



The St. James'

# Pilgrim

News for the Journey . . .

May 2018

St. James' Episcopal Church 11815 Seven Locks Road, Potomac, MD 20854-3340 [www.stjamespotomac.org](http://www.stjamespotomac.org)



## Message from the Rev. Meredith T. Heffner

### *Whale Spit*

At least once in their ministry, Episcopal priests are invited to attend Credo, a retreat for vocational reflection and renewal. I was fortunate to attend in 2011, just after completing

treatment for breast cancer. Considering what I had been through, I wasn't in need of vocational reflection as much as I was in need of personal reflection. I knew I needed to process my experience and get ready—because God would soon be calling my attention back to the work God had for me to do. I wasn't intentionally discerning anything—but I knew enough to realize that God would be up to something. This hunch was confirmed when one of the Credo mentors shared with us this poem (in the box at right).

Our Credo mentor didn't have to explain this poem, as we sat in knowing silence after hearing it recited. We all remember Jonah, and how he resisted God's call. And how, in the belly of a whale he realized he had to obey. We imagine he sat on the beach reflecting on the work that lay ahead, as he cleaned himself of whale spit.

I don't mean to imply that St. James' is resisting God's call, especially after we have spent so much time and

energy listening for it. I'm simply suggesting we're in "waiting mode," sitting, perhaps, in the belly of a whale.

We have received many responses and reflections: some detailed, some general, all worthy and filled with potential—many requiring hard work and deeper reflection, which may require more time than we have anticipated.

When I consider this, even in my excitement, I admit I am a little nervous. I don't know what lies ahead. I don't know what the work entails. I don't know where God is leading. And it's rather safe sitting here in the belly of the whale—waiting to see where we are being led.

### **Whale Spit**

by Catharine Phillips

*I have friends who say  
Be careful  
What will people think?  
Take your time  
Discernment takes time  
Most particularly discernment to affirm  
Not doing what you'd rather not do.  
That takes a lot of time  
Take your time  
Maybe it will become unnecessary.*

*In the spaces left  
When no one is speaking  
In the dark of dreams  
In the light of days alone in prayer  
I know I'm hanging out  
In the guts of a whale  
I know there's a time limit  
I know the whale is swimming  
I know tomorrow  
I'll be hanging out on the beach  
Cleaning off whale spit.*

But that's the spirit of discernment, isn't it? Knowing that God is leading us, just as we have asked, and at some point we are going to be spit up on the beach, readying ourselves to do what God needs us to do. It seems all we can do in this in-between time is to anticipate God's call with trust and hope.

As we sit waiting, I hope you will continue to pray with me: that God will lead us out of the whale and beyond the beach, where we will be able to share God's love in ways that we have only begun to imagine.

*Rev. Meredith*

# Congratulations!



**Congratulations High School  
Graduates: Best wishes for Your  
Next Adventures!**

Jamie Beebe

Graham Bright

Christopher Erwin

Matthew Hicks

Kate Lusk

Holly Smithberger

Ashley Weaver



## Youth Confirmands

Please pray for our youth confirmands who will be confirmed at the National Cathedral (Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul) by Bishop Carl Wright on Saturday, May 12, at 10:00 a.m.

Ben Delaney

Carter Jones

Katie Kerns

Rory Kerns

Genevieve Koduol

Hannah Komukyeya

Aaron Mpuga

Ataho Musiime

Kenny Peterson

## Youth Sunday and Silent Auction, May 6

### **Celebrating our Youth and Honoring our High School Graduates at the 10:30 service**

Please join us on Sunday, May 6, for a very special youth Sunday. Youth will participate in a variety of roles throughout the service, with senior Matthew Hicks sharing why St. James' is so special to him. We will also honor our other graduates.

### **Silent Auction for Youth Summer Mission Trip! In the parish hall after the 10:30 Worship Service**

After the service, please join us in the parish hall to explore the many great items available during the youth silent auction. Cake and refreshments will be provided. Proceeds support the youth summer workcamp in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

## Lunch and Learn Tuesdays, May 8 and June 5

Next Tuesday, May 8, the monthly get-together of St. James' Lunch & Learn group, starting at 11:30 in the undercroft, will feature TeAnna Abraham, Senior Center Director at the North Potomac Senior Center. She (and some friends) will lead the group in an "oldies but goodies" sing-along. She will also share information on the various activities available at the nine county Recreation Centers with designated programs for seniors. This vivacious new friend will have the group tapping toes and singing along.

To make a reservation for the \$10 lunch (served at noon) contact Sarah Padgett. A special note to folks who haven't been before: Come and give this casual monthly meeting a try! All are welcome, and we hope to see YOU there.

To continue the good time for this primarily "mature" group (open to all, no matter the age) come on **June 5** to hear Mark Thorne whose topic is **"The Woodlawn Manor of Sandy Spring: An Intersection of Quakers, Enslaved, and Freedom Seekers."** No doubt the presentation will include learning more about portions of the Underground Railroad near Woodlawn Manor. This presentation is a new program from the Montgomery County Historical Society.

## Vestry Highlights

Led by the Rector, your Vestry met March 27, 2018, with a quorum present.

The Treasurer reported that 2017 ended with a deficit of about \$45,000, one-half of the deficit projected by the approved budget for last year. This is significant and heartening progress in our commitment to eliminate deficit budgeting within the next two years. The 2017 deficit will be met with funds from the parish reserve fund.

The Stewardship Chairperson, Rev. James, attributed the success of this year's pledging campaign to the request for a specified increase in the amount of each pledge, Vestry involvement (small group contact with previous pledging units), and Clergy contact with individuals and families that had not pledged in the past. New pledges more than offset anticipated losses of pledging units (changes in financial status, moves, deaths). Pledges for 2018 exceeded 2017 by more than \$100,000, allowing St. James' to begin to move from discernment into action, as we determine what it is that God would have us be and do.

Feedback from the February Vestry Retreat, received by the Rector from Rev. Dr. Robert Phillips (our dynamic facilitator), emphasized the energy of attendees, their "willingness to engage," their "pleasant unpredictability," and the sense of commitment to a spiritual journey. God continues to bless St. James'.

A Condition Assessment of Facilities proposal was introduced by Rev. Meredith. The Strategic Financial Resources Commission (SFRC) has recommended that a condition assessment be conducted by a professional engineering consultant. (St. James' is an invited participant in this diocesan pilot program to help churches define infrastructure needs and develop programs to meet these needs.) Such consultation will build on the long-standing and highly effective efforts of our committed (and woefully underfunded) Facilities Commission.

Provided by members of the Facilities Commission, an historical perspective on previous and current challenges and meeting of

infrastructure needs will be key to the success of a collaborative endeavor. It is expected that the condition assessment and continued interaction with the SFRC will move St. James' from the constant concerns and reactive status of facilities maintenance today to a proactive position from which to anticipate and plan for infrastructure needs.

The Rector, Wardens, Treasurer, and Chair of the Finance Commission comprise the group that has been meeting with the Strategic Financial Resources Commission. The Vestry, along with members of the Facilities Commission, interviewed representatives of two candidate firms. The Senior Warden and the Finance Commission Chair attended a presentation at St. Francis, Potomac, by a third firm under consideration.

After considerable discussion regarding the costs and benefits of employing a consulting firm and the expectations regarding such consultation, the Vestry approved hiring Ben Dutton, Faithful+ Gould Consulting, Alexandria, VA. His fee will be \$7,000. The cost will be covered by a generous anonymous donation.

Security concerns continue to be addressed with emphasis on added "presence" at exterior doors when the buildings are occupied, electronic communication among Church, Sunday School, and Parish Hall on Sundays, and improved physical security (newly installed or renovated door locks).

The Vestry approved the new front doors and upgraded electronic entry control system for the St. James' Children's School that the Director and the Board of Directors of the School had requested. The cost will be covered by the reserve funds of the school.

A proposal by "Tree Montgomery" (a Montgomery County project providing free shade trees) was presented to the Vestry as an informational item. Additional information will be forthcoming.

*Barry Thompson, Senior Warden*

## Jane Lorenz Honored at the Cathedral

Jane Lorenz was one of several diocesan leaders honored at the annual Seabury Awards at the Cathedral. She has diligently served St. James' since her arrival in 1982. Serving initially as a greeter, she later joined Martha's Ministry, the group responsible for coffee and fellowship after the Sunday morning services. Her monthly rotations included setup and cleanup.

Jane served four years on the vestry as Sunday School Coordinator and assisted the Prison Ministry Coordinator with distributing a training video St. James' developed with funding from a Soper grant, spreading that innovative program beyond the parish and our diocese.

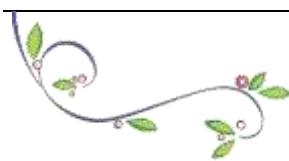
She participated in the St. James' Capital Campaign, with a special focus on designing and installing a Memorial Garden and columbarium. In the mid-90s she answered the office phone and coordinated the schedules of the dozens of volunteers who serve the parish's worship in so many ways, sending post cards and telephone reminders for 20 years.

Jane also became a teller, advancing quickly to Head Teller, a critical role she still performs. She oversees four weekly teams of two volunteers who count donations, enter the information in the

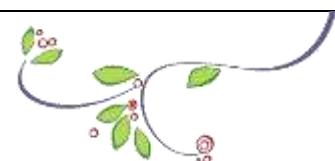


church computer, and balance the totals. For the past five years, Jane has worked with the parish treasurer and the bookkeeper, printing statements, mailing them to members, and resolving errors.

Jane is one of those quiet saints who keeps a complicated parish on track. While she never seeks the limelight, she quietly persists when she sees a problem in need of repair. She is faithful in worship and fellowship. When invited to provide information for this nomination, she described St. James' as a gift in her life. Those who know her character and work would no doubt say she is a gift in the life of our congregation.



## Newcomers' Education Series! 9:15 a.m. Sunday Mornings in June



Are you new to St. James' and looking for ways to learn more about our community? Hoping to meet other new people? We'll gather together for a four-Sunday series at 9:15 a.m. in the parish hall meeting room. Coffee, conversation, and connections will be shared by all!

### Need childcare while you're with us?

Please send a note to

[wELCOME@STJAMESPOTOMAC.ORG](mailto:wELCOME@STJAMESPOTOMAC.ORG) to let us know how many children will be coming (and their ages) so that we can ensure we have the right staff available each Sunday.

- June 3**    **Meet your Clergy:** Who are they, how did they get here, where will they take us?
- June 10**    **Meet the Episcopal Church:** What we believe, what we do, who we are.
- June 17**    **St. James' Past, Present, & Future:** Explore our history, our hope, and the vision for our future. Meet our Vestry and learn what they do.
- June 24**    **Graduate & Get Involved:** Discover where your time, talent, or treasure can help. Celebrate new beginnings and new friends at a graduation breakfast!

## Invitation to Share an Iftar Meal

The Islamic Community Center of Potomac (ICCP) has invited us to join them and other interfaith leaders and friends to share in an Iftar meal (a breaking of the fast after sunset during Ramadan) on Wednesday, May 23. You may recall that our relationship with the ICCP began when they used our space a few years ago while their building was being renovated. Our friendship continues to this day.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting. During this period of 29-30 days Muslims are expected to abstain from all food and drink from dawn to dusk. But they can enjoy all meals and activities after "Iftar" or the breaking of the fast at dusk.

This annual event is meant to help those observing to focus on prayer, purification, and charitable acts. Muslims believe that the physical ritual allows them to understand the suffering of others as well as increase their closeness to God.

**RSVP Required:** If you would like to join the Iftar, RSVP to the office, office@st.jamespotomac.org or 301-762-8040, by May 14 so we can let them know how many to expect from St. James'.

### Schedule of the Iftar Evening, Wednesday, May 23, 2018:

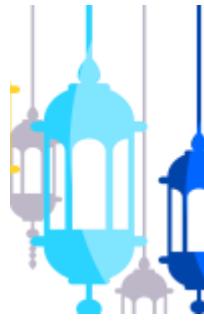
Location: ICCP, [10601 River Rd, Potomac, MD 20854](http://10601 River Rd, Potomac, MD 20854)

7:30-8:20 p.m.	Gathering and brief comments by faith leaders
8:24-8:34 p.m.	Iftar (break of fast)
8:35-8:45 p.m.	Maghrib prayer led by the ICCP Imam
8:50-9:50 p.m.	Dinner at the Barn - the formal close of the program
10:00-11:30 p.m.	Isha prayer followed by Tarawih prayer; guests have the option to observe

## Quarterly State of the Parish Address, June 3

**Christ, Communication, and Coffee—  
with Rev. Meredith**

Join us during Coffee Hour on June 3, after the 10:30 service for our next quarterly State of the Parish Address! Get updates on current events. Honor our graduates and recent confirmands. Thank our Sunday School staff, teachers and volunteers. Catch up on our discernment process and get updates on our financial status. We will celebrate the end of the program year, and look ahead to the fall. We hope you will be there!



## St. James' Calendar of Events

**May 6, Sunday:** Youth Sunday; Youth Silent Auction 11:45 a.m.; NAMI walk

**May 8, Tuesday:** Lunch & Learn, 11:30 a.m.

**May 12, Saturday:** Youth Confirmation, Washington National Cathedral, 10:00 a.m.

**May 16, Wednesday:** Visit to Potomac Valley Nursing Home, 10:30 a.m.

**May 20, Sunday:** PENTECOST with Baptisms

**Wednesday, May 23:** SJCS Spring Show, 4:30 p.m.; Iftar meal at ICCP, 7:30 p.m.

**May 27, Sunday:** Book Club discussion, 6:45 p.m.

**June 3, Sunday:** State of the Parish Address, 11:45 a.m.; Newcomers Education Series begins, 9:15 a.m. Sundays in June

**June 5, Tuesday:** Lunch & Learn, 11:30 a.m.

**June 6, Wednesday:** Visit to Manor Care Nursing Home, 10:30 a.m.

**June 10, Sunday:** Guest Speaker Steve Watkins

## Welcome Author Steve Watkins, June 10

We will be joined on June 10 by Steve Watkins, author of *Pilgrim Strong: Rewriting My Story on the Way of St. James*. Not only is Steve an excellent writer—he received the 2018 Independent Book Publisher Silver Medal Award for Best Regional Non-Fiction in Europe—Steve is also a personal friend.

Truth be told, I met Steve through the internet. I was preparing for my own pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago (also known as “The Way of St. James”), and in my online search for pilgrimage advice, I came across Steve’s blog—which he was writing as he made his way through Spain. His story was compelling, and his vulnerability moving. I found myself doing something I never do: I left a comment on his blog telling him how much I enjoyed his writing and what his story meant to me. We connected then and have kept in touch. Based on our shared love for “The Way of St. James,” my dream has been to have Steve join us for St. James’ Day in July.

As luck would have it, however, Steve’s book tour brings him our way this June. Steve has graciously offered to preach for us at both services on June 10. I know his message will be moving and compelling—and we will each have the opportunity, through Steve, to reflect on our own journeys of faith.

For those who are interested, here’s his official bio:

Steve Watkins is a freelance journalist who’s spent a lifetime working in mainstream media and in the world of political communication. He loves reading, gardening, long walks, cooking for big get-togethers, and traveling the world without a schedule. A pilgrim at heart, Watkins has twice trekked the ancient pilgrimage of Spain’s Camino de Santiago. He and his wife, Dana, live in Jonesboro, AR and Puerto Cayo, Ecuador, and have been featured on HDTV’s House Hunters International. He is the award-winning author of *Pilgrim Strong: Rewriting My Story on the Way of St. James*, a Top 10 Amazon best seller, and is now working on his second book titled *High Banks Road: From Journey to Quest, Now Fullness in Faith*.

If you’re interested in his book, it is available through Amazon.com. Use the St. James’ [AmazonSmile link](#) (also on the St. James’ website, under “Ways to Give”) and a portion of your purchase will be donated to St. James’.

*Rev. Meredith*

## The Ninth Hour: May 27 Book Club

Alice McDermott’s title suggests not only the Midafternoon Prayer but also the time of the death of Jesus and that of a suicide that sets in motion the story to follow. In this book, *The Ninth Hour*, the author has taken the risk of writing about nuns: their humanity and their spirituality, in character developments presenting Irish-Catholic life in the 20th century. Annie, the pregnant widow left destitute after her husband’s suicide, is given a job in the convent’s basement laundry where she and her baby, Sally, are well cared for.

Most of the Little Nursing Sisters of the Sick Poor, like the demanding Sister Lucy and the loving, almost elfin Sister Jeanne, spend their days outside the convent in service to the indigent and ailing. Showing little of the nun’s formal spiritual life, a rich and varied story is intertwined with the life of Sally, her “family” of very capable nuns, her descendants, and her past family history. It is a most appropriate choice for discussion in a group that will doubtless have much to say about this engaging book, its characters, and the author. What decisions would you make, given the circumstances in the story? All are welcome at 6:45 p.m., Sunday, May 27, in the parish hall library/meeting room.



*The Wardens (Barry Thompson and Sarah Hnatov) shop the Rummage Sale.  
THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!*

## “Hello to All the Children of the World” A Celebration of Language, Music, and Art, May 23

By Astrid Crookshank, Director of St. James' Children's School

Every spring the children of St. James' Children's School put on a musical performance to share with all of our parents, families, and friends. This year we have created a program that celebrates music, art, and several different languages built around the song "Hello to All the Children of the World." We have a wonderful diversity in our families and staff at St. James' and this year the musical reflects the diverse backgrounds and experiences of some of our teachers. Our oldest children will be studying the different countries we are "visiting" in the program and will introduce each song with something they have learned about that country.

Ms. Vera, whose family is from Portugal, has been helping our Pre-Kindergarten children learn a song in Portuguese about a little girl and her doves. It is a lively tune called "As Pombinhas de Catrina," and the children have really enjoyed learning it, as I can hear them singing it on their own on any given afternoon. In the fours class they are learning a song in Hindi about a butterfly learning to fly. The children are also learning a few basic dance moves from Ms. Yuganti to go along with the traditional Indian children's song. In our threes class Ms. Liz, who has worked with preschool children in Africa, is sharing a song from Nigeria called "Fanga Alafia," which means "Welcome, peace, good will to you!"

Our new Spanish teacher, Ms. Vanessa, loves using music and songs to help the children learn

Spanish. Ms. Vanessa teaches in the Twos through Pre-K classrooms twice a week and has created a new Spanish curriculum that incorporates the lessons that the teachers are planning for their classes. Since our teachers are learning Spanish along with their class, they are able to reinforce new words and phrases throughout the week, and I've heard from many families that their children are now sharing Spanish words at home as well! The classes will be performing two Spanish songs during the musical program to represent the many Spanish speaking countries around the world.

After the musical performance we will also have a brief presentation from our art teacher, Ms. Yuganti, about some of the projects she has worked on this year. Throughout the school year Ms. Yuganti encourages the children to express themselves and their ideas through art by exploring different art mediums such as painting, drawing, collages and portraits. Towards the end of the school year all the classes begin to experiment with mixed media, and each class will have some of its art displayed upstairs to share with friends and family after the musical.

Please join us on Wednesday, May 23, at 4:30 p.m. in the parish hall. We welcome all St. James' members and friends to come and enjoy the musical performance, art display, and refreshments.



The Three Year Olds at St. James' Children's School—see the story on page 8.



To all the moms, grandmas, aunts, sisters, godmothers, step-moms, and anyone who has been like a mother to a child: Happy Mother's Day. May your day be filled with lots of love, joy, and happiness.

## News from St. James' Children's School

### Classroom Spotlight: The Three-Year-Olds Room

By Rita Harrell

In the Three Year Olds room, we strive to have our children fall in love with learning. Each day, the teachers enjoy 15 to 17 highly energetic and fun-filled students ready to explore, share, and learn. Ms. LaKisha, Ms. Liz, Ms. Ritu, and I have the pleasure of witnessing each child's growth socially, emotionally and academically throughout the year using a variety of hands-on activities.

The Creative Curriculum affords countless learning opportunities for children in many subject areas including Science and Math. For example, the Ball Study taught the children about force and speed using our outdoor playground building materials. During the Boxes Study, students learned about shapes and saw different shapes all around us, which eventually led to the grand opening of the Threes' Mini Market and Mini Cafe. These are just a few of our past curriculum topics.

Every month, one color and one shape are highlighted, and activities focus around that particular color and shape. Now that spring has sprung, our current science and math studies include mixing colors to create pastel colors and using assorted pastel shapes to create flowers and trees as beautiful signs of springtime. While learning all about the letter T, the children even designed a beautiful cherry blossom tree! In addition to a monthly color and shape, we also have monthly themes as part of our curriculum.

After a full morning of fun learning, a nap is needed to revive their energy for afternoon fun.

The afternoon teachers schedule special projects and activities for further stimulation and development. Some past activities have included acorn painting and process art projects. As part of our exploration of spring, the children will be planting, making bird feeders, and experiencing lots of sensory activities. Since the days are getting longer, we will also be using the outdoor classroom more in the afternoon hours.

## NAMI Montgomery County Walk, May 6

The first National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Montgomery County Walk will take place at Wheaton Regional Park to raise funds to benefit community programs that support those affected by mental health conditions. Celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month by walking with NAMI as they work toward ensuring that all of those affected by mental illness in Montgomery County can access the skills and resources they need to achieve recovery.

Please find more information or make a donation at <http://www.namimc.org/walk>.

NAMI Montgomery County  
chidimma@namimc.org | www.namimc.org  
11718 Parklawn Drive | Rockville, MD 20852  
301.949.5852 Office | 301.949.9630 Helpline

## NAMI Family Support Group at St. James'

The NAMI family support group meets the second Friday of the month at St. James' Episcopal Church. It is intended to encourage, support, and empower family members and caregivers of individuals with mental illness. These groups:

- ♦ offer confidential support for loved ones of people living with mental illness.
- ♦ are available free to participants.
- ♦ give families an opportunity to join a caring group of people helping one another through their learned wisdom.
- ♦ ensure that families are no longer alone and have a renewed sense of hope.
- ♦ foster group discussion and interaction.
- ♦ are led by trained volunteer facilitators who have a loved one living with mental illness.
- ♦ do not recommend or endorse any medications or other medical therapies.

Support groups are open to any adult family member of an individual living with mental illness. NAMI also runs a support group that meets monthly for spouses.

## Youth Group Mulching Project Earth Day, April 22

We used two different varieties of mulch, some donated, in two different versions of brown. The youth likened this to something that was said in a recent sermon about a rainbow and diversity and inclusion. By the end of the evening, our group of 13 was dirty and tired, but proud of the work that was done. Some of us older folks had sore backs and knees. I'm sure most, if not all, slept soundly.

*Rachele Donnelly, Youth Director*



## Baptisms!

Congratulations and welcome to those who were baptized on Sunday, April 29, at St. James':



*Braxton Eugene Hokanson*

*Preston Lee Kline*

*Alfonso Miguel Velasquez Roldós*



## Scenes from Easter Sunday, April 1

