



The St. James' Pilgrim

News for the Journey . . .

February 2018

St. James' Episcopal Church 11815 Seven Locks Road, Potomac, MD 20854-3340 www.stjamespotomac.org



Message from the Rev. James S. Isaacs

My Focus This Lent and an invitation to join me!

The first day of the season of Lent is called "Ash Wednesday;" this year it will be on February 14. We will have services at church that day for people to start their Lenten

observance with others at St. James'.

In the past, my observance of Lent has often been personal. I've reflected on my own life: how I was living in relation to God and others around me? And I tried to improve how I was doing in those aspects in some way. As a clergy person, my spiritual leadership for people in the congregation has also been directing them to similar introspection and reflection, hopefully leading to positive life changes.

This year, our congregation is intentionally entering into a time of discerning how God is calling us to be faithful in the next part of the congregation's life. In that context, my perspective of Lent is changing. Instead of just the self-examination that is typical, I realize that we also have an opportunity to focus on our life together as a church.

I wonder what it would also look like to reflect on our life as a community: how is St. James' living in relationship to God and to those around us? What might be revealed to us about our church if we are brave enough to look, and to what positive changes might such reflection lead us? The lens of these questions, a corporate self-examination, will be my focus this Lenten season as one of your

priests. I invite you to join me, while you are engaged in your own self-examination, to also courageously consider our life together. And please share with Rev. Meredith and me what is revealed to you.

This is just another way that we are heading in the same direction together: discerning how God might be calling us to join in what God is doing in our midst or in the world around us. This Lent we will also continue the meaningful practice of emailing out daily reflections from members of the congregation, this time focusing on how people have heard God's call in their own lives.

Our adult forums at 9:15 on Sunday mornings are focused on ways that people in scripture have heard God's call, prompting us to reflect on how it happens in our own lives. The sermons during the services often touch on aspects of discernment. Guest preachers and presenters are buttressing our efforts with helpful insights and guidance. A mid-week Bible study is beginning that is focused on hearing God through scripture. A listening group has formed of people intentionally focusing on the process.

I am probably missing other formal ways the discernment process is happening, which is not mentioning the important informal ways that it is also permeating our life as a community.

I think that it delights God that we know God's love for us and so we are focused on finding faithful specific ways to respond to that love. I am so excited to be a part of this process at St. James'.

In Christ,
James



Report from our Junior Warden, Sarah Hnatov

Thanks, Giving, & Goats— and so much more.

On behalf of the “Seniors,” St. James’ Sunday school class for grades four through six, I would like to thank you for your support of our project, “Thanks, Giving, and Goats.” By its

end, our project resulted in donations to Heifer International totaling more than \$2,570 but in sum, it supported so much more.

Thanks – In November, as we took time to thank God for the many gifts we have been given, the class focused on gratitude and we spent time talking about the gifts that we each have received. Parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters and pets topped the lists of many children but access to clean water and healthy food, a safe place to live, and good schools were also mentioned. As we counted our blessings, we shared offerings of thanksgiving to God.

Giving – By December, as the season of Advent began, we were thinking about the joy in giving unconditionally to others just as God has shared His love with us. Hoping to be good stewards of all that we have been given, we also sought to share God’s love by helping others. We decided to raise enough money to donate a few goats so some families would have milk for their children and that would be wonderful. Even better, we learned that the families who received the animals would be taught how to care for the animals and how to sell any extra milk and other items so they could buy more goats or perhaps add some chickens. Over time, our gift will help the families who receive the donations to build a sustainable livelihood and gain increased access to food, school, and medicine.

And the giving will continue as these families will be asked to help others by “Passing on the Gift.” That is, families who receive gifts from Heifer International are asked to share with others the training they receive and pass on the first female offspring of their livestock to another family. This Heifer tradition extends the impact of our original gift, allowing a once impoverished family to

become donors and fully participants in improving their own communities.

Goats – By Christmas Eve, we had raised \$1,072.86 in donations from our bake sale at Coffee Hour, collections in little coin boxes, and other contributions. Then, by making our donations on “double your donation” days and a match from generous employer, we more than doubled our gift to reach a grant total of \$2,575.72. Each gift donated was carefully selected by the class and together we were able to donate three goats and also three pigs, three sheep, four llamas, three flocks of geese, three flocks of chicks, two schools* of fish fingerlings, and seven gifts of honeybees.

Wow! What an extraordinary chain of giving.

The goats were important but only a small part of this story. Thanks be to God for the many blessings in our lives and the grace to care for others by giving joyfully as the Seniors did. It is amazing to think about the extended and life-changing impact that the actions taken based on lessons learned in Sunday school can have in our lives and the lives of others. Finally, thank you for your interest and generous support shared with the children of St. James’ who led this project. You asked questions and told the children of your experiences with Heifer International, purchased cookies, and returned donation boxes filled with loving gifts. Those acts of kindness and connections change lives too.

**NOTE: Each school comes with 300 fish fingerlings. More information is available at www.heifer.org/faith.*



The Sunday school senior class presented a paper chain in church on Sunday, January 28. Each link in the chain represents one of the gifts made possible in the Heifer International project.

Vestry Highlights

Your Vestry met on January 16, 2018, led by the Reverend Meredith, whose first anniversary at St. James' was January 23. Woo-hoo!

Most welcome was the exciting report by Reverend James, Chair of the Stewardship Campaign.

For the current year St. James' received 102 pledges, totaling \$447,994 (compared with 2017 when 81 pledges for \$355,655 were made). The significant increase in parishioner contributions for 2018 suggests that we will be able to attain a balanced budget within the next few years (and focus on what we believe the people of St. James' are called to do, rather than having to worry continually about deficits as has been the case in the past).

The Treasurer presented "draft preliminary statements" of St. James' 2017 financial position and performance. We ended the year with a deficit of approximately \$48,000 (roughly one half of the projected deficit). We received 99% of the projected income, and expenses were held to 94% of the amount projected. The lower-than-projected deficit bodes well for the goal of further reducing the deficit for 2018.

Reverend Meredith provided additional information regarding the discernment process now underway at St. James'. Faith Talks (9:15 a.m. on Sundays) are to study how to hear God speak through scripture, using topics in *Call Waiting*, a book by Robert Hudnut. The second Discernment Preacher and Teacher, Sunday, February 11, will be Julie Simonton, Director of Congregational Development and Stewardship, Diocese of Virginia. Reverend James is leading a twice-weekly "listening" group during Lent. Interested individuals can obtain details from James. There are many ways for all parishioners to become involved in the important discernment activities.

Daily Lenten Reflections, distributed by email, will commence Thursday, February 15. Vestry members were asked to provide one or more reflections. All parishioners are invited to sign up

on-line on the St. James' website or by contacting the Church Office.

Joyce Nohowel, Chair of the Administration Commission, presented the draft update of the by-laws of the parish.

Ann and Harley Venton, on behalf of St. James', will visit Haiti and Père Andre Wildaine, whose pastoral responsibilities include our partner church and school, Bon Samaritain Parish, L'Acul.

Improvements to our facilities continue with the repainting of the Parish Hall Meeting Room, placement of new tables in the Meeting Room, scheduled replacement of the damaged frame of the entry door at the rear of the parish hall, and the solicitation and evaluation of bids for structural and cosmetic repairs to the parish hall front ramp. The Finance Commission is exploring ways to address best the financing of the ramp project. The Strategic Financial Resources Commission (SFRC) of the Diocese will continue to serve as an evaluation and recommendation resource for St. James', through our participation in the pilot program.

The next Vestry Meeting will be conducted during the Vestry Retreat to be held February 3-4 at the Claggett Center, Adamstown, MD.

Barry Thompson, Senior Warden



Valentine Plant Sale Sunday, February 11

On Sunday, February 11, our parish hall will sparkle with a collection of beautiful cyclamen plants—purple, red, white, pink and lavender. Plan to shop after worship as you enjoy fellowship!

Ecumenical Lenten Series Begins February 21!

“Social Justice and Faith: The Intersection”

- Studies and worship at 7:30 p.m.
- Refreshments at 6:30 p.m.
- St. James’ Hosting on March 7, 2018

Come enjoy this annual event Wednesdays during Lent with our neighboring congregations of Seven Locks Road.

ECUMENICAL LENTEN
STUDY & WORSHIP
THEME: “SOCIAL JUSTICE AND FAITH: THE INTERSECTION”

FEBRUARY 21	STUDY THEME: REFLECTION
GENEVA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 11931 SEVEN LOCKS ROAD, POTOMAC, MD 20854	
FEBRUARY 28	STUDY THEME: REVELATION
SEVEN LOCKS BAPTIST CHURCH, 11845 SEVEN LOCKS ROAD, POTOMAC, MD 20854	
MARCH 7	WORSHIP THEME: REPENTANCE
ST. JAMES’ EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 11815 SEVEN LOCKS ROAD, POTOMAC, MD 20854	
MARCH 14	STUDY THEME: RENEWAL
SCOTLAND AMEZION CHURCH, 10902 SEVEN LOCKS ROAD, POTOMAC, MD 20854	
MARCH 21	STUDY THEME: RESPONSIBILITY
EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, 7720 BRADLEY CHURCH, BETHESDA, MD 20817	



03072018
WEDNESDAY AT 7:30PM
ST. JAMES’ EPISCOPAL CHURCH
11815 SEVEN LOCKS ROAD
POTOMAC, MD 20854

GUEST PREACHER: BISHOP W. DARIN MOORE
PRESIDING PRELATE, MID ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT, AMEZION CHURCH
CHAIR, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES



Lenten Service Schedule

Ash Wednesday, February 14

- Noon Service with imposition of ashes
- 5:30 p.m. Family Service with Children’s sermon and imposition of ashes
- 7:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist with imposition of ashes

Maundy Thursday, March 29

- 7:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist and foot washing in the church

Good Friday, March 30

- Noon to 3:00 p.m. Vigil Service
- 7:30 p.m. Worship Service



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

February 13, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.



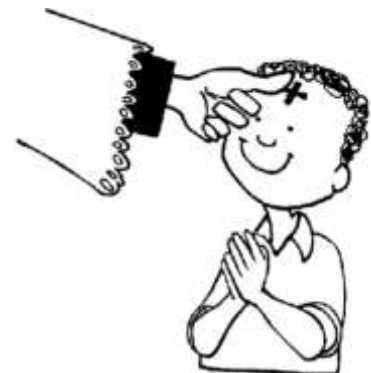
Bring your family for pancakes, sausages,
and fellowship in the parish hall!

Hosted by St. James' Men's Breakfast Prayer Group

Ash Wednesday

St. James' Ash Wednesday Services, February 14, 2018

- 12:00 p.m. Imposition of ashes
- 5:30 p.m. Family service with children's sermon and imposition of ashes
- 7:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist, imposition of ashes, and special music



Annual Convention of the Diocese of Washington

On Saturday, January 27, the Episcopal Diocese of Washington held its annual convention, The Right Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde presiding. Each of the 88 parishes in the District and neighboring Maryland counties sends their clergy and lay delegates, reflecting size of the congregation. Our clergy, Revs. Meredith Heffner and James Isaacs, attended. St. James' delegates are John Eisold and Dan Zimmerman. John attended and I served as alternate for Dan. Pat East is our other alternate. Senior warden Barry Thompson also attended.

Following our Anglican forebears—and our national legislature—the convention and its national counterpart are bicameral in nature, with clergy and lay votes counted separately for election to offices. Other topics, such as those mentioned below, are typically voted on by show of hands.

The meeting opened with Eucharist and included a dynamic and meaningful sermon by the Rev. Dr. Delman Coates, Senior Pastor, in which Dr. Coates suggested that the church reach beyond its physical and ecclesiastical boundaries to move forward. The guest preacher was the Rev. Dr. Delman Coates, Senior Pastor of Mt. Ennon Baptist Church in Clinton, MD. He is recognized for the growth and revitalization of his parish and is a widely published author. He warned the congregation that the church may be sleeping while God is moving ahead, setting the stage for a lively and productive session.

The business session included mention of clergy who had died in the past year as well as priests and deacons ordained or newly installed.

Other reports covered consideration of nominations of clergy and lay candidates for Diocesan Council and Standing Committee and alternate deputies to this year's General Convention (regular deputies were previously appointed.)

The preliminary Treasurer's report for 2017 was presented, pending receipt of contributions still being processed. A deficit of about \$2300 was helped somewhat by the Soper memorial fund and stock market increases. The proposed budget of

\$4,214,350 was approved. It's worth noting that the Diocese is working to assist parishes with financial management and planning and shifting contributions from its major endowment, the Soper Fund, to focus more on parish vitality than on support of current programs.

The Bishop routinely recognizes parishes that have tithed to the Diocese (still a goal for St. James') or increased their percentage of giving by 1 percent. This was the first year this writer recalls that St. James' achieved the latter.

Other routine but complicated approved agenda items included proposals to clarify the Diocesan constitutions and rules of order to restate canons to reflect changes already adopted and streamline regional assembly practices. Most have little impact on our parish, but the Administration Commission will carefully review proposed bylaws provisions.

Three resolutions of general interest were approved:

1. The Diocese of Washington will, as directed in the Bible, honor the immigrants in our midst, and oppose targeting undocumented persons for deportation, and unduly restricting refugees. It encourages congregations as well as Diocesan staff to provide practical assistance as well as welcome. Discussion included agreement to focus on God's directives in the matter.
2. The Diocese affirms that all transgender people, and anyone whose gender identity and expression differ from those assigned at birth, are beloved children of God. It supports efforts to end systemic violence, and encourages parishes to make all gender-specific facilities fully accessible. Discussion included agreement to leave the rationale as stemming from our Baptismal Covenant, and not add specifically technical distinctions.
3. This resolution would request that the next revision of the Book of Common Prayer eliminate, if possible, all gendered references to God, while retaining "the beautiful poetic language of the BCP." A small but vocal group

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Annual Convention, continued from page 5

maintained that the language of the BCP was inspired by God, but the resolution was adopted as written.

In Bishop Mariann's prepared remarks and later comments she mentioned several innovative approaches and accomplishments, including calling of a single rector to lead two congregations and the efforts to promote joint social events and outreach programs such as after-school tutoring.

Also featured was the Bishop John Walker School, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary and has recently moved to new space in Town Hall Education and Recreation Campus (THEARC) at 1801 Mississippi Avenue S.E. in Washington, D.C.

The campus includes other schools and nonprofits as well as performance and sports spaces.

Several exhibits of interest allowed those attending to take care of practical needs like vestments or learn more about programs such as Samaritan Ministries, Seabury programs for seniors, Education for Ministry, collaboration with Southern Africa, prayer beads, and more.

The Convention adjourned at 3:30, leaving a little time to enjoy the Cathedral grounds and stained glass windows on an unseasonably pleasant day.

Mary L. Miers, Alternate Delegate

Lent Madness 2018: The Sainly Smackdown is Back!

By now you've heard that Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day coincide this year. The real Lenten *love*, however, kicks off the next day on February 15. Why? Because for the ninth year running, people of faith are gearing up for Lent Madness, the beloved "sainly smackdown!"

With its unique blend of competition, learning, and humor, Lent Madness allows participants to be inspired by the ways in which God has worked through the lives of saintly souls across generations and cultures. Throughout Lent, thirty-two saints will do battle to win the coveted Golden Halo. Based loosely on the NCAA basketball tournament of a similar name, this online devotion pits saints against one another in a bracket as voters choose their favorites throughout this penitential season.

Here's how to participate: on the weekdays of Lent, information is posted at www.lentmadness.org about two different saints. Each pairing remains open for 24 hours as participants read about and then vote to determine which saint moves on to the next round. Sixteen saints make it to the Round of the Sainly Sixteen; eight will advance to the Round of the Elate Eight; four make it to the Faithful Four; two to the Championship; and the winner is awarded the coveted Golden Halo.

The first round consists of basic biographical information about each of the 32 saints. Things get a bit more interesting in the subsequent rounds as we offer quotes and quirks, explore legends, and even move into the area of saintly kitsch.

This year Lent Madness features an intriguing slate of saints ancient and modern, Biblical and ecclesiastical. 2018 heavyweights include John the Evangelist, Margaret of Scotland, Richard Hooker, Katharina von Bora, and apostles Peter and Paul.

The full bracket is online at the Lent Madness website and, while not necessary to participate, you can order *The Sainly Scorecard: The Definitive Guide to Lent Madness 2018* at www.forwardmovement.org. This companion guide includes biographies of all 32 saints, a full-color bracket, information about how to fully participate, and a series of Pocket Lent trading cards.

If you're looking for a Lenten discipline that is fun, educational, occasionally goofy, and always joyful, join the Lent Madness journey. Lent needn't be all doom and gloom. After all, what could be more joyful than a season specifically set aside to get closer to Jesus Christ?



What Discernment Means to Me

by Rachele Donnelly

Have you ever missed an important meeting at work (or for our youth, a class at school) and felt like you were entirely out of the loop when you returned? Perhaps a new process rolled out. No matter how much your co-workers explained it, your confusion persisted. You had questions. You went to subsequent meetings, read emails regarding the process, you started to understand a bit more, but having missed the original meeting, you still feel like your knowledge of the subject matter is a bit fuzzy. You wonder, "Am I the only one who doesn't get it?" or "Is everyone else going to be ahead of me?" The feeling of "missing out" can seem daunting.

A few weeks back I missed a Sunday service. Given the opportunity, I will talk anyone's ear off, about the importance of attending church. Matthew 18:20 says "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." Equally important though, is the sense of community we gain from being part of a worship community. Like a close-knit community at the Friday night game, we're here to cheer each other on, to celebrate our victories and support one another through hardships. I love being a part of St. James'.

What made missing this particular service so impactful, it was that it was the first service on the topic of discernment. Wow! Discernment...not exactly easy to wrap one's head around. I asked a friend to explain the topic. I went to all the subsequent services. I googled the word. I consulted Merriam-Webster's dictionary. I felt lost. Naturally, I tried to read as much on the internet as I could, within a five-minute time frame (I'm busy and dinner isn't going to cook itself). Here is what I took away. Spiritual discernment means calling on the Holy Spirit to lead or give direction on a matter. It's how the Spirit shows the church or its people what God wants them to do and be. Hmm, ok. I start to recall Reverend Meredith's sermon detailing how we should try to become prophets. In short, serving Christ is something we should dive head-first into. Going through the motions of just going to church, singing a few hymns and saying prayers is not enough.



One definition explained that discernment is an ongoing process; a stance toward life. A discerning disciple has the attitude or intention to seek the presence, wisdom, and compassion of the Spirit at all times and in all dimensions of life. I suspect for many Episcopalians, the idea of being so bold in our faith can seem a bit radical. We are conservative in our worship. We follow along in the bulletin. We have a very organized service. We appreciate tradition. We say "Amen" when we are prompted to do so. Discernment forces us out of our comfort zone. That can be scary.

Self-reflection forces us to ask ourselves if we are Christians because our parents raised us that way, or because it's what we truly believe. Do we recite the Nicene Creed by memory or profess it as belief? Do we share our faith only while we are in the comfort and confines of a church and/or parish hall, or do we share what we believe, through our words and our actions, in the community and beyond? Does our help for our fellow man end at the offer of thoughts and prayers or monetary donation?

Last week, I faced an opportunity to embrace discernment. The first time I met Shannon, I immediately knew we would be friends. We were both so similar. We laughed often. We comforted one another after a hard day. We shared coffee, shoes and more than a few bottles of wine. We discussed spiritual beliefs. I told her about my relationship with God, work camp, the youth group and God-sightings. Shannon and her two children had been through a difficult year. Things had recently gone from bad to worse.

Going through the motions would have meant wishing Shannon and her kids the best and telling her I would pray for her. Perhaps I would donate some money, clothes, offer a compassionate ear and few hugs. Would Jesus approve of my

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What Discernment Means to Me, continued from page 8

response? What if I prayed really, really hard? Is that where the Holy Spirit was guiding me? To pray and hope the situation improved on its own? Is that what a prophet would do? Is that what the disciples did? No, it's not. Moses and Jonah didn't want to dive head-first into action. They complained, ran, tried to avoid the inevitable. In the end, they faced discernment and let the Holy Spirit be their guide.

Prayer is a special tool we have at our disposal when we face challenges. It should be noted though, that prayer comes with a decision: to act

or not. Will we actively listen to God AND follow his direction? Discernment calls upon us to do just that. For me, action meant moving Shannon and her two kids into my home. The peace and quiet I used to know has been replaced with giggles and occasional groans about homework. The organized kitchen is now filled with school supplies and snacks. God didn't promise it would be easy. He never said my electric bill wouldn't go up. He made no mention of me not being able to watch whatever I wanted on TV, whenever I wanted. No, God didn't promise me any of that. He just told me to do it...and I listened.

Please Share Your Lenten Reflections

During Lent, we share our reflections about God's activity in our lives through weekday emails from the church to parishioners on our email list (stories like the one above, but shorter—about 250 words).

Please sign up to offer your own original insights, art, photos and stories by calling the office, by signing up in the church entrance, or from the link on our website.

Submissions are due to the office one week before the publication date. Please send brief written reflections or poems, and/or your own art or photos (up to two) to the office at office@stjamespotomac.org.

**Thank You, James!**

On Sunday, January 28, we lifted up prayers of thanks and hope for our outgoing Sunday school Co-Director James Lewin-Smith, who graduates from his educational program and will begin an internship.



Save the Date!
**St. James' Spring
Rummage Sale**
April 27-28

Grits and Gusto! The Home Front in WWII Lunch & Learn, February 6

Lunch & Learn will meet in the undercroft Tuesday, Feb. 6, at 11:30 to have fellowship, food and fun, including a presentation by return speaker Judith Welles. The topic will be **“Grits and Gusto: Farmerettes and Suffragettes on the Homefront in WWI.”** Judith’s previous programs included the C & O Canal, Cabin John, and Lily Stone. She appeared as a Montgomery County Historical Society’s Speakers Bureau participant.

We will learn how women in Maryland rallied into involvement and activism during 1917-1918. Maryland’s women made a difference during this war, and WWI led to passage of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing women the right to vote.

Although one can come just for the program, if lunch is desired, please contact Sarah Padgett to make a reservation (\$10.00 per person).

Last month’s soup menu (homemade by steering committee members) was highly successful, and this month’s menu will be just as tasty. No matter your age, feel free to join us!

St. James’ Book Club, February 25

On February 25, The Book Club will discuss Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Remains of the Day* at 6:45 p.m. in the parish hall library.

In the summer of 1956, Stevens, a long-serving butler at Darlington Hall, decides to take a motoring trip through the West Country. The six-day excursion becomes a journey into the past of Stevens and England, a past that takes in fascism, two world wars, and the complicated relationship between the butler and his housekeeper. With much introspection from Stevens, this work from Nobel and Booker Prize-winning Ishiguro provides rich material for discussion.

The group-led discussion is likely to delve into moral values, self-worth and complicated relationships. This is the second book by this author to be discussed by the group. What will YOU add to the opinions? Any opinions are welcome. And agreement is not mandatory! Try it! All are welcome.

Future Book Club selections:

March 25 - *A Wrinkle in Time* - Madeleine L’Engle
April 22 - *Lincoln in the Bardo* - George Saunders
May 27 - *The Ninth Hour* - Alice McDermott



Womankind 2018 Retreat, February 23-24

Participants need to register individually; several St. James’ members are registered and waiting for you to join them. This year’s theme is, **“Lift Up Your Hearts! The Transformative Power of Word and Table.”** There are many interesting workshops to choose from!

Registration is \$85, excluding lodging:
<https://www.womankindrichmond.com/>.
The approximate additional cost for a room plus dinner is \$85 double and \$55 single occupancy.

More information on the St. James Richmond, website: www.doers.org/womankind-2018.

Confirmation Classes, Sundays in March

The confirmation service this year will be held on Saturday, May 12 at the National Cathedral. Youth who are interested in being confirmed are invited to attend our Confirmation class series.

We will meet for seven Sundays, beginning on March 11, after the 10:30 service. Pizza will be provided! Come planning to have fun and learn about what it means to make a mature commitment to Christ! See Rev. Meredith (rector@stjamespotomac.org) or James (james@stjamespotomac.org) for more details and the complete schedule.



Mission Trip to Haiti

As many of you already know our parish's first Mission Trip to Haiti is on!

Our Missioners, Ann and Harley Venton, will fly to Haiti on February 21 to spend five days in fellowship and worship with our sisters and brothers at Bon Samaritain L'Acul. Praise the Lord! (and...Woo-Hoo!)

Our various Guilds, Commissions, our Choir and our Youth Group are participating in sending greetings to their counterparts in the Bon Samaritain congregation. And our Sunday Schoolers are on board, learning about their brothers and sisters in Haiti and crafting messages for the kids at Bon Samaritain. (And parents, do not be alarmed to find your sofa and chair cushions scattered about the house as your Sunday Schoolers hunt for loose change to contribute to the trip!)

After years of fellowship and support from afar led by our Clergy, Vestry and the dedicated leadership of our Missions and Outreach Commissioners, we, as a Parish, will now have the opportunity, *if we so discern*, to deepen our connection with Père Wildaine and his congregation. We have so much to learn and to share with one another.

Our missioners will bring back photos and videos that will be compiled in an audio-visual presentation. And they will give a firsthand account of their trip and be available for questions at a parish-wide forum.

We kicked off a month long fundraising drive to cover the expense of the trip last Sunday (as detailed in January 20 email blast) and your initial response was very exciting. We are confident that we will meet our goal... and perhaps even exceed it in which case those funds would go to future mission trips. To find out how you can help, check that Email or give a call to the office. (And, while you're at it, hunt around the house for your own piles of pesky loose change to help the cause!)

Ann and Harley Venton

Stewardship Update, January 2018

Dear friends,

As we look back over the past year, we are amazed by the work God has done in our parish. Life at St. James' is exciting and vibrant, offering opportunities for all to connect with God and with one another. Clearly, God's Spirit is with us!

To all those who made a 2018 financial pledge to St. James', we thank you. With your generous financial commitment we are in a good position to continue doing the work God has given us to do while discerning what God may be calling us to in the future. As we begin the New Year, no matter where God leads us, our dream is that we grow deeper in our faith, both individually and as a community.

To those who have yet to make a financial commitment to our parish, we encourage you to do so by contacting the office for a pledge form, or by making a pledge on-line at stjamespotomac.org.

May God bless you and our Church this year and always.

Meredith Heffner

Summary of pledges received, as of January 20:

Pledges for 2018: **\$452,994**

Pledges for 2017: **\$355,655**

Number of pledging households in 2018: **103**

Number of pledging households 2017: **82**

Average pledge for 2018: **\$4,398**

Average pledge for 2017: **\$4,337**

Percent of households that pledged in 2018: **64%**

Percent of households that pledged in 2017: **51%**

(based on 160 households)

Points of note:

56 households increased their pledge for 2018

28 households pledged for the first time (as compared to last year)

2 households moved away

News from St. James' Children's School

Classroom Spotlight: The Older Infant Room

By Ms. Tiffany Greenberg

Happy Winter!

I am Tiffany Greenberg and I am the lead teacher in the Older Infant Room at St. James' Children's School. Ms. Rizwana, Ms. Ritu, Ms. Nikkii and I have six wonderful, curious students in our class, ranging in age between 12 and 24 months.



In the beginning of the year, we work closely with parents on maintaining each student's individualized schedule. By the end of the year, as the children grow and change, we encourage more independence to help our students prepare for their future classroom. We follow the play-based curriculum, Creative Curriculum, and have monthly themes that we base our lessons and artwork around. The children love reading books as part of our short daily circle time. We also strive to incorporate as many sensory activities as possible to introduce new textures and tactile experiences. We especially love to get messy and go outside when the weather is nice. The Older Infant room shares a separate playground with the Toddler room, equipped with fun houses, slides, a sandbox, and lots of colorful balls and toys.

Do you like snow? We do! We have started the new year with our fun theme about Winter. The children have painted with ice cubes, explored the snow and created many pieces of beautiful artwork!

Calendar of Events

February 1, Thursday: Bible study, 10:00 a.m. (and all Thursdays)

February 3-4: Vestry Retreat

February 4, Sunday: FaithTalk at 9:15 a.m. (*Call Waiting*)

February 6, Tuesday: Lunch & Learn, 11:30 a.m.

February 11, Sunday: Guest Preacher, Julie Simonton

- FaithTalk: Julie Simonton
- Valentine plant sale

February 13, Shrove Tuesday: Pancake Supper 6:00 p.m.,

February 14, Ash Wednesday: Services noon, 5:30 & 7:30

February 21, Wednesday: Ecumenical Program at Geneva Presbyterian, 6:30 p.m.

February 25, Sunday: Book Club discussion, 6:45 p.m.

February 28, Wednesday: Ecumenical Program at Seven Locks Baptist, 6:30 p.m.

February 23-24: WomanKind Retreat, Richmond, VA

March 7, Wednesday: Ecumenical Program, St. James', 6:30 p.m.

March 11, Sunday: Confirmation classes begin

St. James' Member Co-wrote *Gotta Get In!*

Eliot Applestein and Marta Vogel of St. James' aim to show that there is plenty to laugh about in the college admissions process. They have written a musical, *Gotta Get In!* that tells the story of high school senior Will who wants to follow his girlfriend, Jennifer, to Milford College. But he doesn't have what it takes. What ruse can he use to get in? Meanwhile, the Milford admissions office is in turmoil. Waspish Milford has dropped in the college rankings due to a lack of diversity. A new dean is coming and the admissions counselors' heads will roll if they can't find the best candidate. They think they've got one when they receive a letter from Alton Adams, a student from the Virgin Islands. But when the counselors discover that this is a bogus applicant, they scramble to cover their backsides.

Gotta Get In! aims mostly to entertain but we also want to get people talking about the whole process of college admissions.

Gotta Get In!

A musical satire on the craziness of college admissions.

Book and Music
by Eliot Applestein & Marta Vogel
A free staged reading

February 10, 3:00 p.m.

At Bender JCC of Greater Washington,
6125 Montrose Road, Rockville 20852

Who's more devious—the student seeking admission to Milford College, or the admissions counselors desperate to keep their jobs? Stay for a post show discussion.

Song samples: http://bit.ly/Gotta_Get_In_samples.