

St. James Parish

Epistle



November 2020

Rector's Message

Gratitude and praise are responses permeating my spiritual and life journey of late, sprinkled with challenges, doubts, and worries. Maybe you are experiencing the bittersweet mixture, too, of knowing God's reality of love, abundance, and grace but seeing and registering, at the same time, the inbreaking of "the world." I was praying today and, for some reason, the wonderful hymn *Fairest Lord Jesus* popped into my head and I couldn't shake free from it. I found a hymnal (none in the church at present) brought it back to the sanctuary, and sang it through, my version of singing in the shower. The melody is lovely, but the words tap into my own spiritual life that acknowledges a reality of God that could, if I (we) embrace it, transform me/us into more celebratory, confident, and blessed-in-real-time kinds of souls. The ensuing spiritual awakening to the presence of God might, then, tip the world toward the good, the holy, and the place of unified, unqualified love. *Fairest Lord Jesus* sings of nature and how God directs our senses and draws us into Himself there but also signals that even the most wonderful birdsong or "the blooming garb of spring" (v. 2) is not so fair, powerful, beautiful or blessed as is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus is the pure light that "makes the woeful heart to sing" (v. 2). As fall explodes into radiant color, I am reminded of the God who made creation so wondrous and of the One whose sacrifice is more lovely still.

Yet, even as we move through the glorious New England autumn we are continuously reminded, by haranguing politicians, news of

surging COVID cases, and stark iniquities in the world, that humanity's old nemesis and companion "death" is never very far away. While we were on a fall excursion to New Hampshire over Tracey and the girl's break, I picked up a used copy of *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen*. Wilfred Owen died at 25 in WWI and is generally considered to be the preeminent poet to come out of the war. His poems penned over the last 18 months of his life are by far his best work, as he became worn down, wounded once, and more and more horrified and desensitized by the unimaginable brutality of war. If you have seen pictures from that war, you might agree that a hymn like *Fairest Lord Jesus* feels totally out of place. The mud, the dead men and horses, the wrecked homes and lives may appear to drive out all goodness, all compassion, and any sense of God's great and enduring love. Our fatigue from COVID-19, our numbness (nearly) at the escapades and words of politicians and the zealots that often blindly follow them, and our feeling of isolation from the activities, institutions, communities and – above all – people who help give our lives meaning can seem total.

There is a classic painting by Caravaggio called *The Harrowing of Hell* which showcases the theology that Jesus, after His crucifixion, went into hell itself to bring the saved who died before Him up into everlasting light. I came across a painting recently also called *The Harrowing of Hell*, acknowledging his debt to the master Caravaggio, by the Scottish painter Peter Howson. [continued on next page]



[Rector's Message continued]

Howson was a war artist in Bosnia in the 1990's and became a Christian while undergoing treatment for alcohol addiction in 2000 (a). His connection to war influenced his painting of Christ's crucifixion and His saving love. And I began to think that the beauty of *Fairest Lord Jesus* does make sense when we see the ugliness of the world, too. Christ's beauty – which is not physical but spiritual – transcends the bloodiness of the Cross, time, and our resistance to lift us out of the challenges of loneliness, hopelessness, anger, partisan bickering, racism, and violence and brings us into His fair presence, which is full of hope, companionship, equity, and blessedness. We are challenged people who are going to struggle sometimes; it is the nature of human existence. But Christ offered through us to another in love, Christ seen in the dying and living of fall colors, or Christ made real in hymnody, Eucharist, or the holy offer of peace is what makes life, well, real. May we be inspired to see our fairest Lord and Savior for who He is, in all things: loving and sacrificial Savior of blessing. May we see, pray, and experience Christ and give thanks.

In Christ,
Fr. George+

- (a) Information on Peter Howson from PM, BBC Radio, October 23, 2008, David Welch.
- (b) Painting: *The Harrowing of Hell* is by Peter Howson

Warden's Corner

I'll admit it, I am tired. Physically tired, but also emotionally and spiritually tired. Are you tired, too?

As we enter our eighth month of living in pandemic times, the reality that this new way of living will be here for a long time is sinking in. I am saddened by this reality - so much loss. For those of you who have been directly affected by the pandemic, my heart goes out to you.

Tonight, my parents came for an outside visit (thankfully they live close by). I find that I hold back tears every time I see them, as I am reminded that the last time they hugged me or my children was March 16th. Thankfully, they are healthy and I am willing to sacrifice hugs (and will wear my mask) in order to keep them safe.

Yet I am so grateful - grateful for my family, for the technology that allows me to stay in touch with family and friends near and far, for the masks that keep us safe, and all the essential workers who have done so much for our community. I am especially thankful for the teachers and administrators that have enabled our children to return to school safely (my children have greatly benefited from being back in school).

As I drop off my children to school - masked each morning - I am confronted by the reality of how much has changed in their young lives this year. As the coronavirus numbers begin to rise again in Connecticut, I can't help worrying that the few things we have been able to do may be shut down once again.

Please continue to do all you are doing to keep our community safe and continue praying for an end to these difficult times. I know I find solace in my daily meditation and bible reading. I am also finding meaning through my work with the Vestry and the discipleship team at St. James. Always remember that St. James and your parish community is here for you if you need anything. Stay safe and stay strong - God will always be here to guide us through.

Blessings,
Kim Pereira, Ed.D.; Vestry Co-Warden

Church School update

What a great start to virtual Church School! We have explored the stories of "Adam and Eve" and "Cain and Abel" over the past few Sundays. We will continue our first Virtual Church School classes each Sunday. Kind-5th grade will meet from 10:40 am-11 am. 6th-12th grades will meet from 11 am-11:20 am.



Elementary (K-5th) 10:40 am-11 am-

<http://bit.ly/virtualchurchschool>

Contact Amy Steele or the parish office for meeting info

**Middle + High School (6th-12th)
11 am-11:20 am-**

<http://bit.ly/virtualchurchschool>

Contact Amy Steele or the parish office for meeting info

Confirmation Corner

We are so excited to begin Confirmation! Our first class will be Sunday, November 1st at 12 noon via Zoom. Our Zoom meet information will be sent directly to registered families. If you are still considering confirmation, please feel free to reach out before the first class to register!

If you have any questions or need a copy of the Confirmation Expectations feel free to reach out at amy.siyouthminister@gmail.com !

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.

Bible Study: Paul's letter to the Romans

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we have completed our two-year exploration of the four Gospels: Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark, as part of our call to see, "Who is Jesus to me, really?" Each person that participated in our studies of Christ's ministry, life, death, and resurrection came away, I am fairly certain, with new insights about who Christ is to them.

We have left the Gospels behind and moved on to a new frontier: Paul's letter to the Romans. We as a group agreed that we would once again rely on Tom Wright's study guide called *For Everyone, Romans*. We have books in the parish office for you (\$10 per copy), if you would like to participate in our study.

Participation does not necessarily mean coming to every (right now virtual)

conversation we have. You can obtain a study guide and read Romans on your own or you can join us when you are able. We are always perfectly delighted for you to drop in now and again. There has been a small group of folks who have taken a deep dive, not only in reading Scripture, but in joining us for Bible study, too. I hope folks will continue to find strength, wisdom, joy, and comfort in reading God's holy word, as we continue with the Letter to the Romans.

Save the date: Lessons & Carols

On December 20th at 4 p.m., we will hold a Service of Lessons and Carols. As with everything else, we are continually adapting to be as safe as possible. This year there will be no live choir - the choir is currently working



virtually with plans to make a recording for presentation at this service. We will once again welcome members of the CT Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra to lead us in music along with a vocal soloist. Please mark your calendars for this special service of reading and music!

Blake Hansen, Director of Music

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) 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 Monday, November 2nd, All Souls, we will have our usual Morning Prayer 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 to Sue in the parish office** (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, the Town is **not** accepting donations of food items, but only monetary donations. Community Services will then provide the families with Stop & Shop gift cards to purchase their meal items. **We ask that parishioners send monetary donations to the church, noting that they are for the Baskets.** You may also use PayPal from the main page of the parish website at www.stjamesfarmington.org, again noting that your online donation is for the Thanksgiving Baskets. **All donations must be received by St James by Thursday, November 12th** so that a check can be delivered to Farmington Community Services who will then purchase cards to distribute to the families on Saturday, the 14th. Thank you for your continuing generosity!



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.). Our 2020 Convention was all via Zoom, with World Café Conversations on the evenings of October 14th and 16th, the afternoon of the 15th, and the business of Convention on Saturday, the 17th. We encourage everyone to go to <https://ecctconvention.org/> for all the news, Convention worship on Sunday (October 18th), and everything you may wish to know on resolutions, conversations, and much more.

Our two delegates for the last three years are Linda Larkin and Michael Slusarz. They have been faithful servants to God and our parish, attentive participants in the legislative process, and engaged in conversations about ECCT and the whole church. Be sure to thank Linda and Michael when you have a chance. If you are interested in serving as a delegate from St. James beginning in 2021, please contact Fr. George or a member of your Vestry as soon as possible.



EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CONNECTICUT
PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S MISSION

A word from our delegates ...

I felt privileged to represent St. James Parish at this year's Diocesan Convention. This was my third Convention, and while it was quite different from the previous two due to pandemic restrictions, this Zoom mediated

event was engaging, busy and highly interactive. The work of the first three days was centered on discussing two important and timely social topics – Wealth Inequity and the Reality of Systemic Racism, White Supremacy and Anti-Black Bias. The third topic we discussed was the changes that parishes made with regard to worshiping and formation during the pandemic. The prompt was - What We Might Keep or Expand in Order to Encourage a Continuing Culture of Discovery. These discussions were carried out by all delegates in small groups and then distilled into several topics for diocesan-wide work groups. I felt very pleased that the Episcopal Church in Connecticut is offering a forum and support for the work to be done on pressing social issues and enjoyed this opportunity to learn what other parishes are doing. Information about those work groups and when they will meet (through Zoom) will be provided in e-flashes over the next few weeks. You are encouraged to join. For me, perhaps the most poignant moments of each of the Conventions that I have attended, have concerned resolutions dealing with the joining of small parishes that cannot survive due to dwindling membership. These congregations go through a process of discerning how the two parishes will blend. From the stories that they relate at Convention, it is an emotional process of loss, of memories (weddings, baptisms, etc.) of family history, of friendship and so much more. Each time I have been struck by the fact that after they complete this journey there is joy in the new union. That is my take away from the experience of the Convention – change is inevitable and necessary, we are strong, we need to find ways of being today's disciples and that God is watching over us and we are in his care.

Linda Larkin, delegate

As one of your St James delegates, I attended the Episcopal Church in Connecticut (ECCT) annual convention 2020. I found the discussions to be challenging and invigorating.

[continued on next page]

[Annual Convention continued]

Everybody in the small groups had the opportunity to express their views and ideas which were summarized in a report and forwarded to an Episcopal committee. Each delegate had online voting rights to elect standing committee members for clerical and lay orders, and for mission council members and had the opportunity to join in other important group discussions that affect our Church after the conclusion of the convention. Saturday was a day of business which included the Bishop's address, world café reports, resolution debates, and election results. Sunday morning was the finally of the convention and was a time of worship and reflection. By my attendance, I found the convention to be informative, enlightening, and uplifting. I encourage all adult parishioners to become a convention delegate and represent St James during future conventions.

Michael Slusarz, delegate

Budget Update

In the interest of keeping the parish informed on how we are faring with our 2020 budget, we offer this summary report. A detailed report is available for members through the parish office.

	Actual	Budget	Budget vs
	9/30/2020	9/30/2020	Actual
INCOME			
Pledges	\$204,475	\$189,925	\$14,550
Offerings & Gifts	\$3,003	\$3,250	(\$247)
Invested Funds Income	\$8,404	\$11,325	(\$2,921)
Other Income	\$1,910	\$700	\$1,210
TOTAL INCOME	\$217,792	\$205,200	\$12,592
EXPENSES			
Rector Salary/Benefits	\$98,300	\$97,780	\$520
Staff Salary/Benefits	\$69,813	\$71,590	(\$1,777)
Church Property	\$27,305	\$36,971	(\$9,665)
Rectory	\$5,150	\$6,455	(\$1,305)
Non-building Supplies	\$12,365	\$14,925	(\$2,560)
Music	\$4,342	\$4,675	(\$333)
Mission & Outreach	\$23,297	\$22,798	\$499
Other Expenses	\$1,493	\$4,763	(\$3,270)
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$242,065	\$259,955	(\$17,890)
TOTAL INCOME/EXPENSE	(\$24,273)	(\$54,755)	\$30,482

Annual Appeal for Stewardship

Our Annual Appeal is in full swing! We have begun sending out postcards --a new thing for us -- focusing on different aspects of the ministries we engage in here at St. James. We hope that you enjoy seeing St. James in, perhaps, a different way. We are hoping to do much in the 2021 calendar year, which will include planning for a vastly improved capability in the area of handicapped accessibility to our facility. We desire for people to not only move into the building more freely but between the worship space and the parish hall, to restrooms, etc., as well. We plan to continue serving the wider Farmington Valley community, our friends in the Dominican Republic and at the Friendship Service Center, and our own parishioners who need our support, both spiritually and materially.



Please continue to consider prayerfully what you can give to our Annual Appeal and, as you receive your pledge cards in the next mailing, please return your pledge card for 2021 as soon as possible. You are the reason we do what we do and you make St. James a place of worship, prayer, hope, and possibility in a world that teeters and wobbles around all kinds of issues. The community needs St. James as does the wider world; we hope your giving, to your capabilities, will reflect that need and your commitment to it. Please watch the personal testimonials in video format on our Facebook page, our website, and via links in our e-flashes. Hearing fellow parishioner's stories about St. James may also help you in your prayerful consideration of your pledge.

What does reconnection mean to you?

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines reconnection as, "the act or result of restoring a connection: the state of being reconnected." The other definition I like is from the verb form of reconnect which simply states, "re-establish a bond of communication or emotion".

There are 6 guys who I met over 25+ years ago in college who I consider "my brothers". The names of these great men are: Chris Perry, Pata Dibinga, Draylin Beaudrault, Joe Roman, Glen Kunene and Dave Coleman. It took me a few years after being incarcerated to gradually start to reconnect with them. But since COVID, we have really tried to make the effort to stay in touch on a consistent basis. In fact, over the last couple of months, we started a monthly Sunday night Zoom meeting where we talk about what is going on in our lives. We listen to one another, show a great deal of empathy and compassion for each other, resulting in a great deal of jokes and laughter! By re-establishing my bonds with my brothers, I feel a rejuvenation and levels of energy that I can't comprehend and it's a great feeling. I am so thankful and humbled that I have had the opportunity to reconnect with them again at this time in my life.



I challenge all of you (if you haven't done so already lol!) to try and reconnect with family members or friends from your past that have had an impact on your life. See if you can regain that positive energy that we desperately need right now to get through these challenging times. I know, personally, my family has lost some people close to us this year and, with this virus, we couldn't even take the time to mourn and pay our respects to them properly. A heavy feeling of guilt comes

upon a person, due to that situation, which you ultimately have no control over.

But now is the time we need to lean on each other and praise the ones that we still have with us and reconnect to those we have lost contact with. Make sure they know we haven't forgotten them and that we need them more than ever.

So, to my 6 brothers again, I thank you for never giving up on me, for never forgetting about me and giving me the ability to restore our connection to one another!

God Bless you all!!!
Mike Whilby

Michael Whilby served a little over four years in prison (of a five-year sentence). He struggled to reclaim his life, move forward with positive energy, and work every single day for his own liberation in a world that makes it terribly difficult for a person who has been incarcerated. Michael has worked very hard, not only for himself, but for others who may be struggling with a wide variety of challenges from addiction, mental illness, homelessness, disabilities or a label of "ex-convict," ex-felon. He has particularly devoted himself to advocating for those deemed a person-of-no-worth in a world that seems to value material possessions, social standing, and success (defined a certain way) more than the humanity of those who suffer and have real struggles. I have come to know and admire Mike as much as nearly anyone that I have ever known. He is kind, genuine, energetic, positive, hopeful, faithful, dedicated, and honest. Mike has challenged me, not by saying, "Hey, do this!" but by being a positive force for change in his own life and in the world. "Second chances" is not merely a slogan but the mantra of the Christian life, where all of us find ourselves in need of salvation which Christ answers with his life and then, reminding us that He took that life up again.

Fr. George Roberts

Smart Justice Initiative

The article by Mike on the previous page, followed by a few words from me, is a preamble to a new, regular “corner” we hope to have in our *Epistle* each month, to talk about some of the challenging issues of our day, particularly human struggles against discrimination, racism, classism, poverty, homelessness, and so much more. Herein may be opportunities for us, as a parish, to get involved in listening, advocacy, etc. but always looking at it through the lens of our call “to do the work You (God Almighty) have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord” (BCP, p. 366). If we are not channeling God’s call on our lives in everything we do, then we might ask ourselves, why are we doing it? Mike Wilby is going to be a liaison for our parish, in work around issues of race, class, and disability going forward. He has a passion for the work and is a high energy, motivated Christian who will be a huge help and ally in our work to become engaged, as we feel called by God, to certain kinds of work in the world. Below is the first of our opportunities. I hope that folks will keep an open mind and heart. Remember, any work that makes the world better and more open to anyone is an act of reconnection, as Mike said earlier, where we can become one with each other, even as Christ and the Father are one.

The Smart Justice Initiative of the ACLU

“The ACLU Campaign for Smart Justice is an unprecedented, multiyear effort to reduce the U.S. jail and prison population by 50% and to combat racial disparities in the criminal justice system. The U.S. incarcerates more people, in both absolute numbers and per capita, than any other nation in the world.” Mass Incarcerated, Prison Reform, Bail Reform, and Prosecutorial Reform are all part of the Smart Justice Initiative, which seeks to empower people who have suffered as a result of

incarceration - and the people who love them – to find their voice.

On **Monday, November 16th**, from 6:30–8 pm, St. James Parish will host the Smart Justice Initiative via Zoom. Smart Justice will present their documentary, *Smart Justice: Year One*, then have a discussion about the content and aims of the film and the work SJI is doing to end mass incarceration and racism in the criminal legal system here in Connecticut and how folks can take action and get involved. Claudine Fox, Smart Justice campaign manager, Anderson Curtis, and Gus Marks-Hamilton will lead us in a conversation around the issues above. Join us on the 16th.

Celebrating November Birthdays!

Susan Kramer
Rebecca Tuttle
Mimi Hostetter
Chris Hillemeir
Mitchell Ives
Jim Wilkie
Catherine MacKay
Sheila Church
Betsy Stott
Henry Root
Robert Root
Erica Amato
Gavin Stein
Janice Riemer
Kathy Bullard
Jay Buth
Michaela Flynn



Adult Christian Formation 2020-2021

We are in an exciting Christian Formation program year for our congregation and beyond. We partner with the Spiritual Life Center (SLC), in West Hartford, to present a year on Christian Spiritual Practices. Part of walking the way of Jesus and truly living the Christian life means drawing forever closer to the Divine presence. In our busy lives, however, finding new, creative, and practical ways to live the Christian life and engage in our spiritual journey (we are all on one, by the way) can be very challenging indeed. So, St. James Parish presents, in communion with the SLC, workshops on Christian Spiritual practices.

***Lectio Divina*, Celeste Calabotta. Tuesday, November 10th, 6:30– 8:30 pm**



Celeste is a spiritual director and Lay Carmelite, and has been in retreat ministry at Our Lady of Calvary Retreat Center in

Farmington for 10 years and began studying contemplative prayer over 15 years ago. She has coordinated *Lectio Divina* prayer groups at Our Lady of Calvary and St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in West Hartford.

Spiritual Direction, The Rev. Tom Carr. Saturday, December 5th, 10 am–noon.

Tom Carr is Pastor of Second Baptist of Suffield, Connecticut. His primary interests are in preaching, worship leadership, teaching and spiritual growth. He is a certified Spiritual Director. Spiritual direction is one person, walking with another person or group of people in the process of paying attention to the movement of God in his or her life, as s/he grows in intimacy with God.

Praying the Daily Office, The Rev. George Roberts. Tuesday, January 5th, 6: 30–8:30 pm.

Ignatian Spirituality, Judy Pluta, BA, MA, Boston College, NYU. Saturday, March 20th, 10 am–2 pm.

Praying with Art, Lisa Hudkins. Saturday, April 17th, 10 am–noon.

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 ... these words (beyond the Scripture) and prayer are from the late Trappist monk Thomas Merton, but are so timely in this present day ... as spiritual truth always is ...

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

2 Timothy 1:7

You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith, and hope.

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I think I really know myself; and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does, in fact, please you. And I hope that I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me be the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, I will trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Thomas Merton

Minutes of the Vestry of St. James: September 17, 2020

Present via Zoom: Fr. George Roberts, Jessica Watkin, Robyn Shover, Julia Greico, Foster White, Dona Waugh, Rebecca McFarland, Jim Wilkie, Kim Pereira, Tom Nelson, EJ Ososki, Mimi Hostetter

Minutes for June 2020

Foster moved to accept the minutes. Mimi seconded. Jessica will fix the typos in Julia's and EJ's names. Unanimous vote to accept the minutes.

Ministry Reports

Finance/Treasurer's report – August, 2020

- Pledges are currently \$8,000 ahead. This is a first. People paid large pledges at the beginning of the year. Cash offerings are right on target.
- Fall Fair – \$3,500 budgeted for the year; we will end up without that.
- Invested income is down slightly, but not enough to worry about.
- On the expense side we are doing better in a number of areas. The audit bill for \$3,100 hasn't hit us yet.
- We're \$20,000 favorable to budget, but we should subtract out the Fall Fair and the audit bill so we're still \$15,000 favorable to budget.
- Foster moved to accept the report, Mimi seconded. Unanimous vote to accept the report.

Report on the reserve account/investments

- We are just shy of a \$24,000 gain (+2.6%) YTD, the fund is standing at \$850,000. We have rebounded and even have a little bit of surplus.

Discipleship Team Update

- Started in March and have been meeting every 2-3 weeks; have covered a lot of ground. 14 people started and now about 8 are committed to the work.
- The work is about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus – using a curriculum *Discipleship for Episcopalians* – dealing with 8 dimensions of

discipleship. The whole process takes 12 to 18 months. The hope is that these 8 people would lead small groups of 2 or 3 as they become more grounded and confident as disciples.

- Foster and Kim are both part of the group. Kim notes it is a rewarding and productive group to be part of and Foster notes that it is invigorating and informative.

Adult formation for 2020–21

- We are working with the Spiritual Life Center at the Holy Family Monastery in West Hartford – they do really exciting programming all the time. Many of our sessions have a theme of prayer and togetherness.
- We are limiting session enrollment to 30 people. We've already have had people register from other churches in the North Central region; we are asking for a small donation from registrants. Some sessions are in the evening and some on Saturdays.

Youth Ministry

- There is a Confirmation class this year! Other Episcopal churches in the Farmington Valley with smaller numbers have been invited to join us, so we might pick up another 2–3 youth.

New Business

Church School

- Begins Sunday, October 4 – theme is *Weaving God's Promises*.
- Teachers are needed; please think about recruitment.
- Amy will be with the middle and high schoolers with structured class time.
- We hope to break Pre-K through 5th grade into two groups.
- If you have ideas, please let Fr. George know. Many thanks to Julia Grieco for all her creative work for the last few years.
- Trish Guglielmo, Amy Greaves and Amy Steele are now taking on Church School as a team.

New sign

- There is dry rot in the decades-old sign on the front lawn – it has been there at least since the early 1990's – Kelly is going to patch it. We want a new sign facing both ways on Mountain Road. Research to be done on what is available, cost, and what the town requires.

Old Business

Stewardship update – begins October 18

- Going in a different direction, we are sending postcards, each highlighting a different topic or theme of church life. Kim & David Faubert are donating the cost of the cards which will be professionally done.
- In the middle week we'll do a mailing with the pledge card.
- In-Gathering on November 15.
- To have Youth involved in some fun online family activities the night before the In-Gathering (Nov. 14), Amy Steele is planning a virtual gathering.
- Last year our goal was \$267,000 and we achieved \$264,000. Let's aim for a 3% increase over \$267,000. The advice from the Diocese is that people are willing to give to churches in this uncertain time. So roughly \$275,000 would be our goal.

Feasibility study

- John Smith and Fr. George are meeting with Farmington architect, Jack Kemper.
- We agree in theory that we need to do this work for accessibility of our property and that the actual work is something that would have to be part of a capital campaign. Spending the ~\$5,000 to get the feasibility done is something we haven't actually committed to. If the Kemper estimate comes in similar to the Tuttle estimate, do we need to seek a third? If they are very different, we should, but we will discuss next month what to do if they are similar.

Sound equipment

- Blake did a lot of research about this. Total cost \$1,700, for 2 mics, 2 booms, a mixer that takes in camera and sound, a few cables – not top of the line, but professional quality.

Capital campaign

- We need to start to organize a serious conversation around a campaign. This seems odd because of isolation and distance; we wouldn't want to start a campaign right now, but we need to prepare ourselves. Do we want a capital campaign to *begin* with the 150th, to *end* with the 150th? The next Vestry will tackle this formally, but we need to start planning conversations around it.
- We have been talking around this for 3–4 years. The Sesquicentennial is only 2 years away. Early next year we will form a committee whose sole charge is to brainstorm about a year of celebration and thanksgiving. This will be 5–7 people who will help plan fun events and commemorative programs.

Rector's Thoughts

- Tuesday, November 10 at 7 pm: Next adult formation session, on Lectio Divina
- Ongoing: Bible Study of Romans with NT Wright's *For Everyone* continues on Zoom! Fr. George has books left, so if you need a copy, contact him. There are typically 8–9 people, via Zoom. We will start at 11 am instead of 11:30 now that service time has changed.
- Ongoing Friday evenings: The young people's AA group we have hosted in the hall has started meeting again. They have rules and protocols about numbers and social distancing; they've been great guests.

We closed in prayer & adjourned at 9:02 pm.

St. James Parish

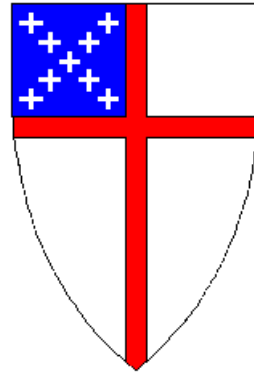
3 Mountain Road
Farmington, Connecticut 06032

Phone: 860-677-1564

Fax: 860-677-8219

Email: st.james.church@sbcglobal.net

Website: www.stjamesfarmington.org



MISSION STATEMENT:

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

STAFF

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

OFFICERS

Kim Pereira & Dona Waugh, Wardens
EJ Ososki, Treasurer
Jerry Hess, Asst. Treasurer
Jessica Watkin, Parish Clerk

VESTRY

2021

Mimi Hostetter
Kim Pereira
Robyn Shover

2022

Thomas Nelson
Foster White
James Wilkie

2020

Julia Grieco
Rebecca McFarland
Dona Waugh

St. James Parish

3 MOUNTAIN ROAD
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032

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