



The St. James' Pilgrim

News for the Journey . . . February 2019

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



Thoughts from our Assistant Rector, The Rev. James Isaacs

Mental Health Ministries: What We're Doing

After almost a year of prayer and listening to God and members of the congregation, St. James' identified a new area of ministry to which we were

being called. What we discerned was a surprise for almost everyone, and yet when people heard about it, it resonated with them. I take this as an indication that it is a real calling from God because it isn't something we would have come up with on our own if we hadn't spent all of that time in a posture of prayer and listening to God and members of the congregation.

What emerged clearly was a call to engage ministry that addresses issues of mental health and wellness. Rev. Meredith and I independently noticed this theme as we set aside time to intentionally focus on the discernment. And then we tested it with a group of people who we imagined might be supportive of the ministry area. All of them affirmed the calling, and helped imagine what it might look like as it got started. That was presented to the Vestry, and, when we went around to every person in the Vestry to hear their response, it was affirmed by each person. As we speak about it to the wider congregation, we have heard both affirmations and questions about what it might specifically entail.

We don't yet know what it will entail in the future or how long it will be a ministry area where our parish's efforts and resources are focused. After listening for God's guidance for so long, now that we have heard a whisper of where to begin,

we aren't going to just take charge and say to God, "OK, now we've got it. Thanks for pointing us in a direction; we'll take it from here." We remain focused on continuing to prayerfully discern how and to what God is guiding us. We might not always hear God correctly, but we are certain that following God's prompting will lead us into ministries that are more meaningful and effective than anything we could imagine or execute on our own without God.

We need to start somewhere. And through the wisdom and prayerful work of the group that convened earlier, we have decided to begin our ministry with two initiatives. The first will take place on nine Sundays (starting on February 10 and excluding February 24) during the adult forum from 9:15 to 10:00 a.m. We will have outside speakers come to offer presentations on their areas of expertise involving mental health and wellness. Our hope is that, through these sessions we will overcome misconceptions about mental health and wellness, and also gain a more accurate understanding of the ministry landscape into which we are being called.

The second initiative is that this year's Lenten Reflections will be focused on the theme of "Reflections on God from the Wilderness." People in the parish will be invited to write about "wilderness" experiences they have had, or have supported others through, with an eye to where God might have been present. This will be an opportunity for people who wish to share

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Reflection from our Junior Warden, Sarah Hnatov

God is at Work Within You

I have a perpetual calendar that sits on the window sill in my kitchen. Each date has a verse and a few words encouraging reflection based on the

lectionary. Each morning, a page is flipped to show the new date and another passage.

I have had this calendar for many years now and as the years pass, the same text comes up over and over. Some make me smile as I flip the page and move on. Others I hardly notice. Some seem to resonate and touch my heart. The words seem to appear at just the right time; just as I need to hear them again or sometimes I notice them for the first time or with a new meaning.

But each year one of my favorites is on February 25. It reads:

**I used to ask God to help me.
Then I asked if I might help him.**

**I ended up by asking God
to do his work though me.**

Those are the words of James Hudson Taylor, a British Protestant Christian who led missionaries in China for more than 50 years during the 19th

Century. Yet, his words still resonate today. Below it is this verse:

**For God is at work within you...
Helping you do what he wants.**

Philippians 2:13

Each time I read those words on another February 25, or recall them on other days throughout the year, I am reminded of the grace that comes with being mindful of God's presence in my life. I am reminded that I am being called to listen, to be present, and to let the Lord's will be done—through me. I do not need to have all the answers or know how things are going to turn out. God has that. I am just being asked to be present; for God is at work within me, using me for his will.

This year, as February rolls around again, let us be reminded that God is at work within us. Let us pray that God will be at work within each of us, and within St. James' helping us together to do what he wants. May we go forward to do his work with wisdom, kindness of heart, and courage to fulfill the ministries to which we are called.

Father, we ask that you do your work through us. *Amen.*

Mental Health Ministries, continued from page 1

experiences they have had with mental health and wellness, in addition to other topics that may come up as we seek to observe a Holy Lent. Please read and reflect on Sarah Hantov's notes above as you consider sharing your reflections.

There are still many questions that remain about where we are going. Our hope is that these efforts will help us further discern where God is leading us. And in the process, we will already begin to do mental health and wellness ministry in the congregation. Reducing misconceptions and

stigma around mental health issues is important. Increasing sensitivity, awareness, and understanding is good. And we are just getting started, with God's help.

It is a pleasure to serve God with you all at St. James'.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James".

Reflections on God from the Wilderness

Types of geography are significant in scripture. Mountains, sea, and wilderness/desert all carry meaning, and similar events tend to happen in the same type of landscape. For example, God often speaks directly from mountains. The sea is a place of fear and danger where God's saving help is revealed. And the wilderness or desert is a place of testing, isolation, and uncertainty, where God sustains us.

The theme of "wilderness" is prominent through Lent. The season is 40 days because Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness after his baptism. Those 40 days remind us of the 40 years that God's chosen people were in the wilderness after being led out of Egypt. It is a time when we are called to be self-reflective and prayerful—a time when we fast to remind us that God sustains us. It can also be a time of trial and testing, as it was for Jesus in the wilderness.

This year, we will continue the tradition of emailing reflections written by people in the parish throughout the season of Lent. The theme this year will be "Reflections on God from the

Wilderness." People in the parish are invited to write about their own experiences "in the wilderness"—in their own lives or when they have supported a loved one through a "wilderness" experience—with particular attention to how God may have been present. Some people may feel called to share experiences that touch on mental health issues that they have faced, which we hope will raise sensitivity and reduce stigma in the congregation around those issues.

This special tradition at St. James' only succeeds if people in the parish write reflections. Please consider writing something to share with the congregation during Lent. The reflections should be less than 250 words and can be emailed to James at james@stjamespotomac.org. If you would prefer your name to not be shared when your reflection is emailed out to the congregation, please indicate that in a note at the beginning of the reflection. If you have any questions or would like to discuss your reflection, please feel free to contact either James or Rev. Meredith.

Are you feeling lucky?



If you can, **please bring a white elephant gift** that can be used as a BINGO prize. What's a white elephant gift? Something new or like-new, perhaps an unused gift or household item that would be of better use in a new home. Funny or gag gifts are also welcome, of course!

Bingo and Potluck Night!

Saturday, February 23

Join us for a fun, family-friendly night of BINGO on Saturday, February 23 starting at 5:30 p.m. in the parish hall. We'll enjoy a **potluck dinner** together. Please bring a dish to share, according to the first letter of your last name (see below). Drinks will be provided by the church.

A - I: Salad or side dish
J - S: Main dish
T - Z: Dessert



Please come out and enjoy a Saturday night with your friends and fellow parishioners!

If you have any questions, or want to help with events like this, please contact Dawn Iype, chair of the Membership Commission: dawniype@gmail.com.

Annual Convention 2019 – Episcopal Diocese of Washington

On January 26, six of us spent a comparatively balmy day at the Cathedral attending the annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. The group included Rev. Meredith, Rev. James, and delegates Katherine Weaver and Dan Zimmerman as voting representatives. Alternate delegate Mary Miers and Candidate Intern Todd Thomas also attended. Todd was conscripted to help with counting the offering.

This meeting, the 124th annual convention, is the legislative body for the District of Columbia and four Maryland counties: Montgomery, Prince George's, Charles, and St. Mary's. The Convention includes members from all of these entities, according to population, and receives input through the year from regional assemblies, ongoing projects and studies, and occasional special meetings. It's a two-way street, with Diocesan staff ("Church House") generating and responding to communications, and maintaining a web page for news and reference, www.edow.org.

Convention follows a bicameral model, with clergy and lay delegates voting separately, with occasionally startling results. This year the agenda proceeded smoothly and we even finished early!

As usual, the day opened with a Eucharist, with a pleasant mix of traditional and contemporary music, reflecting the diversity of our congregations. Guest preacher Nancy Beach, from Willow Creek Church and the Slingshot Group, led the attendees through a series of questions to help us evaluate "Teams That Last."

Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde presided with assistance in the liturgy and reports. Eight clergy who had died in the past year were remembered in prayer. Clergy in new ministries and mission areas of importance, notably the Bishop Walker School, were recognized. Departing staff were recognized, with Canon to the Ordinary (in effect, Diocesan COO) Paul E. Cooney receiving a standing ovation.

In her opening address, Bishop Mariann referred to the parable of the seeds as well as remarks of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, aka CEO (Chief Evangelism Officer) of the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement. She spoke highly of the PB's book, *The Power of Love*, currently the focus of the Thursday bible study group at



Our Convention-goers, L-R: Dan Zimmerman, Mary Miers, Katherine Weaver, Rev. Meredith Heffner, Rev. James Isaacs

St. James', as well as *The Unstuck Church* by Tony Morgan (see the related article on page 5 for more on Morgan's talk). Bishop Curry will speak at the 2020 convention on January 25 next year and will lead a revival service the night before.

Returning to her opening thoughts, Bishop Mariann reminded us that while God sows the seed, we are responsible for the soil, and said that the next phase of her ministry will focus on a mutually discerned vision for the future.

The Convention approved the proposed 2019 budget forecasting an increase of \$91,292 over 2018 revenue of \$4,164,002.

Another annual item, elections to policy groups, resulted in the election of The Rev. Glenna Huber, rector of Epiphany, DC, and The Rev. Dr. Sheila McJilton, rector of St. Philip's, Laurel, as clerical members of the Standing Committee. Elected as lay members of that committee were Erika Gilmore of St. George's, DC and Kay Pierson, Trinity, DC. Lee Puricelli, Christ Church, Kensington, recently served a term and will fill a vacancy for the remainder of 2019. The Rev. James Isaacs is currently serving on that committee.

The Diocesan Committee on Constitution and Canons annually identifies potential conforming amendments and needed updates, typically non-controversial in nature. This year it was noted that the St. Barnabas' Church of the Deaf should be assigned to the Montgomery County North Region, reflecting its transfer to Ascension, Gaithersburg after several years at St. John's, Norwood.

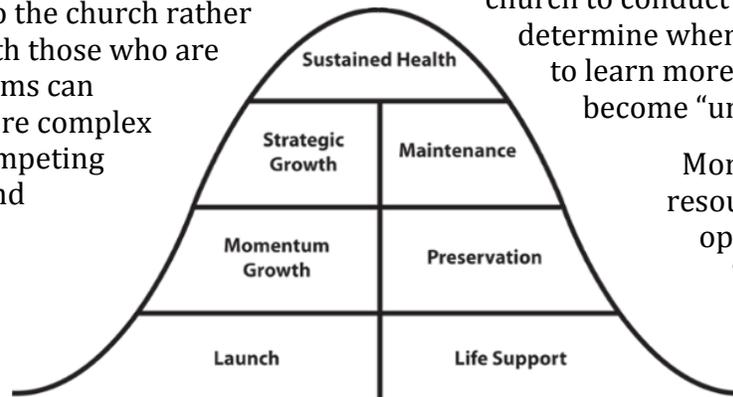
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Holy Interruptions, Baptism by Fire, and the Unstuck Church

On January 25, five members of St. James' attended a pre-convention gathering called "The Unstuck Diocese." The group consisted of Doug and Meredith Heffner, Katherine Weaver, and Barry and Jo Ann Thompson.

The lecture led by Tony Morgan identified seven stages of the typical church lifecycle that range from the hopeful optimistic days of launch to the last stagnating stages of life support (see diagram below). Morgan emphasized that the purpose of the church is to "make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19) However, without active intervention the church, as it passes through the maintenance and preservation phases, can become more focused on people who are already connected to the church rather than communicating with those who are outside the faith. Programs can become increasingly more complex and numerous, often competing for parishioners' time and attention.

Morgan suggests that churches often experience a Holy



Interruption, which is the way that God works in the process of congregational renewal. Sometimes those interruptions can feel like a baptism by fire through crises such as declining financial resources and people leaving the church.

Bishop Mariann suggests that these interruptions are vital if we are to successfully address the habits and patterns that once served our congregations well but now conspire to keep them stuck. These declines need to be addressed before it is difficult to reverse them.

During her address to the Convention, Bishop Mariann mentioned that, as part of a Diocesan strategic planning process, she would like for each church to conduct an assessment to determine where they lie in the cycle and to learn more about the strategies to become "unstuck."

Morgan is providing free resources that outline opportunities to sustain "momentum growth," depending on the church's stage in the life cycle.

Annual Convention 2019 continued from page 4

The usual last, and occasionally exciting, set of actions involves votes on resolutions submitted in advance. Three resolutions—one accepted late for calendar reasons—were considered and adopted, as follows: Resolution 1 calls on our Diocese to encourage parishes, schools, and related organizations to include care for God's creation in worship and prayer, to consider incorporating the Season of Creation from September 1 through October 4 in worship, celebration, and healing, and serving as a moral example. (St. James' did something similar about a decade ago with wonderful results. We used materials from the Diocese of South Africa.)

Resolution 2 would affirm steps taken at the national level to provide prayer and support for ongoing efforts to establish full communion with the United Methodist Church. There was some

concern about persistent differences between denominations about human sexuality and other issues, but approval was provided once it was made clear that the resolution would not establish full communion but simply help prepare a possible path for it.

Resolution 3, introduced late for obvious reasons, affirmed the importance of responsible governance on the part of all elected leaders. It went on to cite scripture and faith teachings, as well as economic effects, to decry the recent partial Federal shutdown and to discourage future such actions.

This resolution was adopted, although St. James' Delegate Dan Zimmerman pointed out some possible weaknesses in its stated applicability to employees of government contractors. ♦

Vestry Highlights

Meeting of January 15, 2019

The vestry met at 7:30 p.m. on January 15, 2019, with the Rector presiding and a quorum present.

Kudos were offered for the success of the online service of Morning Prayer led by Reverend Meredith on Sunday, January 13, when inclement weather necessitated closing the church.

Treasurer: The preliminary report of the Treasurer noted a surplus for the year 2018.

Clergy Reports

Reverend Meredith addressed the vestry retreat (February 2-3 at Adamstown, MD), commission assignments for vestry members (incomplete at this time), schedule for capital campaign consultants (the first will be on January 23 by a representative of the Episcopal Church Fund), spring rummage sale (without leader[s], it will not occur), and the Mary Shepard bequest.

Reverend James reiterated that stewardship is a year-round program and gave a summary of 2018 giving. Pledging for 2019 included 12 new households, an increase in pledged amount by 40 pledging units, a decrease in amount by 16 units, and 17 pledges that were received in 2018 but not renewed for 2019. The pledged total stands at \$457,242, an increase of about \$3,500 over 2018.

He also announced the upcoming eight-session series on mental wellness (based on parish surveys in 2018), commencing at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday, February 10. The use of videos and social media to make the information available to those who cannot be present Sunday mornings will be explored. Lenten devotions this spring will feature personal experiences of "Finding God in the Wilderness" (adding a spiritual component to academic resources). Initiatives for further discernment are planned for summer.

Commission Reports

Administration: Joyce Nohowel Assessed the Mutual Ministry Review responses for the vestry retreat and planning for the fall vestry nominating committee.

Communication: Holly Mulderig will replace Dawn Iype as chairperson.

Fellowship/ Membership: Dawn Iype will be new chairperson

Worship: Lori Minasian reported that Christmas Eve 2018 showed an increase in attendance at the 5:00 p.m. service and a decrease at 10:30 p.m.; there will be no 5:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday service this year; the number of acolytes has increased, but more are always welcome.

Wardens' Reports

The Junior Warden, Sarah Hnatov, had spoken earlier about rummage sales and their value to the community and parishioners.

The Senior Warden, Barry Thompson, announced follow-up interviews by diocesan representatives regarding the Strategic Financial Resources Commission pilot program at St. James'. Written guidance for security procedures will be forthcoming, and adherence to instructions for Sunday mornings was urged. Scout Sunday, involving our sponsored Pack 1306 and Pack 1280 (St. Raphael School), will be celebrated at the 10:30 service on February 10. St. James' brothers Matthew and Andrew Boyce will be receiving church/Cub Scout awards.

Old Business included a proposal for reallocation of \$27,698 in existing funds to be added to a portion of 2019 operating funds to meet the \$36,000 required to replace the parish hall ramp. The allocation was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Barry Thompson, Senior Warden

Happenin's in Haiti

By Harley Venton

Your Missions and Outreach Commission, with Reverends Meredith's and James's able advice and encouragement, are looking forward to a new year of engagement with and support for our partner parish and school, Bon Samaritain, L'Acul.

And St. James' will be blessed by a mid-February visit from our dear friend and brother, Père Wildaine. He is planning to be with us the week of February 18 and will be hosting the Adult Forum that Sunday, February 24, at 9:15 a.m. in the Parish Hall Meeting room. Please take this opportunity to enjoy fellowship with him at that time and/or during the coffee hour following the 10:30 Worship Service.

As some of you may be aware, 2018 was a tumultuous time in the life of the Diocese of Haiti. A series of electoral convocations were held to establish a slate of candidates to succeed the Bishop of Haiti who announced his retirement as of February of 2019. A formal election was held in June of 2018 and a Bishop Suffragan-Elect was chosen. However, following the designated procedures of Canon Law, a Letter of Protestation to the election results was filed in a timely manner and was signed by the requisite number of lay leaders and priests. Consequently, the matter was referred to the Episcopal Court of Province III, which determined that the signatories to the Letter of Protestation had raised legitimate causes for concern regarding the election. Taking this ruling into consideration, the bishops of the Episcopal Church, as is their prerogative, chose not to ratify the results of the June election. Presiding Bishop Curry announced this in December and his office is now working with the various parties in Haiti to come to a fruitful resolution.

Père Wildaine was one of the priests who was a signatory to the Letter of Protestation. Consequently, As of October 2018, Père Wildaine was suspended as the priest of Bon Samaritain Parish and from his capacity as administrator of the parish school. We at St. James', along with our other Episcopal parish partners and educational institutions Vassar College and Sacred Heart University, who are actively engaged in the area, were concerned. However, we have taken our cue

from Père Wildaine himself, who has remained the faithful and calm eye in the middle of this storm. His focus and concern is not for his own designated status, but for the orderly continuation of the financial support that our congregation and the other partners provide to see that the school is staffed and the children are fed.

Upon notification of his suspension, the vestry of Bon Samaritain notified the Diocese of Haiti that, until such time as a proper review and appeals process had run its course, they would not accept installation of a replacement priest. In the meantime, lay leaders conduct weekly worship services. As for the administration of the school, the Senior Warden of the vestry and a key lay leader who is a co-signatory with Père Wildaine to the bank account through which we and the various partners wire our financial support, are able to keep the staff paid and the children fed. And we and our other partners are confident that this reliably avoids any red flag or undue interference from the Diocese in Port-au-Prince.

Of special interest to us here at St. James', it must be noted that the terms of Père Wildaine's suspension dictated that he and his mother vacate the new rectory that our parish helped fund. Père Wildaine has assured us that he and his mother are fine, having secured housing during his suspension with family in the area. He recognizes and is thankful that the long-term investment that we made in building a rectory on Bon Samaritain property provides the kind of housing security that will benefit the parish and the school for generations to come. As the situation in Haiti unfolds, St. James' will continue to support the school and parish with which we have a longstanding partnership.

All around us in this world, here in our own country, in our own Diocese, even periodically at St. James', we are faced with difficult and even distressing conflicts and challenges. It is our particular blessing and privilege that, in the midst of trials, we are grounded in our faith and in the example and teachings of Jesus Christ. And it is with that assurance that we are able to move through difficulties such as this by the way of love.

Mental Health/Wellness Forum, 2019

St. James' has discerned a calling to address Mental Health/Wellness. The adult forums on Sunday mornings will feature guest speakers, presentations, and discussions to build awareness of mental illness and wellness issues, to dispel myths and misconceptions, and familiarize ourselves with the ministry landscape into which we have been called.

- Feb. 10 National Alliance on Mental Illness: An Introduction to Programs / Mental Illness
- Feb. 17 Where St. James' has come / how we will discern where to go with Mental Health
- March 3 In Our Own Voices
- March 10 Mental Health and Montgomery Co. Youth
- March 17 Mental Health and Homelessness/Poverty
- March 24 How to recognize if someone is in crisis and how to help
- March 31 Program not yet confirmed
- April 7 Program not yet confirmed
- April 14 Continuing the discernment: review of the series

Other Events in February and March:

- **Père Wildaine from Haiti, February 24.** Come to the parish hall meeting room at 9:15 to hear about our partners at Bon Samaritain, and about the Diocese of Haiti.
- **Lenten Reflections by email: "Reflections on God from the Wilderness."** Following in the tradition from previous years, St. James' will send Lenten reflections by email, written by parishioners. This year, the focus will be on people experiencing God in the midst of their own wilderness experiences. Emails will be sent on weekdays during Lent.
- **March 14: Samaritan Ministry's "Next Step Breakfast."** Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington hosts a breakfast every year to share with others the good work that they do with people taking the "next step" in their lives. There will be an opportunity to contribute to Samaritan Ministry's work financially. To join the breakfast from 7:30-9:00 a.m., contact The Rev. James Isaacs.



Marriott's and Motor Cars: Lunch & Learn, March 5

Lunch & Learn on Tuesday, March 5, will hear Katie Dishman, Marriott's corporate archivist, as she explores the history of the company and its integral connection with cars. Marriott International actually started as an A & W Root Beer stand in Washington, D.C. in 1927. Not only did the stands, named Hot Shoppes, expand because of their drive-ins, but the lodging business began as motor hotels at the advent of the Interstate Highway System. Historical highlights, including the company's move to Bethesda in 1955, will be featured.

Ms. Dishman has been an archivist at the National Archives and Records Administration in Chicago, at General Mills, at Anheuser-Busch, and at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. She has a Master of Arts in Public History and a Master of Library and Information Science. She is a member of the Academy of Certified Archivists.

Lunch & Learn is open to all - friends, family, and especially, newcomers. Social time (that means the coffee is ready and the soft drinks are on the table) is at 11:30. Lunch is served buffet style at noon and the program runs from 12:30 until 1:30. Feel free to come and go as your schedule requires, but please do make a reservation if you would like to have lunch. That can be done by contacting Sarah Padgett, at 301-540-6944 or Charles.Padgett1@verizon.net. To cover the cost of lunch, \$10.00 per person is requested. There is a welcome just for you!

Book Club: *The Music Shop*, February 24

From the author of *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* comes our February book, *The Music Shop*. Set in 1988 London, in a “seen better days” record shop, there resides Frank who seems to have an uncanny knack for being able to find the perfect song for a person’s particular need. From Bach to the Beach Boys, he’s got the vinyl (NO CD’s, please). Populated with misfits, searchers, and other unlikely characters, author Rachel Joyce pulls the reader in. Full of evidence of the healing power of music, in the book the reader experiences, as one reviewer wrote, “...the understated humor around these odd folks offers something like the pleasure of A.A. Milne for adults...a kind of simplicity that’s never simplistic.” What happens to Frank, always tuned in to others? Can he face his own needs?

Come with your interpretations at 6:45 p.m. to the parish hall library. All are welcome, whether you’ve read the book or not. The group-led discussions are casual, opinions are free-flowing, and one never knows what comment will be next!

Future book choices: March 24, *A Tale for Time Being* by Ruth Ozeki; April 28, *Forty Autumns: A Family’s Story of Courage and Survival on Both Sides of the Berlin Wall* by Nina Willner; May 26, *Hero of the Empire: The Boer War, A Daring Escape*, and *The Making of Winston Churchill* by Candace Millard.

Cold Weather Clothing Drive Thank You!

St. James’ received donations large and small for this year’s cold weather clothing drive. Nearly 40 bags of clothing were delivered to Interfaith Works. Thank you to everyone who donated, participated, and to Joyce Graf for driving the donations to the Clothing Center.



Safeguarding God’s Children Training

Training is required for all volunteers and staff who work with children. Refreshers are available online. Sessions are offered on Saturdays 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at these Episcopal churches in our area:

February 9	Christ Church, Kensington
February 23	St. John’s, Georgetown
March 2	Transfiguration, Silver Spring
March 9	St. Timothy’s; Alabama Ave.
April 13	St. Andrews, Leonardstown

Visit www.edow.org and search “safeguarding” for application forms, or call the parish office.

Do You Have Extras?

These are examples of some of the serving-type things the St. James’ kitchen could use. Glass—plain or decorative—is easy to clean, makes for an attractive table - and gives you something to do with “entertaining” surplus items taking up space in your cabinets. Think receptions, yes, but also Sunday morning Fellowship after church. The table could look even more inviting. The trays are especially needed/wanted. (The ruler in the picture below is for scale; the small vases make excellent toothpick holders.) Questions? Call the office or ask Jerome Childress or Jo Ann Thompson.



Winter Weather?

Call the office or check our website.
St. James’ follows the MCPS guidelines for weather-related office closures or delays.

Meet a Member: Jeanne Lehning

By Holly Mulderig

Perhaps you've ...

... noticed an aesthetic transformation in our Memorial Garden as of late;

... admired the liturgical season banners: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost that adorn the altar during the Church year;

... marveled at the rustic Nativity scene each year in the Parish Hall and for the past two Christmases during the Family Service.

Then you're familiar with some of the gifts that our parishioner, Jeanne Lehning, has bestowed upon St. James'.

Jeanne is a native of Akron, Ohio. Growing up, she enjoyed horseback riding on her family property. Jeanne graduated from the University of Akron with both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in biology. She joined the Episcopal Church in 1988.

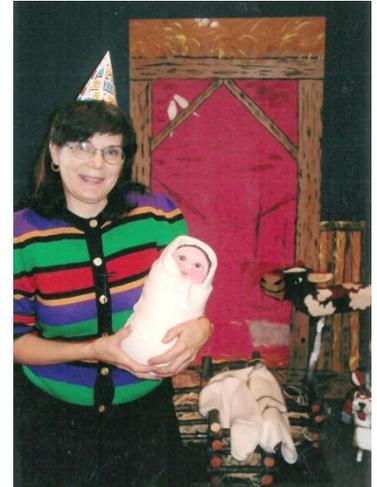
Jeanne and her husband moved around quite a bit, including stints in Georgia and the Detroit suburbs. In 2010, Jeanne moved to Potomac, to live with her son and daughter-in-law and two (now three) grandchildren—John, Karl, and Laura attend St James Children's School as well as the Sunday School. Jeanne also has three grandchildren back in Michigan, and there's soon to be a seventh!

Jeanne's ministry is truly expressed through a variety of artistic, horticultural and musical endeavors. She's a member of the St. James' Singers, the St. James' Ringers and the Flower Guild, as well as serving on the Worship Commission.

Where shall we begin? Let's start with the Memorial Garden. Jeanne's been the chief caretaker and landscape architect of the garden since 2016. "On the left hand side of the garden, as you walk towards the office, I've installed plants native to this area." You'll also notice placards identifying these

plants, attractive stone borders, and statuary, including St. Francis.

As for the liturgical banners, "all feature a common circular theme..." through the church year. Jeanne's next assignment will focus on creating banners relating to "The Way of Love."



The birth of the Nativity scene

Now for the Nativity scene. Twenty-four years ago, at Jeanne's parish in Michigan, her pastor (obviously having been acquainted with her creativity!) requested she build crèche figurines using "simple materials." You'll see animals created from maple and spruce logs, pine-cone hedgehogs, humans ... So began the collection, which now numbers 55. Jeanne commented that "the figures begin to take a life of their own while I'm creating them." (Author's note: I have seen this as she was tending to them, repairing them with tender loving care, with various naturally-sourced materials. Ears and hooves need replacing, coats and feathers need touching up, sometimes a wardrobe sprucing and repairing is required.)



Jeanne refurbished her natural Nativity scene over January, 2019.

After the service, Jeanne says, several parishioners commented that the placement “helped them to really add to the worship experience.”

Jeanne has also conducted a puppet ministry at various parishes. At St. James’, she’s used the puppets during several blessing of the animals services and the occasional Epiphany Festival of Lights service. “I’d love to expand the puppet ministry,” she commented. She’s got a host of human and animal puppets which she crafted herself, along with a stage ... all that’s needed are some more folks interested in puppeteering ... hint, hint.

What makes St. James’ special for Jeanne? “I appreciate the diversity of the congregation – St. James’ shows that God’s love is very inclusive. I see parishioners drawing courage from one another. And I enjoy both the traditional worship as well as special liturgies.” Jeanne also commented that the “church building itself is very conducive to worship both celebratory and contemplative.”

Oh, and two more talents—Jeanne is a sculptor and plays the dulcimer, upon which she will accompany the St. James’ Singers from time to time.

Let’s give thanks for the creative contributions of parishioners like Jeanne, who enhance the



Jeanne’s mural of the Nativity



Jeanne with her mural of The Peaceable Kingdom, in progress

worship experience and, simply the “presence” of being in the St. James’ community through the great gifts of their time and talent.

Cub Scout Pack 1306 Pinewood Derby February 18

Everyone Is Invited!

On Presidents’ Day, Monday, February 18, Pack 1306 will hold its annual Pinewood Derby, one of the highlights of the year!



If you’ve never experienced the thrill of the racing of Scout-produced wooden cars, visit us in the parish hall. Racing will start at about 6:00 p.m.

This is a family event and children are welcome. To quote the Pack newsletter: “We’ll have trophies for the pack’s top finisher and coolest design, and the fastest cars in each den. There will also be awards for all racers and a special division for siblings (and maybe even hyper-competitive parents).”

Spring Rummage Sale Committee Kick-Off Meeting Sunday, March 3

The Rummage Sale will be May 18, with drop off, table set up, and last minute pricing on May 17.

Please come to the parish hall meeting room after the 10:30 service to participate in making this important fundraiser happen. The format and schedule will be different this year—come learn about the changes and ways to help.

Sunday School Update

We wrapped up 2018 with a fun Christmas Eve pageant. Special thanks to Lindsay Ragheb for organizing and directing!

We kicked off 2019 with a record-setting 33 children in Sunday School on January 6.

Also on January 6, the Senior class announced the results of their huge fund raising effort to benefit Heifer International. They managed to raise \$887.40, which was matched by MedImmune, LLC (thanks, Simone!), and triple matched by Heifer International for a grand total of \$3,549.60. This money was enough to buy four irrigation pumps, one flock of chickens, one flock of ducks, one flock of goslings, four alpacas, four pigs, four goats, four llamas and four sheep.

On January 20, Alice Morrison helped us to launch an ongoing mission project to help the children send care cards to support people in our congregation and community. Thank you, Alice!

In our classes, we've begun studying parables that Jesus told.

And we have more exciting mission work. On February 3, all the students made Valentine's Day cards for children who are in hospitals on the

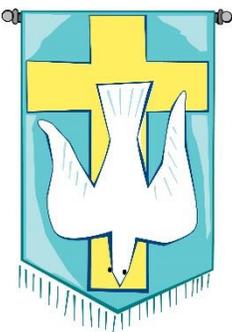
14th. We are partnering with a local nonprofit called Eliana's Light. A representative collected the cards and will distribute them to six pediatric medical centers in our region.

Also on February 3, the Sunday School Seniors started a food drive for The Children's Inn at NIH that will culminate in a field trip to deliver the food on Sunday, February 24. See the next page!

We can always use more parent and other volunteers. Specifically, we need:

- At least one more person to teach the Primes class (Kindergarten and first grade) one or two Sundays a month.
- One or more people to initiate and coordinate Sunday School extracurricular social and/or mission activities. This person would not need to organize all the activities themselves. Andy Mason can help with email distributions, online sign-up sheets and placing notices in the bulletin. Other volunteers can organize activities, book venues, bring refreshments, etc. We just need someone to get us going.

Confirmation Classes Begin March 11



The confirmation service this year will be held on Saturday, May 11 at the National Cathedral. Adults and youth who are interested in being confirmed are invited to attend our Confirmation class series.

We will meet for seven Sundays, beginning on March 10, after the

10:30 service (no meetings on Sundays April 14 and 21). Pizza will be provided! Come 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.



Ash Wednesday Services and Quiet Day, March 6



Services with Imposition of Ashes will be held at noon and 7:30 p.m. After the noon service, stay for a short Quiet Day in the church with activities to lead us into our Lenten journey.

Quarterly State of the Parish Address, Sunday, March 17

Christ, Communication, and Coffee with Rev. Meredith



Please join us in the parish hall after the 10:30 service to catch up on celebrations, goings-on, and daily church life. The spiritual and financial health of the parish will also be reviewed.

St. James' Sunday School Food Drive for NIH Children's Inn

February 3 – 24, 2019

The St. James' Sunday School identified helping children in hospitals as a service goal for the year. The Sunday School seniors will be leading a food drive for the Children's Inn during February, 2019.

The Children's Inn provides housing for families and their children who are participating in research and treatment at the NIH hospital. Trying to make it a "place like home" for families with a seriously ill child, the Children's Inn keeps several pantries stocked with snacks and food to cook for meals or take on-the-go.

If you would like to contribute, please drop off food items with Marisol or one of the Sunday School volunteers in the undercroft or in the box in the main lobby before any 10:30 a.m. service in February.

Children's Inn Wish List of MOST NEEDED ITEMS

White rice	Jelly	Raisins
Individual cereal	Olive oil	Shelf-stable milk
Pudding cups	Pasta sauce	Apple sauce (squeeze)
Jello cups	Pasta mixes	Granola bars
Fruit cups	Canned fruit	

Wish List for the Inn's "Help Yourself" Pantries

- Tuna cracker kits
- Canned fruit, fruit cups, dried fruit, raisin/craisin boxes
- Cereal in single-serve boxes
- Individual-sized snacks, especially healthy snacks (applesauce, granola bars, pretzels, pudding, Jell-O, etc.)
- Shelf-stable food & reduced-fat milk, Horizon milks (regular, vanilla and chocolate)
- Juice boxes, bottled water
- Cooking essentials (spices, olive oil, non-stick cooking spray, etc.)
- Nutella, Nutella kits
- Condiments: mayonnaise, mustard, ketchup, honey, syrup, agave, BBQ sauce
- Long grain white rice, regular brown rice

Note from the Inn: Please be sure to check the expiration date on food you donate, as this helps in stocking the shelves with fresh and safe food for families to consume. Small serving sizes and individually packaged items are preferred.

Non-Native Invasive Plants

By John Combs

In our last essay we looked at Native Plants and their critical role in the environment. This essay will discuss one of the most significant threats to the survival of existing native plants which is the introduction of non-native invasive plants here in after referred to as NNIs.

Non-Native Invasive plants (NNIs) are plants that have been introduced to an area from other areas and ecosystems that are not native to our area. Many non-native plants present no problem for native plants because they are not invasive and therefore are tolerated. What we are concerned with are non-native plants that reproduce rapidly, spread over a large area and have few if any natural controls to keep them in check and thereby present a threat to the survival of native plants. These NNIs can be aquatic plants, herbaceous perennials, shrubs, trees or vines.

Many of these plants were intentionally introduced and then escaped and became an invasive problem plant. Such NNIs as Garlic Mustard and Oriental Bittersweet are examples of plants introduced intentionally. Many other NNIs entered accidentally through cargo operations at ports of entry or in packaging materials when items are shipped from overseas. Regardless of how they arrived, if they are invasive they need to be identified and controlled.

A principal concern to county residents is to know which NNIs are most important in our county. The Montgomery County Parks program maintains a website designed by the Weed Warrior Program that lists the NNIs of greatest concern in the county at: www.weedwarrior.org. This site contains the names and color coded references which when clicked take you to detailed descriptions and photos. This is an excellent reference provided you know the name of the NNI of interest to you. I will cover other guide material later that is an appropriate way to identify a particular plant in question.

Our county has been a pioneer in developing strategies to combat NNIs. Carole Bergmann, a Montgomery Parks Countywide Forest Ecologist

and Field Botanist, designed and implemented an innovative program to train and authorize individual citizen volunteers to help control NNIs in the county Parks. This program has been imitated by other jurisdictions around the Country and Ms. Bergmann has gotten widespread recognition for her innovative program. Since the program was initiated in 2003 over 98,000 hours of citizens' volunteer time has been compiled removing NNIs in Montgomery County Parks and approximately 950 individuals trained as Weed Warriors.

The Montgomery County Parks Weed Warrior Program is described on their webpage at www.weedwarrior.org. They provide training session seven or eight times per year at various locations throughout the county. Attending one of these sessions is an excellent way to learn about invasive plants while performing a very worthwhile civic service and getting lots of exercise at the same time. If you do not want to commit to the program until you know more about it, you could join one of many supervised NNI removal activities coordinated by the Weed Warrior Program and identified on their webpage.

Of particular concern are NNI vines that threaten the survival of our native trees that are so valuable in the natural landscape. In addition there are a number of NNIs that spread rapidly and completely take over vast areas displacing many desirable native plants. Examples of some of the latter NNIs are Mile-a-Minute vine and Lesser Celandine.

In order to control NNIs we must first be able to recognize them. Photo guides are available including: A National Park Service publication that has an online version at www.maipc.org/PlantInvadersMidAtlanticNaturalAreas5thEdition.pdf. This professional publication has detailed discussions of many of the topics I am covering in the short essay but with a great deal more specificity and detail with cited references in many cases. If any of the issues I have raised are of

continued on next page

Amy Metcalf in “The Plaza Suite”**February 16**

Saturday, February 16: “Plaza Suite” at Sandy Spring Theater. Our own Amy Black (Metcalf to us) has a significant part in Neil Simon’s “Plaza Suite,” presented by the Sandy Spring Theater Group at the Arts Barn in the Kentlands, Gaithersburg. Dan and Scott Zimmerman will be organizing this event, which will be preceded by a restaurant dinner for those interested. Contact Dan and Scott at sdz40@yahoo.com.

We will gather on Saturday, February 16 at Mamma Lucia at 6:00 p.m., eat dinner, and then go see Amy in the play at 8:00 p.m. Mamma Lucia is at 14921 Shady Grove Rd (Falls Grove village Center) Rockville, MD; 301-762-8805; the menu is online. The Arts Barn is at 311 Kent Square Rd., Gaithersburg, MD. Hurry—the Arts Barn has a seating capacity of only 99. Tickets are \$18-20 plus a \$2 fee per ticket if purchased online by credit card.

Please let Dan Zimmerman know by February 9 if you can attend dinner and the play and he will make reservations for both.

Cheryl Stafford in “The Gondoliers”**February 24****Ready for a theatrical water trip?**

After weeks of winter, don’t Gilbert and Sullivan lift the spirits? Set in Venice, this story of two Gondoliers trying to figure out which one is the ruler of a distant kingdom is sure to float your boat! Put on your thinking cap and see if you can solve the mystery before they do.

Our own Cheryl Stafford’s singing and dancing talents will be on display at Rockville’s F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre. The production is staged by the Victorian Lyric Opera Company, a local producer known to many at St. James’.

Tickets are \$28 for adults, \$24 for seniors, and \$20 for students. To go as a group from St. James’ to the 2:00 p.m. show on Sunday, February 24, contact Mary Miers, at 240-274-7087, email marylmiers@comcast.net by noon on Sunday, February 9. We might have lunch, and maybe we will have enough takers to qualify for a group discount!

Non-Native Invasive Plants, continued from page 14

particular interest to you this would be a good source of further information.

A second valuable reference is The Maryland Invasive Species Council which puts out a monthly report called the “Invaders of the Month” which contains very valuable and timely articles about invasive issues: <http://mdinvasives.org/iotm/>. Looking at the past issues of this source will help you realize how great the challenges are to control invasive plants in our local ecosystem.

When you are visiting local plant nurseries or garden centers and you notice they are selling invasive plants you should let them know that you object to this practice. The Maryland Native Plant Society has a card which you may download at www.mdflora.org, that they suggest you give to such an establishment alerting them to the problem of introducing NNIs. If you discover as I

did that many plants in your yard are not native plants you may want to consider replacing some of them with native plants. This is a valuable way of creating an environment that is more welcoming to native species of insects, animals and birds that depend on them.

Controlling NNIs plants requires real consistent effort since the NNIs rapidly reproduce, and dormant seeds may remain viable for several years. In many cases removing top growth will not kill the plant so that use of some herbicide is necessary to completely kill the plant. Where invasive plants are prevalent the local birds may have few other choices and eat the invasive seeds which leads to spreading them. Some NNIs like thistles can come back if even fairly small pieces of the root are left in the ground. This extreme persistence for many NNIs places a high value on the prevention of introduction in the first place.

News from St. James' Children's School

Classroom Spotlight: Developing Early Literacy in the Fours Room By Yuganti Shirodkar

What is Early Literacy? Children are born ready to learn. At the beginning, children learn from visuals and then associate visuals with sounds, just as a baby recognizes Mom's face and voice. In the Fours classroom, we provide learning opportunities every day through talking, reading, singing, and playing. Through these interactions, children develop a foundation of reading, writing, and learning even before they start formal reading. This knowledge they develop is called early literacy.

There are several techniques of developing early literacy. We use these techniques in the Fours classroom: vocabulary, print motivation, print awareness, letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, and narrative skills. Sight words are introduced in the class every week. We develop beginning readers by using the sight words and by drawing visuals. Each week, we introduce a "Letter of the Week" and discuss the phonic sound of the letter. Later in the year, we learn about ending sounds, vowels, consonants, and consonant blends. We play games, sing songs, and do worksheets to review phonic sounds.

Children are encouraged to bring their favorite books and then narrate the books in their own words to develop narrative skills. We read many books in class and discuss print terminology to encourage print awareness. We speak to children in a positive tone to encourage communication. Helping children use appropriate vocabulary is another way to develop a good word "bank."

Before children can take control of their own experience and spend time with peers, they begin communication with their family. Early on, each child loves to hear and learn words from familiar voices. This is the start of literacy development. Home is the very first social group children interact with. This forms the basis of their early literacy development. Spending time with children reading books, singing songs, interacting, and pretend playing is crucial for their language and literacy development. The knowledge base that children develop through these activities will support their literacy learning for years to come.

Calendar of Events

Sundays at 9:15 a.m.: FaithTalk - adult spiritual formation (childcare available); Mental Health series begins February 10

Sundays at 10:30 a.m.: Sunday School, childcare; **Sunday School Food Drive** during February

Thursdays at 10:00 a.m.: Way of Love study

February and March Nursing Home Visits: Help is needed to keep this ministry alive! Please contact the office if you'd like to try a visit to share worship and prayer with our neighbors.

February 10: Valentine's Plant Sale

February 23: Bingo Night and Potluck Supper, 5:30 p.m.

February 24: Père Wildaine at FaithTalk; Book Club

February 26: *The Pilgrim* submissions deadline

March 3: Rummage Sale Committee meeting, noon

March 5: Lunch & Learn, 11:30 a.m.

March 6: Ash Wednesday Services and Quiet Day, noon and 7:30 p.m.

March 11: Confirmation classes begin

March 14: Samaritan Ministry Next Step Breakfast

March 17: Quarterly State of the Parish address, noon

Fundraisers for St. James' Children's School

Valentine's Day Bake Sale, February 13 -14

Pick up some tasty treats in the school lobby!

Dine Out Fundraiser at CAVA, February 19. Eat in or take out at

CAVA in Cabin John between 4:00 and 8:00 p.m. Mention St. James' with your order and SJCS will receive 10%.

Come Serve with Us: Nursing Home Ministry

Our nursing home ministry volunteers offer a worship service that includes Holy Communion, scripture, music, and prayer support to the residents of two area nursing homes, each once a month. Please contact the church office if you are interested in trying this fulfilling ministry.

