



The St. James'
Pilgrim
News for the Journey . . .

June 2018

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



Message from our Assistant Rector, James Isaacs

Sabbath Time

I am deeply thankful for the parental leave that I was able to take because the Vestry decided a few years ago to include a parental leave benefit for staff members with new children. While not restful,

it was profoundly meaningful and important time that I was able to dedicate to bonding with and caring for my daughter, and supporting my family more fully than I would have been able to otherwise. Thank you.

I am also happy to be back with the people at St. James'; it is a pleasure to serve Christ with you. My first Sunday back was on Memorial Day weekend, and I imagined that many people from the congregation were vacationing out of town on the first long weekend of the summer.

An important spiritual discipline for me for many years has been observing sabbath time—time set aside to intentionally be in the presence of God's glory and love. As my family continues to expand, finding opportunities to set time aside for observing sabbath has been much more challenging.

This week, I came across a pamphlet by Tilden Edwards entitled "Sabbath Time," that includes excerpts from his book of the same name. One sentence stood out to me:

Countless people, though, succumb to various cultural pressures that leave them with a rhythm that oscillates between driven achievement (both on and off the job) and some form of spirit-numbing private escape.

He contrasts this rhythm with the one God intended for us that shifts between ministry and sabbath.

I reflected on how I use my time, and I admit that too often I probably fall into the cultural trap that Edwards describes. The time that I spend "doing" things, either at work or at home, is too often focused on accomplishing something and not always focused enough on serving Christ. The time that I have "off," when I don't have responsibilities that I am attending to (although that seems much rarer recently), isn't always time that I spend resting in the love of God in a way that renews me.

And so, as we enter the summer months—a time often marked by vacations and a slower pace for some—I encourage you to spend a moment to reflect on the quality of your time. When you are attending to your responsibilities, what is your focus? And particularly focusing on the time that you are not attending to responsibilities, what is the nature of how you spend your time? Is it spent at the well of life, God's creative love? Or is it spent in what Tilden Edwards calls "spirit-numbing private escape"?

As an aside, I hope that coming to church on Sunday is one of the ways that you are able to spend your time that reminds you that you are in the presence of a loving God. And if it is not, please let me know so that we can work to perfect our worship at St. James'.

May this summer be a holy one for you, in what you do and in the times when you are not focused on "doing."

In Christ,
James

Reflection from our Senior Warden, Barry Thompson

Transition and Transformation

Perhaps you've been lucky enough to find one on a flowering plant in your garden; or you may have seen one at the "Wings of Fancy" exhibition at the Brookside Gardens. The cocoon, or chrysalis, of the butterfly represents transition and transformation: transition from the caterpillar to the pupa to the emerging adult butterfly; transformation from the crawling, multi-footed—perhaps not unattractive—larval stage to the butterfly resplendent in its bright colors and capable of soaring flight.

I'd like to use the chrysalis as an analogy for this time at St. James'. The impending departure of our graduating high school seniors is the familiar annual time of transition from the cosseted periods of childhood and early adolescence to the "on your own" of college life, often away from home and family. Individually, these students are in a period of transformation also. Intellectually and emotionally, they are on the brink of adulthood, with personal beliefs and opinions that will guide them and engender consideration and respect from those around them. They are "alive" to opportunities and new realities. Like the butterfly, they are ready to "take wing."

This is a time of transition for our parish also. On May 20, we celebrated the first anniversary of the installation of our Reverend Meredith. The Assistant Rector, Reverend James, returned from family leave. We await the coming, later in the year, of our new seminarian. Sunday attendance continues to increase, slowly but surely. Finances

are on a more firm footing than before. The recent rummage sale, the ongoing estate sales, and the Youth Group auction in support of the upcoming Mission Trip have been quite successful. St. James' is transitioning into a healthier, more vibrant, and more capable parish.



We are also in the process of transformation. Our journey of discernment is not yet complete, but there is a distinct and shared sense that we are moving forward. What we want to be, what we should be, and what God has called us to do, as a parish and as a people may not be fully fleshed out at present. But, as Reverend Meredith has said repeatedly, "God is at work at St. James'." Returning to the analogy of the chrysalis, we are "halfway" there. We can't get "stuck" between where we were and where we must be in the future. The transformation must be completed. Our parish and parishioners, with God's help, will "take wing."

I want to embrace and celebrate both transition and transformation. I look forward to new ideas, new ways of doing things, new people, and new opportunities for participation and leadership. I'm certain that you do also. I invite you to join me in an exciting journey into our future. May we become God's butterflies!

Barry Thompson

Guest Preacher and Author Steve Watkins: "Living Your Life as Part of God's Story"

Sunday, June 10, at both services and at 9:15 a.m. FaithTalk in the undercroft

We will be joined on June 10 by Steve Watkins, author of the award-winning book, *Pilgrim Strong: Rewriting My Story on the Way of St. James*. Steve Watkins has twice trekked the ancient pilgrimage of Spain's Camino de Santiago and will preach for us at both services. Watkins says, "We are all wired for long walks and thinking time." Steve will have a book signing on Saturday, June 9, in Fairfax, VA. Contact St. James' for more information, office@stjamespotomac.org.



A Special Thanks to Sunday School Directors, Teachers, and Volunteers

We are reminded in scripture that we are to share God's love from generation to generation. With this in mind we are especially grateful to those who have volunteered their time and talent to teach our children about God's love. Below is our list of teachers and volunteers. When you see them be sure to say thank you!

Jean Ananworanich, Assistant Teacher
 Sarah Hnatov, Junior Warden
 Alan Mason, Teacher – Juniors
 Andy Mason, Teacher – Primes
 Susan Mason, Teacher – Juniors
 Ashanthi Mathai, Teacher – Seniors
 Simone Nicholson, Teacher – Seniors
 Jennifer Nordin, Teacher – Seniors
 Marisol Rivas-Castro, Director
 Emily Roegner, Assistant Teacher
 Maureen Schiavone, Teacher – PreK

Feeding His Sheep

Shepherd's Table, where we help serve meals, is transitioning to an online volunteer system. Our leader, Claude Williams-van Bellinghen, will be attending a "launch" on June 9 to learn how to use and explain the new process. Watch for instructions on how to volunteer for our next "regular" session in August or sign up as an individual volunteer at one of the many additional meals Shepherd's Table now offers.

Choir News

Marta Vogel and Eliot Applestein hosted a delightful potluck on May 31 to mark the end of the weekly choir season. Eliot and our Director, Newton Lewis, performed on Eliot's harpsichord. Marta, with former choir members Sarah and Bill Josey, followed up with a marvelous concert at the Spencerville LDS Church on June 3. This outreach of the National Philharmonic Chorus featured music composed by Leonard Bernstein, notably his *Chichester Psalms* and *Missa Brevis*, and other choral works arranged by contemporaries of Bernstein.

Did Someone Say "Discernment?"

As you know, we've been asking who God is calling us to be and what God is calling us to do.

Based on our listening group responses, we're getting a good idea of who God has created us to be. We have heard descriptors like: kind, interested, joyful warmth, friendly, outgoing, inclusive, open, welcoming, positive, filled with infectious energy, and offering a feeling of belonging.

We come together for reflection, inspiration, warm clergy, relevant sermons, spiritual depth, connection, community, fellowship, and to teach our children that God is a priority in our lives.

We've seen changes in our parish this year, including more community events, many new faces, more diversity, increased fellowship, and more energy.

In conclusion, it seems that God has created us to be warm, energized, welcoming, and inclusive community offering spiritual depth, community and connection through worship, engagement, and fellowship. And this is something to celebrate!

As for what God is calling us to do, we have begun reviewing the feedback we've received from our discernment listening groups, and what surprises your clergy the most is how few people engaged with the last round of listening group questions, despite the energy around hearing what God has in store for us. If we don't all participate, we may be closing ourselves off to some extent. If you haven't participated and feel called to, please contact James through the church office.

Thank you for being part of St. James'! I wish traveling mercies for all who are traveling this summer. May God bless us, and may God bless St. James', Potomac!

Rev. Meredith

If we don't all participate, we may be closing ourselves off to some extent. If you haven't participated and feel called to, please contact Rev. James Isaacs through the church office.

The Rector's State of the Parish Review

Finances...

When we met for our State of the Parish Meeting on June 3, I reflected that it's been just over a year since I was installed as your rector. The last quarter has been busy. God is certainly alive in this place! There is much for which I am grateful, most especially for being part of this wonderful family.

Financially, we are doing well. With financial restraint and good financial planning, our goal is to continue to reduce our projected budget deficit. You'll recall last year that our projected deficit was \$95,000. We closed the year with a deficit that was half that (good news!), and our projected budget deficit this year is \$45,000.

As of May 15, 2018, our latest Income/Expense report shows a strikingly positive overall result at this point in the year—we're in the black by \$66,000, well ahead of our anticipated deficit. Although our expenses pulled ahead of income by \$1,384 this month, both pledge and plate income at this time are substantially ahead of the projections. We received more than \$7,100 from the rummage sale, which had not been included in the budget. On the expense side, all major expense categories remain either at or below their projections.

This is good news! But remember: sometimes things are slow in the summer; please continue to maintain your giving to the parish throughout this time frame so we can keep up with our expenses.

I thank you—for your gifts of time, talent, and treasure to St. James'. We would not be in such a good place without you.

Looking ahead...

As we continue our focus on discerning God's call—and how we can use our gifts to do God's work—we will also be discussing how we can give to St. James' well into the future in various ways, including through planned giving. Our annual campaign will begin in the fall.

We will be working hard with the Diocesan Strategic Financial Resources Commission to take

our recent facility assessment and strategize how to raise funds to take care of our most critical facility needs (our church roof and parish hall ramp are the most crucial). We will also plan a more long-term fundraising effort to

raise money for a reserve fund that will cover our facility repair and upkeep costs well into the future, so that we are no longer living in fear that our operating funds will be needed to cover expensive repairs and replacements. In this way, we will no longer be financially burdened and will be able to focus on God's work at hand.



Summer break...

Then we breathe... yet throughout the summer, there will be plenty going on at St. James'!

Sunday School will continue, with a slightly different format. See the article later in this issue of *The Pilgrim* for more information.

Our Sunday morning FaithTalk will also continue on a less formal basis, focusing each week on that Sunday's lectionary readings.

Perhaps the most obvious change will be the use of a shorter version of our bulletin. Yes, for two months we will actually use *The Book of Common Prayer*! Why are we doing this?

First, this saves paper, which saves trees AND money. But more importantly, this allows us to reconnect with our fabulous prayer book. Our recent class of confirmands didn't know the BCP even existed, which means they hadn't fully connected with the richness of our prayer book tradition.

Prayer book pages and hymn numbers will be announced so that everyone is on the same page. The hope is that by the end of the summer, when we return to our regular bulletin format, we know more about where our liturgy comes from, and how it is available to all through the BCP.

Rev. Meredith

The Unstuck Church

By Rev. Meredith

At our diocesan clergy retreat we heard a presentation about why churches get stuck—why they fail to live into the work God has for them to do. The number one reason churches stall out is that they spend more time focused on *how* they do things rather than on *why* they do things.

Now: We've spent a good portion of the year talking about discernment, and it's occurred to me that we need to know not only who we are, but what's our "why."

And through my time with you, I think we already know our why... It was reflected in the sermon given by our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry at the royal wedding a few weeks ago, where he said "it's all about love"—about sharing God's love—with God and with our neighbor.

Think about that for a moment. How do you feel God's love at St. James'? How do you share God's love at St. James'? How do you take that love beyond the walls of St. James'? That's what it's all about. It's all about love.

So as we continue through the summer—breathing and praying and discerning—I suggest that we live into this love, remembering this is part of God's call. I am convinced that if we do so, we won't get stuck in the doing and forget why God has brought us together at all.

In closing, remember the love God shares in this place. May God bless you and keep you, and always remind you how much you are loved.

Help Wanted: Parishioner Seeking to Hire Help for Part-Time Yard Work

Hiring able-bodied and willing young people, male or female, for part-time yard work and assistance with gardening. Work is to be carried out at a private home, with two adults on premises. No prior experience necessary: will train and supervise. Days, hours, and tasks negotiable. Tools provided. Paying \$10 per hour. Contact Barry Thompson, 301-922-1810 (cell), 301-947-4652 (home), 13201 Moran Drive, North Potomac, 20878.

Mark Your Calendar for Summer Fun!

St. James' Day Picnic Sunday, July 22
Cabin John Park. More information to come.

Backpack Stuffing Party Sunday, July 29.
Fill a backpack with school supplies for local children in need! We're donating MANY filled backpacks to Interfaith Works.

Help Wanted: #SummerCamp @St. James' Sunday School!



Let's kick back and enjoy summer fun in Sunday School! Our wonderful volunteer teachers need a much deserved rest, and our children are ready for some new adventures, so we're hosting #SummerCamp @St. James' Sunday School.

We are looking for special guests to teach a lesson, share a skill, or lead a fun activity during one or more 10:30 a.m. worship services between June 17 and August 26. This is a great opportunity to get to know the wonderful children of our congregation.

Please email SundaySchool@stjamespotomac.org, leave a note in the Sunday school office box, or talk to Andy Mason, Marisol Castro, or Sarah Hnatov. We'll follow up to share details and answer any questions that you might have.

Art Supplies: Donations of fabric paint and fabric markers would be appreciated for a project for the summer. Please contact the Sunday school team (above) for details, and thank you!



God Sightings 101

By Rachele Donnelly, Youth Director

The first time I heard the term “God sighting,” I assumed my then 14-year-old son was referring to something he saw in his breakfast. You know what I’m referring to...every few years, typically on a slow news day, a funny story will pop up about a piece of toast showing the likeness of Jesus. God sighting, right?! Well, sort of.

God sightings, my son explained, are instances where we see God working. Miracles are just one way we can see God, but sometimes we have to look a little deeper to really see all the amazing things God is doing! Having just returned from his first work camp, Christian explained how the sightings were a staple for the youth mission trip. At the end of each day, the group would gather to discuss ways they saw God working in their lives and the lives of those around them. This tradition has continued, evolving into our present day “Devotions at Dairy Queen.”

Recognizing God sightings requires observation and humility. Sometimes the sightings are bold and in your face; at other times, they’re subtle and easy to miss. They often begin at the intersection of a coincidence and a blessing. In many ways, recognizing God’s love and blessings is similar to positive and negative self-talk. If we focus on His grace, as well as how He continues to bless us and answer our prayers, the observations of God sightings are plentiful. However, in times of duress, we may become myopic in our negative thinking, and we fail to see what’s right in front of us. Recognizing blessings and answered prayers, or failing to do so, creates a pattern. Answered prayers usually come quietly; unfolding naturally in our lives, without drama or fanfare. The subtle nature requires trust and observation.

Hands down, the most positive people I know are the ones who trust in the Lord and listen for how he whispers to them. Opening our eyes and our ears allows us to know God’s message of unconditional love for us. You may recall my article earlier this year on the topic of discernment. In it, I explained how I heard a

whisper from God telling me to help my neighbor, Shannon, and her two kids. In February, they moved into our home. At the time, Shannon was between jobs. As you can imagine, hope was not exactly overflowing. Having been a single mom, I understood some of her struggles. For those I didn’t, I prayed. I asked my family and friends to pray, too.

By the time this article is published, Shannon and her children will have moved into their new apartment. She’s doing an incredible job, managing a local pet store. The kids are doing great, too. For a time, Shannon credited the new job and other positives in her life as just great things that happened. Not wanting to seem too preachy, I was subtle in my talk of God sightings and blessings. When she was recently selected for the apartment however, the incredible blessings that she encountered could be explained in no other way. My heart swelled with joy when Shannon told me that she knew God was intervening in her life. She told me she thanked God repeatedly thereafter, and that since that time, she has recognized so many more blessings in her life.

As we prepare to head to Chattanooga, Tennessee in just a few more weeks, I eagerly look forward to watching God transform the lives of our 12 youth and four adults. I know God will show himself to each participant and homeowner. I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve our youth, their families, our service, and above all, God. I look forward to sharing God sightings upon our return.

In the meantime, I have a request. God sightings are not just for teenagers and mission trips. Where have you seen God? Please take a moment to send me a quick email about a time you experienced your own God Sighting. I will share the stories with our group at work camp. So please, finish the sentence “One crazy thing I’ve seen God do is...” and email your answers to the parish office, attention Rachele Donnelly

Vestry Highlights

The Vestry of St. James' met May 15, with Rev. Meredith presiding, and a quorum present to conduct business.

Isabelle Schuessler recorded the minutes.

Lori Minasian offered a reading, titled "Anyway," that urges one to do good despite any negative response. She noted that members of St. James' are motivated to do good in a mutually supportive way.

The Treasurer reported a very positive position for the church, although expenses did exceed income for April.

The recent rummage sale netted more than \$7,100. The Youth Auction added \$4,000 to the coffers for the Summer Mission Trip. Rev. Meredith reported that she recently had a very positive conversation with Mr. Carl Eifler about the effective use of the Eifler Fund, established in his father's name. A new donation of \$5,000 has been received.

Rev. Meredith stated that the consulting engineer's report is expected to be received shortly. His findings will be reviewed by the Rector, the Strategic Financial Resources Commission group at St. James', and the Finance and Facilities Commissions in order to draft priorities and undertake implementation.

She announced for the summer a reduction of the Sunday bulletin to four pages, augmented by use of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The Senior Warden reported that measures to increase security of the buildings continue. Additional parishioner involvement will be sought.

Reports from the Christian Education Commission included the success of the Thursday morning Bible study group (although additional participants are most welcome and details are available from the church office), and plans for a new FaithTalk series between services in Sundays.

Sarah Hnatov outlined plans for Sunday morning Summer Camp for our students.

Harley Venton said the Missions and Outreach Commission will meet soon to review activities. Emphasis has been on the recent trip to Haiti.

Katherine Weaver announced that consideration was being given to an expansion of the backpack program in the fall.

Rev. Meredith stated that the work of Pastoral Care will be energized further by the arrival of the new seminarian (who has a special interest in this ministry).

By the time you read this, the Friends of Cabin John Creek Tour (June 2) will have been completed, featuring the Rain Garden at our church. Marta Vogel served as guide.

Barry Thompson, Senior Warden

In Search Of... Vestry Candidates!

Early in the fall we begin our nominating process, searching for members who are interested in running for vestry positions. In order for this to be smooth and effective, we use a Nominating Committee to ask for nominees and present the slate at our Annual Meeting. If you're interested in serving on the nominating committee, or running for a position on the vestry, please contact Rev. Meredith or members of the vestry for more information. We need you!

Summer FaithTalks

As school ends and we transition to a summer schedule, we will set aside our Sunday morning study of call and discernment and begin a less formal lectionary bible study. We will introduce a new series in the fall, with details to come. If there is anything you would like to study, please contact Ann Venton or Rev. Meredith through the church office.

Spring Rummage Sale a Success!

By Sarah Hnatov, Junior Warden

Thank you for your support of the St. James' Spring Rummage Sale. We really appreciate the time and effort that everyone contributed to making the sale the huge success that it was.

Many volunteers came on Saturday afternoon to set up tables and help empty the shed, and more people finished that job on Sunday. Many stayed after the services for several hours to help, and others came with their families later that afternoon. Throughout the week, some prepared meals or baked treats for the workers, and others worked to sort, organize, and price items.

On the day of the sale, there were cashiers, greeters and more roles to fill. As some became weary, others seemed to show up and take their turn. On Saturday afternoon, we cleaned up and donated remaining items to the Vietnam Veterans Association. Together we got it all done, raised over \$7,100 for programs at St. James' and beyond, but that was only part of the success.

It was wonderful to see many in our community come together and work to help others, and it is in that that the real success of this rummage sale becomes apparent. We saw it in:

- The man who purchased piles of clothing, lots of books, multiple identical pairs of children's shoes in sizes 6, 8, 10, and 12, and varied household items. When asked what he was planning to do with all of those matching shoes in the same sizes, he said that he purchases items to send back home to El Salvador;
- The young Latina woman purchasing a few supplies for her home. When asked how she heard about our rummage sale, she said she cleans houses in the neighborhood. The next day she returned with two friends;
- The woman who bought bags of yarn for her sister who knits blankets for children hospitalized with chronic illnesses;

- A young mother helping her two young boys learn to count out the money needed to pay for the items being purchased;
- The woman who haggled over prices with volunteers while shopping and donated an extra \$10 "to a good cause" as she paid for her purchases.

The stories go on but it is wonderful to know that our efforts helped others in so many ways, some known and in many ways that we will never know.

Thank you for being a part of that and more. Time will tell where we go from here, but this time, it was again a job well done.

Note: Plans for future rummage sales are under discussion. We'd like to do it again but are considering a different format. If you have ideas, comments, or questions, please contact me, Sarah Hnatov, through the church office.



Summer Tai Chi Class Returns to St. James' June 19

Join us on Tuesday evenings from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the undercroft for quiet, meditative movement.

Our instructor Dr. Douglas Pratt, a pediatrician with FDA, has been practicing Tai Chi for over 20 years. Students of Tai Chi follow the teacher's slow and gentle movements (no verbal instruction) to build strength, balance, and peace of mind.

All levels of ability are welcome. Instruction is free; a freewill offering (\$1-5 suggested) is collected to cover St. James' utilities.

Memorial Garden Notes

By *Jeanne Lehning*

Late spring, after most trees and bulbs have finished blooming, is the best time to appreciate the lush, verdant foliage of the garden. New growth on shrubs is tender and yellow-green, and fully developed leaves still have a soft, fresh appearance before having to withstand summer's hot days. In the midst of this growth frenzy, it seems rather odd that certain species have already disappeared from view.



Some of the native plants in the memorial garden are known as woodland ephemerals. The term ephemeral comes from Greek, meaning "lasting one day" and refers to those plants that grow, flower, and die within a short time. Examples of woodland ephemerals in our garden include Dutchman's Breeches, trillium, and Jack-in-the-pulpit.

Before beginning the native plant garden, I had not been familiar with this term's botanical application. It would have benefited me to know it. Dutchman's Breeches is the most striking example that we have. Thanks to my ignorance, we have a plant in each of the four small gardens flanking the two boulders. In 2016 I planted two of them, and I was totally dismayed when a few leaves struggled to the surface, turned yellow, and withered a day

or two later. Thinking that they were dead, I got two more in 2017, but when I went to plant them, lo and behold—the two from the previous year were stretching out their frond-like leaves. This spring, all four plants were out by March, and one of them bloomed for the first time by April.

Another fact not usually mentioned in wildflower catalog descriptions is that certain species can take up to six years before blooming. Trillium fits that category, but it is well worth the wait. The four fluffy mounds of Dutchman's Breeches suddenly yellowed and withered in early May, totally disappearing for this year—little lessons in faith and patience.

The unusual growth patterns of ephemerals can be understood in the context of their habitat, deciduous forests. In the competition for the sun's life-giving light, spring ephemerals have taken the indirect route. They sprout early, while the trees are still dormant and a great deal of light reaches the forest floor. By the time the overhead canopy is leafed out, they have sprouted, bloomed, and stored sufficient energy for the coming year in a corm or thick root. There they lie safely underground until the following spring.

Strictly speaking then, ephemerals are not really shade loving plants. They are the earliest ones to take advantage of the increasing sunlight.

Calling for White Elephants for Lunch & Learn Bingo, July 3



Lunch & Learn's now annual Bingo Extravaganza will be Tuesday, July 3, at 11:30 a.m. in the parish hall.

Prizes will be white elephants: unused gifts, long held yet seldom used items, and nice things from your house you didn't realize you still had. The last several years have proved to be a good way to give every winner a chance at winning something he or she cannot do without!

All are welcome, and if you do not wish to play bingo, come and simply visit. Friends and neighbors are welcome. To enjoy lunch before the games, please contact Sarah Padgett. The cost of lunch is \$10.00 per person, and that includes drinks and dessert.

Please note the change in location, for this month only, to the **PARISH HALL**.

There will be no August meeting.

Tuesday, September 4, will start the 2018-2019 year. Stay tuned for more information.

Urgent Appeal for Gardening Help

With the summer growing season in full swing, the needs of our church grounds have appeared everywhere! We have had some help in meeting those needs:

- Our youth group, leaders, and some of their parents spread mulch on various beds, and weeded the hillside lower bed last year.
- Jeanne Lehning has kept our Memorial Garden looking wonderful.
- Barry Thompson, Marta Vogel and John Combs did a spring clean-up of the rain garden, and Barry continues to maintain the conservation garden nearby.
- Natalie and Jim Rathvon have done cleanup and pruning behind the church building.
- A County crew came to weed and improve our rain garden and conservation gardens nearby and on the hillside, and plant in empty spaces.

For all this, we are very appreciative. But much remains to be done, now and over the coming weeks. We need volunteer help to avoid having to hire outside workers at a high cost.

Please consider whether you might commit to adopting one of the following gardens/tasks and keeping it looking good:

1. Weed the upper bed on the hillside between the church and parish hall.
2. Weed the lower bed on the hillside between the church and parish hall.
3. Weed the area under the parish hall ramp and prune bushes as needed.
4. Weed the rain garden and remove dead vegetation.
5. Weed the conservation garden next to the rain garden/behind the bench.
6. Weed one or both of the pachysandra beds behind the church.
7. Prune the shrubs as needed around the church building.



8. Weed the mulched slope between the columbarium and the concrete ramp walkway.
9. Weed the garden next to the patio near the parish hall building.
10. Clean up and weed the bed behind our neighbor's fence to the left of our dumpsters.
11. Spray and then in a few days remove the dead weeds (or dig them and then spray to prevent more) along the South wall of the parish hall (among the stones, the mulch of the climbing bars, and between the stone blocks of the patio).
12. Weed the small patches around trees and shrubs between the church and parish hall.
13. Spray and then in a few days remove the dead weeds that grow around our parking lots and curbs.

Please consider whether you could commit to doing within the next two weeks any of the items #6-13 above—one time or ongoing.

Supplies may be needed, such as mulch, spray to kill vegetation or tools. Just let us know and we will furnish whatever you need.

Thank you for giving serious consideration to whether you, and perhaps in partnership with others or families, can sign up for one or more of these tasks to help maintain and beautify our church home. No prior experience required!



Happy Father's Day!

To our fathers, and those who have been as fathers to us, thank you!

“I was in prison, and you visited me” (Matthew 25:36)

Over 25 years of ministry

It all started about 25 years ago when a former St. James' member worked with the chaplain at the detention center to start a mentoring program for inmates being discharged. A training program was developed and other volunteers, including Pat East, continued this ministry for several years. In 1992 Grace Huff started visiting inmates, distributing Bibles, and offering a Christian parenting program for women inmates. Bill and Doris Wallace joined the ministry and were a great blessing, working one day a week. Members of St. James' have generously donated Bibles and Christian materials through the Missions and Outreach budget.

Over four thousand Bibles purchased!

Between 2006 and 2013, more than four thousand new Bibles were purchased. Why do they need so many Bibles? In the prison, there is a lot of turnover. New people arrested and some coming back. There are two facilities in Montgomery County. People arrested are brought to the detention center on Seven Locks Road in Rockville (at the intersection of Seven Locks and Wootton Parkway, just a mile or so from St. James'). Those who do not get out on bond are sent within a few days to the correctional facility in Clarksburg to await trial.

A quick job description ...

From Grace Huff: “I work weekly at the Montgomery County Detention Center. What do I do? Load a cart, visit inmate units, offer Bibles and Christian materials. The inmates appreciate these visits, are very polite and glad to receive these gifts. I listen to their concerns and offer prayers. Prayer requests are written and passed on to churches, of many denominations. We hear many “thank you’s” and “God bless you’s,” says Grace. Grace added that she has never had a bad experience; most of the people she has counseled have been non-violent offenders.

To get a badge, you must have a TB test and a security clearance, attend an orientation once a year in Clarksburg (main detention facility) and sign papers. Then you’ll need to work with an experienced person.

Usually, visits are on Thursdays, but Grace is available other days, too.

... and how you can help

While Grace is more than willing to spread the good news, it’s not a one-person show. This ministry – and Grace – needs your help. So we need rides and volunteers. Grace lives at the Village at Rockville, on Veirs Drive between Lakewood Country Club and Frost Middle School – not too far from the parish and its residents.

Grace is enthusiastic about keeping up the ministry. She can work alone in the Rockville Detention Center, health permitting and, most importantly, if she can obtain a ride. “If able, I could work there five days a week--there is a lot of work to do sharing the Gospel and praying with inmates. Working in the jail is a very great blessing,” she says.

I get paid in love...

One benefit that Grace had not expected was getting to know and become close friends with other volunteers. Once an officer asked me, “Ms. Grace, do you get paid?” “Oh, yes, I get paid in love!” And she says ...

“... You get more than you give. The opportunities and blessings are very great!”

So... won’t you consider spreading the Good News, maybe even more importantly, sitting and listening and praying with the inmates. If you have an interest in volunteering or would like more information, please contact Grace Huff.

And remember – what you did for the least ... so you did for me.

Scenes from Special Days

Confirmation at the Cathedral, May 12 ~ Baptisms ~ Sunday school makes meals for Martha's Table



Nursing Home Ministry: Could God be calling you to help?



We are looking for a few more parishioners to join the St. James' nursing home ministry and ensure its survival.

During 16 years of devoted service by Alice and Jerry Morrison, St. James' Nursing Home Ministry members have visited Manor Care Health Services (Potomac) and Potomac Valley Nursing Home (Rockville) on the first and third Wednesdays of each month to offer a 10:30 a.m. communion service with intercessory prayers. We also sing seasonal hymns, as well as long-time favorites. The residents and the staff are so appreciative (we hear "God bless you!" a lot), and the staff makes every effort to accommodate us and make it a positive experience for all attending.

We meet at St. James' at 10:00 a.m. and are back by 11:30 a.m. We welcome you to come with us on one of our visits to see if you might be called to this ministry, and if so, to join us for one or both visits each month. For more information, please contact Natalie or Jim Rathvon.

Seven Locks News

In 2011 The Rev. Adrian Nelson, II of Scotland AME Zion Church sent a letter to the churches on Seven Locks Road, proposing that our congregations come together to participate in a Lenten study and fellowship. Seven years later, we continue to gather each Lent with members of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Geneva Presbyterian Church, Seven Locks Baptist and Scotland AME Zion for community and spiritual reflection. Those from St. James' who participate say that this is one of the most meaningful practices of their Lenten season.

Rev. Nelson recently sent us notice that he has been appointed pastor of the historic Lomax AME Zion Church in Arlington, Virginia. Although he is excited by this opportunity, he is sad to leave our fellowship, and we are sad to see him go.

Soon we will be meeting Scotland's new pastor, The Rev. Quintin Borders. As we do, we will not forget Rev. Nelson's vision, and the gift that he gave us by calling us into this special community.



Deanna Abraham, Senior Center Director at North Potomac Recreation Center, leads the singing for a recent Lunch and Learn gathering. Her superb rendition of "His Eye Is on the Sparrow" concluded the program.

Calendar of Events

June 10, Sunday:

- ♦ Guest Speaker author Steve Watkins at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. worship and 9:15 FaithTalk
- ♦ Sunday school and youth volunteer appreciation and Commissioning Youth Work Camp at 10:30 worship

June 13, Wednesday:

Visit to Potomac Valley Nursing Home, 10:30 a.m.

June 24, Sunday:

Book Club discussion, 6:45 p.m.

July 3, Tuesday:

Lunch & Learn Bingo in the parish hall (note location change), 11:30 a.m.

July 4, Independence Day:

Parish office closed; Visit to Manor Care Nursing Home, 10:30 a.m.

July 11, Wednesday:

Visit to Potomac Valley Nursing Home, 10:30 a.m.

July 22, Sunday:

St. James Day Picnic, Cabin John Park, after 10:30 worship

July 29, Sunday:

- ♦ Fill a Backpack for Interfaith Works! Stuffing party after services in parish hall
- ♦ Book Club discussion, 6:45 p.m.

News from St. James' Children's School

Last month, nineteen staff members attended the Maryland State Child Care Association's Conference by the Sea in Ocean City. This year's theme was "C.A.M.P.: Children Are My Passion." Our staff attended a variety of classes, and were able to fulfill their annual training requirements. It was a wonderful weekend of learning, team-building, and networking with others in the childcare profession.

Many thanks to everyone that participated in our fundraisers throughout the year to help send our staff to this important conference.



Classroom Spotlight: The Four-Year-Olds Class

By Yunganti Shirodkar

Welcome to the Fours room. At St. James' Children's School, we try to cater to every child's learning needs. We use a variety of teaching strategies and offer different learning opportunities throughout the day. We start our year in the Fours room helping students adjust to the classroom routine. Once students settle down we begin with our curriculum. Every month we explore a different Creative Curriculum Study, for example Buildings, Insects, Trees, etc. The Creative Curriculum study theme is integrated in all the developmental area, like language, math social science, art, etc. We also study weekly themes that cover different topics, like seasons, my family, five senses, etc.

Our morning starts with free play activities. Students get to pick any activities available in the classroom. Free and open-ended art is an integral part of our morning routine. During free art students get to explore a variety of art supplies. After free play and free art, we have our morning meeting and circle time discussion, followed by read aloud books. At morning meeting we talk about the weather, daily calendar and our agenda for the day.

Later in the morning students get into more formal learning, they participate in

language arts, math and science activities. Sometimes these activities are one on one and some days students work in small groups. We use "Handwriting Without Tears" workbooks to teach writing in the Fours class.

We spend an hour every morning and afternoon playing outdoors and exploring nature. We also have our morning meeting in our outdoor classroom every Monday.

We recently planted flowers and vegetables in our garden patch outside. Students observe the garden every week to learn how the plants grow. Playing outdoors and participating in team oriented activities help the child's' social and emotional development. If anyone would like to join us in our outdoor classroom, we love volunteers and welcome you to participate!

