing long or consistently enough to see that the Savior of the world has already saved us and, thereby, naturally, has healed us.

Isaiah 65 says that a day will come when "They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox ..." We have not yet arrived at Isaiah's holy vision of the future, even though we believe Christ has accomplished more than Isaiah could have ever dreamed of or seen. Advent's waiting for the reality of God among us stokes our hope once more: with God's help, we may finally at long last open our hearts to the possible future that Christ has already paved the way for: peace, grace, salvation and, yes, enduring love.

In Christ, George+

Warden's Corner

I love this analogy!

You are holding a cup of coffee when someone comes along and bumps into you or shakes your arm, making you spill your coffee everywhere.

Why did you spill the coffee?

"Because someone bumped into me!!!"

Wrong answer.

You spilled the coffee because there was coffee in your cup.

Had there been tea in the cup, you would have spilled tea.

Whatever is inside the cup is what will spill out.

Therefore, when life comes along and shakes you (which WILL happen), whatever is inside you will come out. It's easy to fake it, until you get rattled.

So we have to ask ourselves... "what's in my cup?"

When life gets tough, what spills over?

Joy, gratefulness, peace and humility?

Anger, bitterness, harsh words and reactions?

Life provides the cup, YOU choose how to fill it.

Today let's work towards filling our cups with gratitude, forgiveness, joy, words of affirmation; and kindness, gentleness and love for others.

(Shared from a friend whose cup is full of goodness and inspiration.)

Cathie Martin, Co-Warden

Advent Crèche Scene

During Advent, look for the special olive-wood crèche in the church. Each Sunday, a different family will add more figures to the scene. Also, children should look around the church to find where the wise men and their camel are hidden in a different place each Sunday. They will not appear in the crèche until the Epiphany!

First Sunday Breakfast on SECOND Sunday



Find delicious food and fellowship at the **First Sunday Breakfasts** cooked by a great crew of men of the parish: pancakes, sausage, bacon, eggs, breads, juice and coffee as good as Mom made. The menu may change from one month to the next. Due to conflicts on the actual *first* Sunday of December, we're moving ahead one week – **come join us in the Parish Hall at 9 a.m. on the second Sunday of December, the 8th** as we joyfully gather in fellowship!

Church school updates

Thank you to all our wonderful Church School families who generously contributed to the Thanksgiving Baskets provided to the Friendship Service Center. Your generosity provided wonderful meals to those in need while giving our kids the gift of expressing kindness and to be thankful!

As we enter Advent, each child will bring home an activity to share with their family. In addition, our "First Sunday" lessons have returned! On the second Sunday (due to scheduling), December 8th, the children will get a special visit from St. Nicholas!!

Finally, there will be **no** church school on Sunday, December 1st (but it's Youth Sunday and kids are always welcome to take part!) and Sunday, December 29th (winter school recess).

Wishing all our parish families a happy holiday season!

Julia Grieco

Youth Ministry Updates

We had an eventful November! We joined in community at a fun corn maze event complete with apple cider and donuts! Youth also donated their time to a St. James member through acts of service to help foster the idea of "I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:35

These are our upcoming Youth Ministry events:

Winter Youth Sunday

On Sunday, December 1st we will have our Winter Youth Sunday! Youth will participate in the service through readings, ushering, prayers of the people, and music! Please email me at amy.sjyouthminister@gmail.com or speak to me in person. if your youth would be interested in participating in the service!

Youth Ministry Fundraising Luncheon

Mark your calendars! On Sunday, December 8th, the youth group will host a Christmas themed fundraising luncheon to celebrate the faith-based service of giving to our global community through donations to Heifer International. Our youth chose this charity due to its promise to provide not only livestock, but skills building to individuals across the world to help foster and support international communities.

Youth will prepare a pasta feast, with 3 different types of pasta, garlic bread, and salad! Get into the spirit of our magical Christmas season and help give to those less fortunate! Suggested donation for lunch is \$5 per person or \$10 per family. Lunch will immediately follow the 10:15 a.m. service. We hope to see you there!

Amy Steele, Youth Minister

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.



Celebrating St. Nicholas Day on Sunday, December 8th

On Sunday, December 8th, we will celebrate not only the second Sunday of Advent, but St. Nicholas Day, too (officially on December 6th). St. Nicholas lived in the 4th century and was based in an area called Myra (in present-day Turkey). He is most noted for his kindness to children and orphans and the old custom of leaving money in children's shoes on Christmas morning is derived from the legend that St. Nicholas secretly left money for orphaned and poor children in shoes laid outside overnight.



Our church school children will have a visit from St. Nicholas, so parents please have your children in church school promptly by 10 a.m. St. Nick may show up again before the beginning of the youth fundraising luncheon for Heifer International. Normally, we give money to the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese Jerusalem during this time of year. In honor of the work our youth are doing, we will be asking that our children put their coins in Sparks the Dragon for Heifer International during the month of December! Heifer International helps gift families and communities around the world with animals that they can learn to breed and raise (cattle, pigs, goats, and chickens) and learn sustainable farming practices. We believe that Heifer International works “in the spirit” of St. Nicholas which benefit children and their families around the world!

Yum, Christmas Cookie Exchange!



All women of St James are invited to a Christmas Cookie Exchange in the parish hall at St. James on **Thursday, December 12th at 7 p.m.** We will gather for an evening of fellowship, and to share our cookies. We also will package up tins of cookies to be delivered to the St James parishioners who are shut in during this holiday season. Plan to bring about 2–3 dozen holiday cookies or other treats to exchange and to pack into the tins to cheer up our fellow parishioners. We hope you will come, and if you have questions, contact Andrea Harris.

Advent Service of Lessons & Carols Sunday, December 15th, 4 p.m.

On Sunday, December 15th at 4 p.m., the St. James Choir and guests will take part in the Advent service of Lessons and Carols. The past several years this service has been jointly presented within the Sunday morning Eucharist. This year we will have the opportunity to hold a service only for this, expressly highlighting the journey we take as we anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ. With a history of use for more than one hundred years, the compiled texts used for the story of the Lessons comb through the riches of the Bible, all pointing towards the arrival of Jesus. Paired with each of the lessons are selections of music that emphasis and inspire the texts. Please join us for this uplifting service as we journey through Advent. There will be a reception in the parish hall following the Service.



Who is Jesus to me, really? meets What is healing?

Last fall, we launched what was to be a two-year cycle of exploration of the four Gospels: Matthew, Luke, Mark, and John. We have, thus far, had a wonderful journey through Matthew and are currently still engaged in Luke. Please join us as we continue to discuss Luke and prepare to begin with Mark. All are welcome and encouraged to join us, no matter where you are on your journey and regardless of whether you have been involved in the group up until now. We are still using NT Wright's book on Luke and will, when the time is right, offer his study guide to Mark. All in good time ... We continue to meet between the 8 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. services on Sunday mornings. There is no purer, more challenging, or more effective way of growing in the faith and life with God in Christ than reading and joining conversation on Holy Scripture. See you Sundays!

Another strand of our exploration of *Who is Jesus to me, really?* will help us confront and discuss the area of healing. Healing is something we normally consider mystical and in the realm of evangelicals. But remember, healing takes many forms. We are going to have a number of speakers, beginning with The Reverend Tom Furrer, Priest in Charge at Trinity, Wethersfield, who will talk to us about healing ministry, his work at the Kateri Clinic in Nigeria, and how mission and healing intersect. We will later welcome a physician among us to discuss his experiences of healing and how both his vocation as a doctor and faith as a Christian intersect. More to come ...



On the second Monday of every month we have launched a new opportunity to engage in dialogue – ***Faith and Fries: Exploring Questions and Mysteries***. During our *RenewalWorks* explorations in 2018, one suggestion for community connection, being more engaged Christians in our own town, was to



begin a faith-based conversation somewhere in the community **Join us on Monday, December 9th at 7 pm at Taprock Beer Bar & Refuge in Unionville**, and the second Monday of each month thereafter, we hold a casual, open, anyone-is-invited conversation on the mysteries and questions of faith. The format is a question or subject area and folks are encouraged to share, ask questions, voice concerns, etc. The Fries, in the *Faith and Fries*, means folks are welcome to have a drink, get something to eat, relax, and engage in meaningful dialogue. We hope that you not only come and take advantage of this, but also invite neighbors, friends, people who may be “spiritual but not religious.”

The Rev. Susan Gibson, pastor of First Church of Christ, Congregational in Farmington and Fr. George are in conversation about furthering our dialogue on faith and race, possibly in the context of healing, during Lent 2020. Stay tuned for more information!

Formation, in the Christian context, says that we are constantly trying to be formed into whoever it is God is calling us to be. Study and experience - in community - are truly indispensable ways of coming to know God in Christ more fully and deeply. We strongly encourage you to get involved in some way in adult formation this year. If you have ideas about a program that might bring us into contact with God, please let Fr. George know.

Be on the lookout for *Hope for Christmas Past, Present & Yet to Come*, a set of daily prayers for Advent. The booklets will be in the pews from December 1st until they are gone. We hope they are a special way you might hold Advent close and be intentional during this oft-neglected but important liturgical season.

The Angel Giving Tree for the Friendship Service Center & Farmington Community Services

The mission of the Friendship Service Center (FSC) is to provide friendship and direct service to the poor and needy of Central Connecticut, including the ownership and operation of housing for the poor. The Farmington Community Services (FCS) provides support to residents experiencing financial, physical and psychosocial hardships. St. James' Outreach Committee is asking you to help provide Christmas gifts to approximately 30 individuals from the FSC and 10 children and their mothers from the FCS. The Christmas ornaments representing each individual are now hanging from the Christmas tree displayed in the Parish Hall. We ask that you select one or more ornaments, sign your name on the appropriate sign-out chart, purchase an appropriate Christmas gift for your chosen recipient, and return the gift **unwrapped** to the parish hall with the ornament attached serving as a gift tag. This is a wonderful opportunity for St James to share joy with those in need in our community. **The deadline for return of gifts is Sunday, December 15th.** If you have any questions, please see Armen Slusarz or Sheila Church. Thank you very much for your continued generosity!!



Ladies' Night at the Movies!

We did it once, let's do it again!! **The women of St. James will get together to see the movie, *Harriet*, on Tuesday night December 3rd at the AMC Theater in Plainville, 220 New Britain Avenue, 06062.**



The movie time is 7:25 pm at the time of this writing and the discounted tickets are \$5 per person. Invite a friend and RSVP as soon as possible, but no later than December 2nd, please! We totally enjoyed our movie night last time and we're long overdue to gather again. RSVP to Armen Slusarz. See you soon!!

Men's Breakfast!

On Saturday, December 7th, all men of St. James are cordially invited to join Fr. George for breakfast at the Unionville Family Restaurant (yes, in Unionville), 7:30 am, for a time of good food and even better fellowship. If you have never been there ... you should know to come hungry!!



Dominican Republic 2020

On Sunday, December 15th, following the 10:15 service we'll meet to discuss the mission to the Dominican Republic for the summer of 2020 in more detail, along with mission goals, etc. Please try to come to the meeting, particularly if you are interested in taking part in the trip itself

Neighbors Wanted – our experience at FSC

The Friendship Service Center (FSC) in New Britain is a St. James Outreach mission that fulfills the Christian imperative to be a servant. The St. James Outreach Committee contributes funds and St. James is represented on the Board of Directors. Parishioners volunteer in the soup kitchen and some privately contribute funds and equipment. It is an honor and a privilege to serve. But it is more than just a call to service and reaching out with practical assistance to those less fortunate than we. Volunteering in the soup kitchen makes you think “Who is my neighbor?” We love our neighbors on Woodside Drive and in St. James parish. They are our people. They are those who we consider “us.” This is our tribe. At the Friendship Service Center, we deliberately put ourselves in a different part of our neighborhood. After all, New Britain was originally an ecclesiastical, ministerial parish of Farmington.



Serving in the kitchen feeds us spiritually, and aligns with our personal values, but we aren't “good Samaritans.” We are ordinary “neighbors” putting ourselves in a place we normally would not be and meeting people we normally would not meet. Some of the volunteers we meet are doing community service. The people to whom we serve food need so much more, but they thank us for our little bit of servanthood. Most of the food is donated. A little is purchased from Food Share. The chefs are exquisitely clever in creating meals out of whatever is donated. Nothing is wasted. Packaging is recycled or re-purposed. We cook, chop, serve, wash dishes and sweep the floor. When there is sufficient food, we have lunch with those we serve. Sometimes sharing a meal feels like communion. It is all so humbling. It is all so ordinary but we realize that the spirit is present the longer we are here. The spirit is present in ordinariness.

Someone said Jesus had it backwards. He said that the poor, not the rich, will inherit the Kingdom. He said it was the hungry who would be satisfied. At the last supper, he said “No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what the master is doing. I call you friends for all that I have heard from my father, I have made known to you.” The Friendship Service Center is, therefore, aptly named. Be a neighbor. Be a servant. Be a friend.

Ed & Barb Preneta

The Longest Night: Healing in Times of Challenge

On **Saturday, December 21st, at 5 p.m.**, we will hold a service of the winter solstice, *The Longest Night: Healing in Times of Challenge*. Most of us think of Advent and Christmas as seasons of anticipation, waiting, and a celebration of the coming of Christ among us, Emmanuel. For many, however, the holiday season is one of pain, grieving, reminders of past hurts, and a time of intense loneliness. We, at St. James Parish, want to make a special place for those who are most in need healing (all of us are in need, at some level) and to remember those in our community for whom Advent and Christmas are a struggle. We will have luminaria (candles in bags of sand) lining the walk leading up to the church. We will use music, prayer, Holy Eucharist, and the laying on of hands (for those who wish it) as conduits to God's most holy and sacramental love. Members of our Prayer



Team will be present and we will have space for silence, lament while also making room for the possibility of healing and joy. We invite all to bond together, no matter where we are in our life journey, in solidarity. Those who are filled with joy might find that the good news of Christ's coming is part of what we are called to share with those who are still struggling during this holy time of year. First Church of Christ, Congregational will join us on this night of worship. All are welcome!

Celebrating December birthdays!

*William Rice
Gloria Flis
Bill Larkin
Nicholas Tuttle
Blair Connelly
Kevin Ives
Kim Faubert
Gay Ayers*



*Robyn Shover
Elijah Howe
Jennifer Rosenthal
Grayson Reardon
Noah Reardon
Kaitlin Bittner
Jim Clifford*

Prayer Team – sharing thoughts

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

Fr. Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest, has the following thoughts about our God-Relationship:

“As I grow older, faith for me has become a daily readiness to allow and trust the "force field" (the omnipresent power of God), knowing that it is good, that it is totally on my side, and that I'm already inside of it. How else can I really be at peace?

“Let this prayer resonate in you...

God for us, we call you ... Father

God alongside us , we call you ... Jesus

God within us, we call you ... Holy Spirit

You are the eternal mystery that enables, enfolds, and enlivens all things, even us, and even me.

Every name falls short of your goodness and greatness

we can only see you in what is ... we ask for such perfect seeing.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.

Amen ... So be it.”

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

Always available, always confidential

Armen Slusarz

Carol Kirkwood

Donna Paye

Pat Clark

Join us for Greening of the Church

Join us on **December 22nd after the 10:15 service** for the annual greening of the church. We are looking for volunteers to come help hang greens, wreaths and decorate the windows, all while enjoying fellowship and creating a glorious welcome for the Christmas season. If you are going to join us, please bring some clippers for trimming greens. Refreshments will be available throughout our decorating!



We are also in need of greens for the windowsills. If you are willing to donate them, there will be a box to drop them in on the sidewalk to the right of the front entrance of the church.

Please contact Jane Johansen, if you are interested in helping, or sign up in the Parish Hall.

Outreach Ministry update

The Outreach Committee met on November 18th to determine a budget allocation of \$4,902.20 for the year 2019. Present at the meeting were Pat Clark, Barbara & Jerry Hess, Mike & Armen Slusarz, Jessica Watkin, Joseph Watkin & Sheila Church. The following disbursements were unanimously approved:

- ▶ Friendship Service Center (FSC) - \$1,000
- ▶ DR Mission Trip in summer, 2020 – Carry over \$1,000 in budget to help with this trip
- ▶ Operation Fuel – \$500
- ▶ American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem – \$400
- ▶ Traveler's Aid Fund – \$400
- ▶ Gifts of Love - \$400
- ▶ Your Place at St. Monica's – \$500
- ▶ Unionville Museum - \$100 as thank you for their participation in the Living History Tour
- ▶ Virginia Theological Seminary - \$200
- ▶ Mass on the Grass - \$200
- ▶ Farmington Food Pantry - \$200



The above allocations add up to \$4,900. The Outreach Committee also donated \$500 in the summer of 2019 to "Days for Girls" for a total 2019 allocation of \$5,400.

Looking towards 2020, the following Outreach Projects/Events are proposed and we invite your participation.

- ▶ Food Drive for the Farmington Food Pantry – typically in January and June
- ▶ Church by the Pond – participation dates TBD
- ▶ FoodShare "Walk Against Hunger" for FSC – typically in May, but date TBD
- ▶ Monthly participation with meals at FSC
- ▶ Continued collection of peanut butter & jelly for Gifts of Love
- ▶ Thanksgiving Baskets for Farmington Community Services
- ▶ Church School involved by providing Thanksgiving Basket food to the FSC
- ▶ Angel Giving Tree gifts for Farmington Community Services and FSC

Outreach at St. James is a "Parish" Ministry, and as always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions. Anyone who would personally like to be an active member of this Committee is ALWAYS welcome. Beginning in 2020, the new chairperson for Outreach will be Jessica Watkin. I want to personally thank Jessica for stepping up to take over this Committee and I ask each of you to continue providing your support of this vital ministry at St. James.

Blessings to you all – *Sheila Church*

Your Christmas gift: poinsettia delivery

The best Christmas present of all may be seeing the delight in the eyes of a shut-in to whom you bring a poinsettia from his parish church. The one thing missing from your holiday may be seeing gratitude in the eyes of someone with a grieving heart whom you remind that he is not forgotten by St. James. Our church will be adorned with flowers on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day; you are invited and encouraged to spread Christmas joy by taking these plants to those whose names will be available after the service on Christmas Day.



Come to worship at 10 a.m. on Christmas morning or come during the days after Christmas. Leaving the flower basket in a box in the chapel (please!), remove the plant, cover it with a paper sleeve from the chapel (to protect the plant from the cold), take a card with the address of a recipient from the top of the piano – deliver it and see what God has in store for you.

Notes from the Parish Office

IRS reminder: as the end of the 2019 rapidly approaches, many of us choose to make charitable gifts. In order for you to receive credit for a tax-deductible donation on your 2019 tax return, **the donation must be received by St. James or postmarked on or before December 31, 2019.** Donations made or mailed after that date, even if the check is dated in 2019, cannot be included in your 2019 Contribution Statement issued in January, 2020.

The 2020 Altar Flower Chart is now in the narthex. Please sign-up for a Sunday when you would like to donate and dedicate the flowers for the day's services. Note that there will be no altar flowers during the Lenten season.

If you pledged for 2020 and requested envelopes, the boxed envelope sets will be labeled and ready in the parish hall for you to pick-up on December 8th.

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.

Summary of Vestry Minutes – October 17, 2019

Present: Jessica Watkin, EJ Ososki, Robyn Shover, Kim Pereira, Julia Greico, Michael Slusarz, Todd Root, Fr. George Roberts, Cathie Martin; Mimi Hostetter (**Missing:** Rebecca McFarland, Dona Waugh)

MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER

MOTION (Julia) to approve the minutes, Robyn seconded, the motion carried unanimously.

MINISTRY REPORTS

Finance/Treasurer's report – September 2019

Q: Does any extra money from the Lilly grant need to be returned? A: Yes.

Repairs and maintenance are over budget, as we discussed last month. The Fall Fair raised over \$3,400, more than last year, this is not reflected in the report yet. Revisit the \$4,000 goal for next year.

MOTION (Mimi) to approve the report, Cathie seconded, the motion carried unanimously.

Community Norms

We'll send out the Norms we established as a group at the Retreat and discuss them next time when more people are with us.

NEW BUSINESS

Youth ministry grades 6-8

- For Sep. and Oct. they will stay with the high schoolers' group. Kathy Roach will teach them in Nov. and Dec.; she is excited to come back after a brief hiatus. Tina Hillmeier has them in January, Tracey Roberts has them in Feb.
- Julia reminds us there's still a two-month gap in church school teaching staffing and that she got no response to her email request for help. Please look up the needed dates in her email.
- We can also help by emphasizing that church school starts at 10:00 even though Church starts at 10:15.

Quote for bush and tree work around the church – Cathie

- Cathie walked the property with Chris from Tree Monkey, he quoted us \$1,400 for all the work, \$825 for the first stage, he can't prune everything now (like the Japanese maple which needs to wait until mid to late winter). He also advised there are a few things we could do ourselves to reduce the cost.
- Skip then walked with Cathie and knew certain trees were planted in memory of certain people, and that's information we need to have before any major work is done. It's not something that we can do now, but should we work it into next year's budget?

Warden's meeting report – Todd

On September 24, St. James hosted a gathering of Wardens from our Region. The purpose of this gathering is to create a place for the Wardens in our region to share experiences and resources to problem-solve and create a network.

- The purpose was for the Wardens to bring two things forward: 1. Things you're having trouble with and could use guidance on, to lay out your burdens, 2. What successes have you had in your Parish.
- Thirteen Wardens attended. Issues discussed were: Stewardship, how to run an effective campaign and how to meet the increasing costs of running a church; also some programmatic issues that they brainstormed about.

OLD BUSINESS

Tuttle proposal

- We are revisiting the letter of agreement we first received back in June.
- There was a great deal of discussion about questions that Fr. George will find answers to.
- Reminder that we need to obtain the consent of the Diocese before we make any changes to the building, particularly if it involves borrowing money. We would be budgeting this into next year.
- Vestry agree that we will have our questions answered and then at our November meeting, we can decide about putting these expenses into next year's budget.
- Vestry would also like to get feedback from the other members of B&G on this proposal.

Stewardship – Michael

MOTION (Michael) to set a goal for the Stewardship drive for \$285,000, Cathie seconded, the motion carried unanimously.

Todd reminds us that this is a 1.8% increase over last year and that we should keep that in mind when we set our own pledges. The whole Vestry agreed to keep that in mind.

Report on the steps – Michael

- After receiving a second quote about the work on the steps, the Vestry agrees to proceed with the work as originally quoted and to honor the advice not to use rock salt on the steps.

RECTOR'S THOUGHTS

- November 11, 7:00 pm: **Faith and Fries** at Taprock Beer Bar & Refuge. Come have some fries with us! (Or some other snack and beverage!) We are advertising this in the Yankee Flyer, Farmington Patch. We hope you will join us and bring friends. There will hopefully be a hodgepodge of people coming. This will be an opportunity to socialize and think about some aspect of our faith. Come and have dinner or a snack or drink. We are holding this event with First Church of Christ Congregational and some of their members will be in attendance.
- **Community Dinner of Thanksgiving and Stewardship:** Saturday, Nov. 16, 5 pm – Dona Waugh has kindly agreed to head up the dinner again, we'll need at least two other people making turkeys – Laura will have crafts for the kids from 5-6 pm
- **Ingathering for Stewardship:** Sunday, Nov. 17
- **Noon Prayer** is being changed to Wednesday evening at 5:30. Maybe folks who couldn't come because of work might be able to stop by.
- Fr. George recognized Todd Root: Todd visited Holy Comforter Parish outside Boulder, CO while he was away from CT. They are going through a Rector search; they are chasing folks about wearing their nametags. It was a wonderful experience. Todd, as a Warden, asks that if we travel, we should please **go to other Parishes**, especially when we're outside of CT, and get ideas of what goes on in other Parishes.

MOTION (Mimi) to adjourn, Robyn and Julia seconded, the motion carried unanimously.

We closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:59 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jessica Watkin, Clerk

Christmas Decoration Fund

When we celebrate together during holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas, we are poignantly aware of those who are no longer with us. If you would like to make an offering for Christmas flowers in memory of loved ones, please complete the form below and return it to the parish office. Offerings may also be made in thanksgiving for our many blessings. Since it is helpful to have an idea of how many poinsettias to arrange for, we ask that you let the church know as soon as possible; **the deadline is noon on Monday, December 16th**. Make checks payable to *St. James Parish* marked "Christmas Decorations." After Christmas, the flowers will be distributed to the sick and shut-in. If you would like to help with that ministry, please call the parish office (860-677-1564). Thank you.



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Please print as you wish the donation listed in the Christmas Bulletin

In memory of _____

In thanksgiving for _____

Given by _____



Schedule of Advent & Christmas Events

ADVENT is beginning. The time of preparation for Christmas is here. The vestments and hangings change to purple; the Advent wreath is lighted for worship. Books of meditations for grownups are in the pews for you to take home; books of activities for families with children are sent home from Church School. Please join the parish family for Advent activities:

Sunday, December 1	10:15 am	Youth Sunday
Sunday, December 8	9:10 am	<i>Visit from St. Nicholas</i>
Monday, December 9	7:00 pm	<i>Faith & Fries</i> (Taprock Beer Bar)
Sunday, December 15	4:00 pm	<i>Advent Service of Lessons & Carols</i>
Sunday, December 21	5:00 pm	The Longest Night: Healing in Times of Challenge
Sunday, December 22	11:30 am	<i>Greening of the Church</i>

Christmas Services

Tuesday, December 24	4 pm	Christmas Eve service with Christmas Pageant
	10 pm	Prelude Music
	10:30 pm	Festal Eucharist with choir & instruments
Wednesday, December 25	10:00 am	Christmas Day Eucharist



In Search of our Kneeling Place

In each heart lies a Bethlehem,
an inn where we must ultimately answer
whether there is room or not.

When we are Bethlehem-bound
we experience our own advent in his.

When we are Bethlehem-bound
we can no longer look the other way
conveniently not seeing stars
not hearing angel voices.

We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily
tending our sheep or our kingdoms.

This Advent let's go to Bethlehem
and see this thing that the Lord has made known to us.

In the midst of shopping sprees
let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.

Through the tinsel
let's look for the gold of the Christmas Star.

In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,
let's listen for the brush of angels' wings.

This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem
And find our kneeling places.

Ann Weems, from *Kneeling in Bethlehem*



December 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 HE 8:00 & 10:15 10:00 Nursery 10:15 Youth Sunday 11:30 Coffee Hour	2	3 7:45 Ladies Might at the Movies	4 5:30 Evening Prayer & HE 7:30 Adult choir rehearsal	5 10:30 Eucharist at Touchpoints	6 6:30 AA	7 7:30 Men's Breakfast at Unionville Family Restaurant
8 HE 8:00 & 10:15 9:00 <i>First Sunday Breakfast</i> ; Adult formation 10:00 Nursery; Church School 10:30 Amberwoods Ministry 11:30 Youth Fundraising Luncheon for Heifer International	9 7:00 Faith & Fries at Taprock	10 6:30 Boy Scouts	11 5:30 Evening Prayer & HE 7:30 Adult choir rehearsal	12  7:00 Cookie Exchange	13 January Epistle submission deadline 6:30 AA	14
15 HE 8:00 & 10:15 9:00 Adult formation 10:00 Nursery; Church School 11:30 Coffee Hour; DR Trip meeting 4:00 Advent Service of Lessons & Carols	16	17 6:30 Boy Scouts	18 5:30 Evening Prayer & HE 7:30 Adult choir rehearsal	19 9:30 Prep/serve lunch at Friendship Service Center 6:30 Evening Prayer 7:00 Vestry	20 6:30 AA	21 5:00 Longest Night: Healing in Times of Challenge
22 HE 8:00 & 10:15 9:00 Adult formation 10:00 Nursery, Church School 11:30 Coffee Hour; Greening of the Church	23	24 Parish office closed 4 pm Christmas Eve Service 10 pm Prelude Music 10:30 pm Christmas Eve Service	25 10:00 Christmas Worship 	26 Parish office closed	27 6:30 AA	28
29 HE 8:00 & 10:15 10:00 Nursery 11:30 Coffee Hour	30	31 Parish office closed	Jan. 1, 2020 Parish office closed 11:00 Feast of the Holy Name Service			

St. James Parish

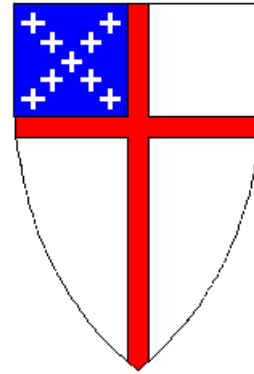
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MISSION STATEMENT:

*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	Cathie Martin & John Smith, Wardens		
Amelia (Amy) Steele	Youth Minister	EJ Ososki, Treasurer		
Blake Hansen	Director of Music	Jerry Hess, Asst. Treasurer		
Susan Deming	Parish Administrator	Jessica Watkin, Parish Clerk		
Kelly Nauss	Sexton			
Laura Vacca	Nursery Supervisor			
		2018	VESTRY 2019	2020
		Bill Raymond	Cathie Martin	Julia Grieco
		Chris Roach	Michael Slusarz	Rebecca McFarland
		John Smith	Todd Root	Dona Waugh

St. James Parish

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

