



The St. James'

Pilgrim

"News for the Journey . . ."

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Clergy Corner with our Assistant Rector, The Rev. James Isaacs

Your kingdom come, on earth as in heaven

I have recently begun using the Daily Devotions in the *New Zealand Prayer Book* as a part of my own daily spiritual discipline. There are morning and evening prayers for each day of the week. And each day takes its theme from a phrase from the Lord's Prayer. It is an interesting spiritual experience for me to have a phrase from the Lord's Prayer stirring in the back of my mind throughout the day.

I am writing this reflection on a Tuesday, so today's phrase is "Your kingdom come on earth as in heaven." Some things haven't gone the way that I intended or would have liked recently. Even sometimes when I think that I am trying to do God's will, my plans seem to be thwarted.

As I reflect on how things, at times, are not the way that I would have them, I am left wondering, "Is the way that I want things the way that God wants things?" I find myself reexamining how much what I am working for is my desires versus God's desires. Do I need to "seek first the kingdom of God" more? Should my prayer and effort be closer to Jesus's prayer in Gethsemane when he says to the Father, "yet not my will, but thy will be done"?

After reflecting on some of the things that don't seem to me to be going the right way, I find myself even more convinced that some of the things that I had been working for might actually be trying to help earth come closer to how it is in heaven. I then wonder if it is because I have striven inadequately to help realize this part of God's dream. Is it my fault? Is there more that I can do; should I redouble my efforts? Is it the fault of others, or the fault of what are called the "principalities and powers" in the Gospel according to Mark?

During the prayers in the Tuesday Morning devotion, the brief service wisely continues with praying what has become known as "The Serenity Prayer:"

*God,
grant us the serenity
to accept the things we cannot change,
the courage to change the things we can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.*

That prayer is an important one for many people in the recovery community, and I find an even deeper grounding through praying it in the context of that phrase from the Lord's Prayer.

I am led back to offering my will and efforts to God, handing it all over to God who I believe is active in the world, and praying anew "your kingdom come on earth as in heaven."

In Christ,
James



Rev. James Isaacs in the News:

See this recent article in [The Washington Post](#) featuring our Assistant Rector, James Isaacs.

Reflection from our Youth Director, Rachele Donnelly

Our 2017 Youth Mission Trip

Glancing at the calendar, it's hard to believe our 2017 workcamp mission trip was more than a month ago. Along with more than 400 kids from places as far away as Kansas and Minnesota, our group of 10 youth and four adults descended upon the coastal town of Wilmington, NC, eager to serve. Unlike previous years, our group was filled with several first-timers. Fortunately, we also had a great group of returning campers, who eagerly took their freshmen counterparts under their wings.



The Saturday before camp began, our group travelled to Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, Virginia for a little rest and relaxation. The park was the first place where many of the kids had the opportunity to bond. As the teens range in age from 13-19, they are allowed to roam the park freely, as long as they stay with their buddy at all times. The buddy system not only ensures safety in numbers, but it also creates an instant bond between two or more youth. Between spending time together on roller coasters, eating lunch, or observing the park's famed gray wolves, the youth are offered ample opportunity to get to know even more about one another than they previously did. Judging by the smiles as we left the park, the youth had a wonderful time.

Back in our caravan, we travelled down the road to Norfolk. We spent the evening in the parish hall of Christ and St. Luke's Episcopal Church, conveniently located near Children's Hospital and the Ronald McDonald house. Thanks to contributions from our youth and their families, our group donated four full bags of snack items, coffee, creamer, sugar and many more items on the Ronald McDonald House wish list. Upon dropping off the items, we learned the history of the organization and toured the house.

Of the many things we as parents, grandparents, youth and religious leaders hope to instill into our children, a strong work ethic, an appreciation of family and friends and a desire to grow in Christ seem to generally top the list. For that reason, we celebrated the opportunity to meet up with two special people on our travels. At Christ and St. Luke's, we had the privilege of seeing Rev. Meredith's dad, who joined us for dinner. The very next morning, after church, we continued down the road, stopping to have lunch at a Cracker Barrel. Many of our youth were excited to learn that veteran work-camper Chris Goodkind would meet us there. In North Carolina for a summer internship, he regaled us with stories of what workcamp meant to him.

We officially arrived at the camp close to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. The following five days were filled with hard work, challenging repairs and occasional thunderstorms. Additionally, there were beautiful days at the beach and parks, new friendships formed and strengthened relationships with Christ. The theme for the week was that the cross was not the end, but rather the beginning. What a great message that youth and adults can learn from! The message resonated with us throughout the week. We installed floors and painted walls. We learned new songs, praised God together and leaned on one another and the Lord when we felt overwhelmed. Upon our return home, I asked the first-timers and returning youth if they would be back next year, and the answer was a resounding YES!

At our parent meeting the week before we left, I challenged our youth. I explained that work camp was going to change their lives. They would make friends, learn new skills, pray a lot and come back with what can only be described as a spiritual high! My challenge was for them to work to maintain their passion and excitement for Christ. As a teenager, this can be a challenge. The new school year is just around the corner. That means full schedules filled with homework, AP classes, college applications,

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wrestling, band, theater, and more. It can be hard to find the time to get everything done plus have time left over to go to church or youth group.

I know that sometimes it's not feasible to get everything done. However this is where my challenge to our youth and their families begins. Work to maintain the passion that you felt for Christ. Join us at church and youth group. Pray. Recognize "God sightings" and share them with your family and friends. Send a care card, or text to someone. Everyone loves a care card! Because raising children really does take a family, I ask parishioners to talk to our youth about what workcamp means to them and how it has changed their lives.

I am very excited to announce that our 2018 workcamp mission trip will take our group to Chattanooga, Tennessee. Details for that will be announced in September.

It seems to me that every article I write ends with the same two words: THANK YOU! Thank you to this congregation for all the emotional, spiritual and financial support you have generously given to us. Thank you for the prayers and warm smiles. Thank you to our chaperones and adult leaders, who give up vacation time at work or relaxing Sunday evenings to surround yourselves with teenagers. Ann, James, Lisa, Luther, Rev. Meredith, you are amazing! Finally, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as the St. James' youth director. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to work with these incredible kids and their families.

Rachele

Rally Day Returns! Sunday, September 17

It is our tradition to come together on the Sunday after Labor Day to celebrate the beginning of Sunday School and the start of a new program year.

Also known as "Homecoming Sunday," and "Welcome Sunday," [Rally Day](#) has a rich history in the Church.

The 1905 book, *How to Conduct a Sunday School*, offers this description of Rally Day. "It usually comes at the end of the summer break-up, and is used as a means of rallying the forces again for the work of fall and winter. When a general is preparing for a battle he is said to rally his forces. When a sick person begins to recover it is said of him that he is rallying. When a bookbinder brings together in one place the different sections of a book to be bound into one he is said to be rallying the book. All of these phrases may be applied to the Sunday school work; we are rallying our forces for the great campaign of the fall and winter."

Although some shy away from the image of "rallying" together like an army general, there is something to be said for encouraging our teachers, inspiring our children, and celebrating the reunion of our community after a summer break. "Rallying," then, becomes an act of bringing us together—which we celebrate for the rest of the academic year.

In 1905, Rally Day concluded with a "grand review," a procession of all the Sunday school students marching up to the altar, making Rally Day, the author enthused, "one of the happiest days of the year."

This year Rally Day will again include a Kid's Fair hosted by both the Sunday school and St. James' Children's School. Details will be provided soon. We hope you'll join us on September 17 for the celebration!

St. James' at Shepherd's Table Wednesday, August 30

Please come for St. James' turn to serve and prepare meals at Shepherd's Table in Silver Spring. There will be two shifts: 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. to set up and prepare salads, and 5:45 to 8:00 p.m. to serve and clean up. To sign up contact Mary Miers or the parish office, office@stjamespotomac.org.





Backyard Bonanza! (at church)

When: August 12, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Who: Anyone who wants to have fun

What: Backyard Bonanza

Where: Field behind St. James' parking lot.
If it rains, we will move the Bonanza indoors.

The kids will have full access to the SJCS playground while everyone else hangs out, talks, plays games, eats, and drinks. We hope to see you there!

This will be a potluck event so bring your favorite main course, side dish, or dessert to share. We'll label dishes to assist those with diet restrictions. Also, bring your favorite beverage (no hard liquor). Have a favorite outdoor game? Like cornhole, baseball gloves, Frisbees, or anything that you play outside. Bring them too! Bring a putter for a putting challenge.

We will need some coolers and POP-Ups if you have them. We'll borrow everything else from the church. If it rains, we'll move indoors and play indoor games like poker and board games that you bring.

There's no need to RSVP. Instead, please sign up for food and game slots here or on our website events list: [St. James' Backyard Bonanza](#).

Book Club, August 27: *The Art of Racing in the Rain*

St. James' book club will discuss *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, by Garth Stein on Sunday, August 27. Everyone is welcome to attend the discussion, beginning at 6:45 p.m. in the parish hall library/meeting room. It's informal, free-flowing, and fun—give it a try! We approach discussion of any book from a perspective of “what, if any, impact does this have on *my or our* spiritual life?” And that's along with the usual comments about the author's intent, writing style, comparison with other works, and the overall appeal of the book.

Enzo, the dog, is given thoughts, feelings, and silent words. His master, Denny is a race car driver known for excellence when driving in the rain. Together they tackle their developing family situations in Enzo's reflections about his life and his approaching death. Though his death is inevitable, brought on by failing health and age, Enzo is ready—for what he believes will be his chance to become human.

Lauded by some reviewers, panned by others, this book is ripe with possibilities for discussion. What does Enzo have to teach us mere humans? Do we see ourselves in this book—in just one character, or several? How do these humans change each other? Which ones enrich the book's flow; which ones do not? What is Enzo's impact on his world? What will *you* take away from this book? Some of us will read it again.

Future books on the schedule are:

September 24: *The Lost City of the Monkey God*, by Douglas Preston
 October 22: *The Sympathizer*, by Viet Thanh Nguyen
 November 26: *Life on Mars*, by Tracy K. Smith.
 December: No meeting
 January 28: *The Sun Also Rises*, by Ernest Hemingway

Did You Know?

Harley and Ann Venton will be taking part in the Kennedy Center's Page-to-Stage Festival, reading two one-act plays by John Sowers: *Passing*, and *Waiting*. See them on the Millennium Stage North on Saturday, September 2 at 11:00 a.m.

Lunch & Learn, September 5: *Barbecue and Fire Safety*

The undercroft will be filled with the aromas of pork barbecue from Branded 72, with baked beans, slaw, greens, and who knows what else for the fall's first meeting, Tuesday, September 5, at 11:30 a.m. To ensure enough food for the lunch portion of the meeting, please make a reservation with Sarah Padgett and plan to bring \$10.00 per person to cover the cost. If you've only got time for the program, there is no charge and no need to make a reservation. The program will run from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Jim Resnick, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service Program Manager for Senior Outreach and Education, will teach us realistic steps that we can all take to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe. He will also bring a sign-up sheet for those interested in a free home safety check by the MCFRS. You aren't a “senior,” but you wonder what your parents might do to be in a safer environment? You are most welcome to attend. There is never any age restriction at L & L!

In calendar year 2016 the MCFRS responded to more than 120,000 incidents—a call every four minutes, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Fire and fire-related calls made up 16,000 of these incidents and Emergency Medical calls made up nearly 87,000 calls. What does this mean to us? We need to take an active role in not being one of these statistics.

Fire prevention, injury prevention, disaster preparedness are more than just slogans, and the MCFRS is working hard to help you achieve the goal of safety in your home, on the road, at church, and everywhere else in our community. Sometimes described as “life-saving and life-changing,” this presentation is not to be missed. We're hoping to see you there!

L & L Steering Committee: Lois Van Nevel, Sarah Padgett, Len Whistler, and Jo Ann Thompson

St. James Day Celebration!

Scenes from the July 23 Parish Picnic at Cabin John Park





Rally Sunday is coming soon!

Mark your Calendar:
Sunday, September 17
at St. James'

**Fun for all, and a great start
to the Fall season!**

**Kid's Fair sponsored by the
Sunday school and St. James'
Children's School!**



First Faith Talk of the 2017 Program year!

Join us on September 17 at 9:15 a.m. in the parish hall meeting room for a review and discussion of the adult education video series, “Missional Voices and the Work of the People: Transformed through Love, Participating in God’s Dream of Wholeness.”



Our rector, Rev. Meredith, was particularly excited to share this series with you after attending a Missional Voices Conference this past spring. The conference goal each year is to discuss new ways to be a missional Church in our secular world, and how that may involve “being Church” in new and different ways. As Rev. Meredith continues her first year with us, this is an excellent time to ask ourselves what mission means at St. James’.

Through this four-part series we will first explore what it means to be created to be “missional:” how God’s love shapes us and makes us whole. Next we will discuss how we respond to this love with our own expressions of love—no matter what the circumstances. Then we will examine the specifics of our job as missionaries—how we can let God “happen” through us—and how through our love, God gets things done. Finally, we will hear from The Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle, the Bishop of Texas, and consider his suggestion that our missional work is impaired by the way we “do” church today.

Especially as our program year begins, and we enter a new year of living into who God has created us to be, we hope you’ll join us as we explore our own mission—and find our own missional voice.

Knit & Crochet Fellowship, August 16

Our next gathering will be Wednesday, August 16, in the parish hall meeting room. All ages and genders are welcome! We’ll also teach anyone who wants to learn knit or crochet, or get a refresher. Stitching together is spiritual and community building, so please join us with whatever project you’re working on.



We also hope to make prayer shawls, to be donated to those who need comfort or healing. We have donated yarn for shawls, so you don’t need to go out and buy yarn for shawls (though you are welcome to do so if you can’t resist the sales!).

Kirsten Hall, kirsten@stjamespotomac.org

St. James’ Calendar of Events

August 8, 15, 22, 29, Tuesdays: Tai Chi at St. James’, 6:00 p.m., undercroft

August 12, Saturday: Backyard Bonanza! St. James’ back lawn and SJCS playground

August 29, Tuesday: Submission deadline for September issue of *The St. James’ Pilgrim*.

August 15, Tuesday: Tai Chi at St. James’, 6:00 p.m., undercroft

August 16, Wednesday: Knit & Crochet group, 7:00 p.m., parish hall meeting room

August 27, Sunday: Book Club, parish hall library

August 30, Wednesday: St. James’ at Shepherd’s Table, Silver Spring

September 5, Tuesday: Lunch & Learn Barbecue and Fire Safety, undercroft

September 17, Sunday: Rally Day! Carnival and fun in the parish hall

September 17, Sunday: Fall FaithTalk program begins, parish hall meeting room

Backpack Project 2017

Thanks to all who helped fill 50 backpacks with school supplies on July 16! There were very exuberant kids and adults who filled multiple backpacks. Once the supplies were skillfully placed on the tables by Jerome Childress, the stuffing went quite quickly.

Joyce Graf and Grace Lo helped to transport the supplies from the attic to the parish hall. Bill Wallace arranged for backpacks to be picked up by Interfaith Works. The Weavers did the shopping and arranged the inventory. A special thanks to Kirsten Hall for providing assistance in purchasing the backpacks again this year.

The backpack supplies are purchased with funds from previous year's donations. So thank you also to those who contributed financially or with in-kind donations. If you will be out school shopping or would like to contribute supplies to next year's backpack drive, please see the list of needed supplies below.



Top 6 Items Needed for 2018 Backpack Drive

- Backpacks
- Packages of lined filler paper
- Tab dividers
- Two pocket folders
- Pencil Pouches
- 3 inch binders

Other Items Needed

- One-subject notebooks
- Composition notebooks
- Large pink erasers
- Red and black pens
- Rulers
- Boxes of colored pencils

Thanks again for providing school supplies for local families in need!

