



The St. James' Pilgrim

News for the Journey . . .

March 2019

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



Thoughts from our Rector, The Rev. Meredith T. Heffner

Wishing you a holy Lent

Every year, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, when we are reminded that we are dust, and to dust we will return. During this time we remember Jesus went into the

desert to fast and pray before beginning his work for God

As it says in our prayer book (p. 265), we are invited “to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s holy Word.”

In the book *Lent with Evelyn Underhill*, Underhill refers to Lent as a period of “stocktaking.” She suggests that in our modern desire for speed and immediate results, we often overlook the importance of self-examination, thereby risking burnout, a loss of direction, and an absence of spiritual nourishment.

I like this metaphor. It reminds us that no matter what we do with our lives, every so often we need to pause—to examine what we are doing, to make sure that our lives are in good order.

Lent offers us the opportunity for “spiritual stocktaking:” a time to pause, to examine our relationship with God, to see what’s lacking—as well as what needs to be jettisoned—so that we are ready to receive the promise that Easter brings.

There are many ways to examine our inner lives during this period of reflection and self-

examination. Some people “give things up,” making a sacrifice of some sort (chocolate, for example, or social media). Others take this a step further and engage in periods of fasting during Lent—taking their eyes away from the things of the world and focusing more on God.

Others, instead of giving something up, take something on—adding things to their daily routines like more prayer or service, reading or exercise.

Whether you choose to give something up or take something on, what’s important is that you do something that works for you – so that this period of 40 days becomes one of self-reflection and closer engagement with God.

At St. James’ there are many ways to observe a holy Lent:

- We offer **Lenten reflections**, emailed every weekday and Saturday of the season. These are written by members of the parish, and offer personal reflections on the theme for the season. This year our theme is “Walking in the Wilderness.” You may choose to write a reflection, or to read the daily reflections. The hope is that they draw you deeper in your relationship with God.
- **Lenten Creation Care** calendars are available in the narthex, offering daily suggestions for caring for the world around us. As the tagline on the calendar says, “The world can change a lot in 40 days.”

continued on next page

Thoughts About Spiritual Ascesis

(That is: exercise, shedding some unnecessary mental fat, toning the muscles of attention and patience.)

By Holly Mulderig

Excerpted from *Sensing God: Learning to Meditate During Lent*, by Laurence Freeman, OSB.

He fasted for forty days and forty nights. —Matthew 4:2

Forty is one of those numbers that seems to turn up everywhere. It has many symbolic meanings but in biblical terms, as well as in Asian traditions, it points to the idea of process, a time of trial or preparation during which people are made ready for the next stage in their development. The Hebrews spent forty years in the wilderness before entering their promised land; Jesus spent forty days fasting in the desert before beginning to teach publicly; Muhammad spent forty days

fasting in a cave and the Buddha sat for the same length of time meditating under the Bodhi tree. According to Kabbalah, an ancient Jewish tradition of mystical interpretation of the Bible, it takes forty years to complete a cycle of transformation from intention to integration.

The forty days and nights of Lent are about simplification, purification, getting priorities reestablished and remembering that God, not my ego, is the center of reality. Whatever discipline you take up for Lent (giving up sweets or alcohol, doing spiritual reading, spending more time with your loved ones, helping someone in need) it is about this—simplification and purification.

The ancient word for this discipline was *ascesis* and it was used as a metaphor from the training exercises of athletes. Lent is a time for spiritual asceticism or exercise, shedding some unnecessary mental fat, toning the muscles of attention and patience. The way of meditation is an integral part of the Christian tradition of prayer—the “prayer of the heart.” This distinguishes it from either mental prayer or the external forms of worship with which many Christians have come to identify prayer.

Prayer is like a wheel with many spokes—these can be explicitly religious such as those we practice in church, or less obviously so, like walking, exercise, making music, or art. Whatever concentrates our attention in a selfless way can be said to be a form of prayer. The fruit of all prayer is a calmer mind and a more open and compassionate heart.

In this way of meditation—praying in the heart, or what Jesus calls the “inner room”—we are not speaking to God or thinking about God or asking God for things. Meditation is not what you think. We are *being with* God.

The early Christian monks, the desert fathers and mothers, said that meditation was the “laying aside of thoughts.” This means good and bad thoughts, silly as well as wise ones. In meditation we are not trying to have good or better thoughts.

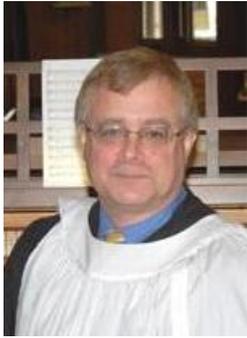
continued on next page

Rector's Reflection on a Holy Lent continued from page 1

- We also have the **Stations of the Cross** available in the sanctuary for you to experience any time during office hours. If you are unfamiliar with the Stations of the Cross, the practice refers to a series of images and prayers relating to Jesus on the day of his crucifixion. The prayers can be picked up in the church office.
- If you enjoy a lighter Lent, many parishioners participate in “**Lent-Madness.**” This is a Lenten discipline that combines a study of Christian saints using the format of “March Madness.” You can pick up your “Saintly Scorecard” at church, or for more information go to www.lentmadness.org.
- You can also get back to basics! See Holly Mulderig's piece below to learn more about **Meditation.**

Whatever you do this Lent, I pray that it brings you closer to God, and inspires you to a renewal of faith. God bless you this Lent, and always.

Rev. Meredith



Reflection from our Music Director, Newton Lewis

Wilderness and Grace

One of this year's Lenten Gospel readings will be the familiar story of the prodigal son. I find that a great sequence hymn for that reading is "Amazing grace."

The theme common to both is that in spite of our failings and shortcomings, God's mercy and grace is always waiting there for those willing to accept it. The hymn is probably one of the most beloved of all time. One of the reasons that the text is such a powerful witness to God's grace is that text is autobiographical and attests to the real life "prodigal son" story of its author, John Newton.

He was born in 1725 near London, England to a religious mother, who hoped he would become a clergy person, and a father who was a merchant

ship captain. His mother died when he was six and when he was eleven his father took him to sea.

Later in his teens he was impressed into the British navy aboard the *HMS Harwich*. As one source puts it, Newton's life as a sailor "had become so debauched, irreverent, and immoral that even his fellow sailors were shocked by his conduct and coarse speech." He rejected the Christian upbringing of his mother and enjoyed trying to convince his fellow sailors to also reject God.

When he was 17, while on leave, he visited the Catletts, old family friends of his mother. He fell head over heels in love with the daughter, Mary, and decided to go AWOL. When the British Navy caught up with him he was demoted and given eight dozen lashes.

continued on next page

Thoughts About Spiritual Ascesis, continued from page 2

If you get an inspired solution to a problem you are troubled by, let it go and it should be there when you finish your meditation (although by then it may not feel so inspired!).

How to Begin: Sit down with your back straight. You can use a straight-backed chair or a cushion or meditation bench. Sit alert and comfortably, so that you can sit still throughout the meditation. Close your eyes lightly. Begin to repeat a single word or mantra and try to repeat it continuously, faithfully throughout the period of the meditation. When thoughts, problems, plans, memories, fantasies, anxieties, whatever, rise in the mind let them go and return your attention to the mantra. I recommend the word *maranatha*. This is an ancient Christian prayer-word but also one that can be used by all, young and old, those with faith and those without. It means "Come, Lord" but we are not consciously thinking of its meaning while we repeat it. If you choose this word say it as four syllables: ma-ra-na-tha. Articulate it clearly in the mind and listen to it as you repeat it.

The simplicity and stillness of the mantra will lead you into the silence that is pure prayer. There is nothing so much like God as silence, according to Meister Eckhart, a twelfth century German mystic and theologian. The simple discipline is to say the mantra from the beginning to the end of the meditation—as best you can. Don't evaluate yourself. The thought of failure is just another thought to lay aside.

Saying the mantra is the interior form of the discipline of meditation. Actually sitting down to it every day is the outer form.

A lot can happen in forty days and forty nights. More useful things will happen if we enter into this period of sweet discipline with open hearts and minds, with conscious attention. It's not about succeeding, however, but it's about simply being faithful. That's when the most interesting, enlivening things happen. It is then that our sense of God is opened, transforming everything. ♦

Wilderness and Grace, continued from page 3

However, he remained so unmanageable that the captain of the *Harwich* traded him for a crew member of a passing slave ship.

On the slave ship, Newton openly mocked the captain and wrote obscene poems about him. While the crew seemed to enjoy the poems about the captain, he got into so many fights with the other sailors that he ended up being chained with the slaves. The captain gave him over to be a slave on a plantation in Sierra Leone owned by his African mistress. He was forced to steal food just to keep from starvation.

One can't help but think of the passage in the prodigal son story that says "He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating." He sent a letter to his father telling him of his situation. His father put out the word to other captains and the son was eventually located and rescued from the plantation.

Twenty-three-year-old John Newton next found himself on the *Greyhound* where the captain found him to be one of the most profane people he had ever met. According to one biographer, "Newton was admonished several times for not only using the worst words the captain had ever heard, but creating new ones to exceed the limits of verbal debauchery."

In March of 1748, the ship hit a fierce North Atlantic storm. It raged for a week. The sails were torn; some of the sides of the ship were splintered. After a week, Newton and another crew member manned the bilge pumps because the ship was taking on water. He said to the captain "If this will not do, then Lord have mercy on us." Taking a break from pumping he was then strapped to the helm to keep from getting swept overboard.

During his eleven hours at the helm he began to think about having invoked the Lord's mercy. He had mocked the faith of others and denounced God as a myth. Would God actually have mercy on the likes of him, he wondered. Yet he came to believe that God was sending him a message of salvation and would work through him to spread the message of God's love and redeeming grace.

March 21, his last day at the helm, is the day that Newton always considered his conversion to Christ. He did not immediately turn everything around in his life. However, knowing he wanted to go in a new direction, he asked Mary's parents for her hand in marriage. Her parents were hesitant but allowed him to write to her. Knowing he had to make a living to support a wife and family, he returned to what he knew—the slave trade. He even became the captain of his own ship.

It wasn't until he was thirty and suffered a stroke that he stopped going to sea. He and his by then wife, Mary, immersed themselves in church activities. He studied Greek, Latin, and theology. Because of his passion for the Gospel, many friends began to suggest that he become an Anglican priest. The first bishop turned him down for not having a university education. It has been suggested that the real reasons were his evangelical leanings and hanging out with Methodists! But an earl, impressed with his story, sponsored him and the Bishop of Lincoln ordained him and offered him the position in Olney.

Olney was a parish made up of poor workers, most of whom were illiterate. Newton's style of preaching was emotional and drawn from his own experience of sin and redemption. It was no surprise that his parish grew and needed to have two and three prayer meetings a week besides Sunday morning services.

William Cowper, the not-yet-famous poet, was a member of the congregation. Newton and Cowper became close friends and decided to write a new hymn text for every prayer meeting. On January 1, 1773, Newton was preaching on David's prayer in 1 Chronicles: "Who am I, Lord God,...that you have brought me this far?" The name of the hymn text that he wrote for that prayer meeting was "Faith's Review and Expectation." The first line was "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound."

As one biographer notes "Newton saw himself a sinner like David who had been chosen, perhaps undeservedly, and was humbled by it." (As Newton himself put it, "our hearts endeavored

continued on next page

FaithTalk Mental Health/Wellness Forum

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

- February 10** National Alliance on Mental Illness – an Introduction to Programs and Mental Illness
- February 17** Where we have come at St. James' and how we will discern where to go from here with Mental Health
- March 3** In Our Own Voices, by National Alliance on Mental Illness
- March 10** Mental Health and Montgomery County Youth
- March 17** The Relationship Between Mental Health and Poverty
- March 24** How to Recognize if Someone is in Crisis and How to Help
- March 31** Program not yet confirmed: Anxiety?
- April 2** **(Tuesday, at Lunch and Learn, 11:30 a.m.)** Mental Health Issues in Later Life
- April 7** Program not yet confirmed: Military, Veterans and Mental Health?
- April 14** Continuing the Discernment: Review of the Series

Men's Fellowship: March Madness Edition!



All St. James' men are invited to watch the **NCAA basketball tournament on Saturday, March 23.**

We'll gather in the undercroft (downstairs area of the church) starting at 5:00 p.m. Please bring snacks to share and your favorite beverage. Questions? See Yemi Agboola or Pete Iype.

Wilderness and Grace, continued from page 4

to shut him out till he overcame us by the power of his grace.”)

In 1779 the two compiled 348 texts into what they called Olney Hymns. The collection became popular in evangelical circles with their emphasis on faith, salvation, the wonder of God's grace, and love for Jesus.

At the time of its writing, Newton's intentions were about personal salvation, not a political statement on abolition. That chapter in his life would come about while he was at his next church, St. Mary Woolnoth in London and 34 years after he had left the slave trade. In 1788 he wrote a pamphlet *entitled Thoughts Upon the Slave Trade*. In it, he describes the horrors of the slave trade and his remorse “that it would always be a subject of humiliating reflection to me, that I was once an active instrument in a business at which my heart now shudders.” The pamphlet was sent to every member of Parliament as well as being sold to the general public. At this point he became

an ally of William Wilberforce, a leading abolitionist MP and together they helped insure the passage of the Slave Trade Act of 1807 which banned slavery in Britain and British held territories.

As for “Amazing Grace”, it never really took off in Britain. In fact, in the ensuing years after its first appearance, it was only published once. But it did make its way across the sea to the United States, where it was coupled with a tune called NEW BRITAIN. It's from the U.S. that it became one of the world's most beloved hymns. But that will have to be another story.

I would like to close with words from Newton's epitaph:

JOHN NEWTON, Clerk, Once an infidel and libertine, A servant of slaves, Was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the Gospel which he had long laboured to destroy. ♦

Lent Calendar and Programs



Stations of the Cross during Lent

Fourteen Stations of the Cross will be hung along the walls of the church during Lent. Each station offers a place for meditation and reflection. Come visit the stations during office hours, 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Lenten Reflections: “Reflections on God from the Wilderness”

Reflections from parishioners will be emailed to the parish during the 40 days of Lent. To contribute, email James Isaacs, james@stjamespotomac.org.

Seven Locks Ecumenical Dinner, Study and Worship

Wednesdays March 13 to April 10

“Bridging the Gap: Overcoming Differences Through Christ’s Love.”

Enjoy this annual event with our neighboring congregations of Seven Locks Road. Dinner is served at 6:30 p.m.; study and worship begin at 7:30 p.m.

Hosting Churches and Schedule:

March 13	Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 7720 Bradley Blvd., Bethesda
March 20	St. James’ Episcopal Church, 11815 Seven Locks Rd., Potomac
March 27	Seven Locks Baptist Church, 11845 Seven Locks Rd., Potomac
April 3	Geneva Presbyterian Church, 11931 Seven Locks Rd., Potomac
April 10	Scotland AME Zion Church, 10902 Seven Locks Rd., Potomac

Holy Week and Easter Services

✠ Palm Sunday, April 14

Holy Eucharist at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m., followed by brunch at noon

Bells, procession with palms, and a dramatic reading of the Passion of Christ. Brunch at noon hosted by St. James’ Youth Group.

✠ Maundy Thursday, April 18

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

✠ Good Friday, April 19

Vigil at Noon; Good Friday Liturgy Service at 7:30 p.m.

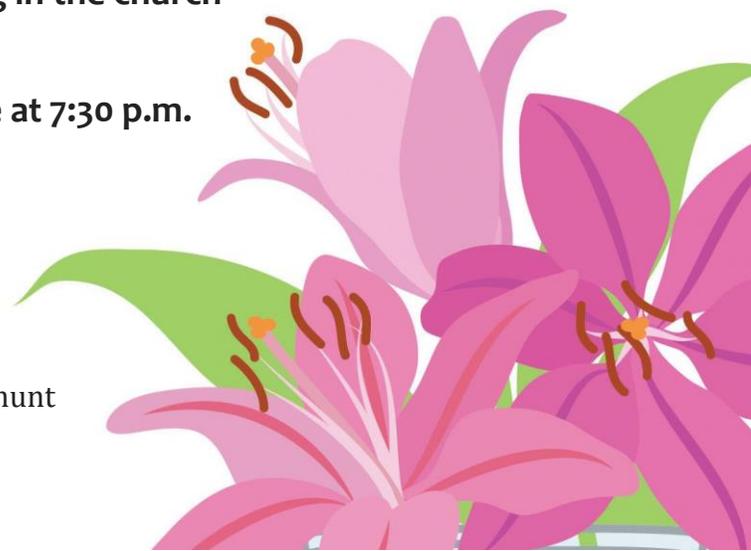
Quiet Day in the Church: 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

✠ Easter Sunday, April 21

Holy Eucharist at 8:00 a.m.

Festival Eucharist at 10:30 a.m.

Brass, choir, and a glorious celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord! Children’s Easter egg hunt after the 10:30 service.



Highlights from the Vestry Retreat

Meeting of February 3, 2019, at Vestry Retreat

The vestry met at 9:00 a.m., February 3, 2019, on the second day of its retreat at the Bishop Claggett Center, Adamstown, MD. The rector presided, and a quorum was present.

Reverend Meredith led the **Spiritual Retreat Debriefing**, based on the previous day's excellent program led by Rev. Tricia Lyons, Missioner for Evangelism and Community Engagement, Episcopal Diocese of Washington. The theme was "Beyond Joy and Warmth; Abundant Life!" and involved exercises to achieve deeper spiritual engagement. The vestry discussed the concept of "Walking with Love" and the "Wedge" of activities that bring one closer to God. Feedback from vestry members emphasized the positive nature of the previous day's experience and the spiritual energy and commitment of the vestry in "moving ahead" to greater involvement.

State of the Parish reports included a security update and a financial review. The **treasurer's** preliminary report for 2018 indicates that St. James' will close out the year with a surplus of income over expenses, the result of increases in plate income, the proceeds from two rummage sales, and \$2500 in matching gifts from employers of two parishioners. Tracy Lively reported that the Mary Shepard bequest would be deposited in two accounts: \$100,000 in a money market account at 2.0% annually and \$900,000 in a stock asset account (Treasury notes), earning 2.5%. She mentioned also that valuation of property, buildings, and furnishing needed updating, as the last inventory was carried out in 2005.

Reverend Meredith reported the findings of the biennial **Mutual Ministry Review**. Thirty-six responses, including eight from vestry members, were received. As this represents 25 percent of our average Sunday attendance, it is considered to be a very good response. The proposed engagement in the area of mental health and wellness received mixed responses, largely positive. To quote the rector, "When you hear God calling, you may not end up where you think you will," and we will proceed with deliberation. The

review confirmed that finances were considered to be stable and that transportation assistance to members, multigenerational activities, earth stewardship, and increased access to religious education were concerns. Too many activities burden the congregation. Outreach, personnel, and facilities need attention, according to respondents. As regards our clergy, the review spoke to the need to take time to care for self, as well as care for others.

The handbook "**What you need to know about being a vestry member**" outlined expectations, to include active participation in the definition and support of the church's mission, being spiritual leaders for the church family, giving proper attention to finances and legal responsibilities, and serving as liaisons to individual commissions. Roles are being revised, to include new vestrypersons.

Reverend Meredith has begun the process of meeting with each of our commissions, to receive status reports, evaluate membership and programs, and plan for the near and long term.

St. James' is in a period of positive transition. All congregants need to be kind and to love one another, so that we can serve God in this place, to the best of our abilities.

Barry Thompson, Senior Warden



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.

Vestry Business Meeting, February 24

The vestry met for 40 minutes after the 10:30 service on Sunday, February 24, because of the lengthy interval between the February 3 meeting and the next scheduled meeting on March 19. The rector presided, and a quorum was present.

The **treasurer** reported a surplus of about \$30,000 for 2018, instead of the projected deficit of \$54,000! Final accounting for 2018 is almost complete. Two small corrections, one positive and one negative, needed to be made to the 2019 budget, approved by the vestry at its December 2018 meeting. Both corrections were approved, and the treasurer's report was accepted. Any alterations to commission or committee sub-line requests for 2019 should be submitted to the treasurer. In response to a question, the relatively stable nature of rentals (largely because rental agreements are in place for major renters) was confirmed.

Reverend Meredith spoke of the **follow-up to the vestry retreat** and of moving ahead to our "why:" why does St. James' exist, what is our vision for serving God in this place, and how do we ensure that our actions support the "so that" in attaining our goals. All commissions and committees will be asked to consider the "wedge" of the "Way of Love" (introduced to the vestry at the retreat) as the parish continues its mission "to bring people together to be transformed by, and to proclaim, Christ's love through worship, spiritual formation, and service."

Two proposals for spending were received from the **St. James' Children's School**. One is for replacement of the glass exit doors at the rear of the school (under the parish hall ramp); the other for replacement of large playground structure in the fenced play area, which is now more than 20 years old. The expenditures involve only school money and were approved at the recent SJCS Board meeting. The vestry approved the proposals.

Reverend Meredith stated that progress continues to be made in updating the covenant between the church and the school.

The success of Saturday's "**Potluck and Bingo**" was noted, and thanks extended to Dawn Iype and all who assisted in preparations and/or attended. Some 70 parishioners, of all ages, and guests enjoyed hours of good food, fellowship, and bingo (with a plethora of "valuable" prizes).

Also mentioned was today's end of **the Sunday School's gathering of food** items for the food pantry at the Children's Inn of the National Institutes of Health. The amount of donations was impressive, and thanks were offered for all who participated.

Reverend Meredith reminded vestry members of the opportunity (further explained by Reverend James at the 10:30 service) to **provide Lenten reflections** (emailed on a daily basis). She provided **dates for upcoming events**, to include: Edits to "A-Z Books" due March 1; Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, March 5; Ash Wednesday, March 6; Confirmation classes begin March 24; State of the Parish Address, March 17. Further information can be obtained from bulletins, *The Pilgrim*, News and Notes, and from the church office.

The meeting closed with prayer and was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Barry Thompson, Senior Warden

St. James' Youth Events in March

Sunday, March 17: Pretzel Making, 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the parish hall. Bring \$3.

Sunday, March 23: Into The Woods, at Ford's Theater. Plan to be out and about from noon to 6:00 p.m. The musical runs from at 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. We will metro there and back. **RSVP ASAP to Rachele Donnelly, rachele_donnelly@yahoo.com., to help us secure the lowest ticket price!** The cost for the show per youth will be \$25. Each youth should have a SmartTrip Metro card (or money to obtain one) and \$10 for lunch at the Potbelly's near the theater. We will meet and depart from Grovesnor Metro station.

Bingo! Fellowship, Food, and Fun

St. James' first Bingo night on February 23 was a big success!

We enjoyed a delicious potluck dinner, then broke out the Bingo cards. Linda Ellis and Harley Venton kept the crowd entertained while calling out the numbers. While there was clearly one very lucky table, many people won fun prizes from the white elephant table.

The Membership Commission would like to thank everyone who contributed food, prizes, time or talent to make this a great event. See you there next time!



Above: We filled the parish hall with players and prizes! The white elephant gifts were a hit.

Left: Harley Venton and Linda Ellis called the numbers and checked the cards of the winners.

St. James' February Service Projects

By Riley Agoston and Olivia Riel

During the month of February, the St. James' Sunday School decided to help kids suffering in hospitals. On February 3, about 30 kids made 80 Valentine cards for six hospitals with the help of a local nonprofit organization called "Eliana's Light," which supports families with children who have complex medical conditions (photos next page).

The organization collected the cards on February 4 and delivered them to Children's National Medical Center, The Hospital for Sick Children (HSC)'s Pediatric Center, Johns Hopkins Children's Center, Kennedy Krieger Institute, The Children's Inn at NIH, and Inova Children's Hospital.

In addition, the Sunday School led a food drive for the Children's Inn at NIH. The Children's Inn provides housing for families and their children who are involved in treatment and research at NIH. To create a "place like home" for families with children in need of treatment, the Children's Inn provides stocked pantries with foods and snacks to cook for meals or take on-the-go.

The Children's Inn sent us a wish list of items they would like for their pantries and kitchens.



Food Drive for The Children's Inn, NIH



This included pasta, sauce, canned fruit, granola bars, and other non-perishable items. They also sent us a wish list for their "Help Yourself" pantries. This could include juice boxes, condiments, cereal, etc. We asked the parish and Sunday School to donate foods on the Inn's wish list. In total, we were able to collect 30 fruit cups, 21 apple sauces, 17 boxes of rice, 48 boxes of pasta, 15 cereals, 14 pasta sauces, 15 soups, 17 beans, 10 peanut butter jars, 24 puddings and Jellos, 7 crackers, 26 cartons of milk, 13 drinks, 90 snacks, 10 canned tunas, 7 canned items, and 9 condiments, making the total about 373 food items raised!

On February 24, four seniors and two adult leaders sorted and packed up all the food items at St. James and then delivered the food to the Children's Inn. Thank you to everyone who donated food for this project. It is with your generosity that we were able to have a successful food drive.

We are extremely proud of the work that all of us put into these service projects, and we couldn't have done it without you! The Children's Inn is very thankful, and so are the six hospitals that received the cards for the children. Once again, thank you for contributing to these service projects.





Making Valentines

During the month of February, the St. James' Sunday School decided to help kids suffering in hospitals. About 30 kids made 80 Valentine cards for six local hospitals. More on page 10.



A happy Eliana's Light volunteer receiving the Valentine cards to be taken to local hospitals.



Some creative designs emerged – even 3-D pop-ups!



St. James' Has Got Talent!

Announcing...drum roll, please...a monthly column of artistic endeavors involving parish members. This first edition will mostly let you know what you've recently missed, although the word obviously got out in our busy February. You'll see drama, comedy, choral, and solo musical and dance performances. Highlights of the past month included:

Amy Black (Metcalf) to us, starring in one of three mini-dramas in Neil Simon's "Plaza Suite" at the Arts Barn In Gaithersburg.

Cheryl Stafford, long a teacher and mentor with a full portfolio and studio in singing, acting, and directing, returning to the stage in Gilbert & Sullivan's The Gondoliers with the Victorian Lyric Opera Company. You'll also see and hear Cheryl with our choir on Sundays.

Dylan Nohilly has been guiding our choir's bass singers as we recover from several years of life changes, most recently Blair Slaughter's recent

surgery and rehab. Dylan is also a sought-after performer in local choral works.

Since one can never have too many tenors, **Doug Throckmorton** has filled out that section when needed. He sings with The Cantate Chamber Singers and you'll be able to hear them at the farewell for director Gisele Becker on May 18 at 5:00 p.m. at St. John's, Norwood in Bethesda.

Bill and Sara Josey are still active singers with the National Philharmonic, based at Strathmore. **Charlotte Annan** has been singing with the National Christian Choir for 27 years now; and while **Mary Miers** no longer commutes to the New Dominion Chorale in Virginia, she is still a fan and will be attending NDC's opera and operetta concert on April 28. Stay tuned!

No doubt there is information about other upcoming performances; news about school productions featuring St. James' children and youth is welcome. Please send information to the parish office.

Cub Scouts at St. James'

Scout Sunday was celebrated 10 February with Cub Scouts from Pack 1306 (St. James') and Pack 1280 (St. Raphael Catholic Church) assisting ushers. Participating Scouts and Leaders were: Andrew and Matthew Boyce and father, Jim, from Pack 1280; Edwin Crane and father, Chris, from Pack 1306; Evan Kline and Sam (1306); John and Karl Lehning and John (1306); and Sam Swanson and Chris (1306). Andrew and Matthew Boyce were awarded God and Church emblems.

Presidents' Day (February 18) saw the annual Pinewood Derby for Pack 1306 held in the parish hall. More than 25 Scouts and family members attended. Fifteen Scout (and a sibling) competed in the multi-heat elimination derby with some spectacular cars constructed and decorated by the youngsters. Trophies and medals were awarded.

*Barry Thompson,
Chartered Organization Representative (COR)*



Above: Testing the racers at the Pinewood Derby, February 18.

Below: St. James' scouts Andrew and Matthew Boyce were awarded God and Church emblems, Sunday, February 10.



March Book Club: *A Tale for the Time Being*

Join us on Sunday, March 24, at 6:45 p.m. in the parish hall, where we'll discuss Ruth Ozeki's book, *A Tale for the Time Being*.

It all started with a Hello Kitty lunchbox washed ashore on a remote Pacific Northwest island. The contents, an assortment of items in various states of preservation: did they come as a result of the 2011 tsunami in Japan? What does the diary represent? Who is this girl, Nao? Who, really, is Ruth, the Canadian author who found the lunchbox? What is a "time being"? In this tale of shared humanity and a truly unique relationship between writer and reader is a quest for home. Past and present, fact and fiction, quantum physics, history, and myth—all written with, as one reviewer wrote, "Ozeki's signature humor." The book was on the short list for both a Pulitzer and a Booker award. Ozeki herself is a writer, filmmaker, and Zen Buddhist priest. This is her third novel.

The St. James' Book Club, a very informal gathering, welcomes anyone who'd like to attend and discuss—or listen to a discussion of—any of the group-chosen books. The discussions themselves are group-led, meaning that there is a very free-flowing exchange of opinions, interpretations, and questions. The sharing of insights is perhaps its most fascinating aspect, and all comments are welcome. Beginning at 6:45 in the parish hall, in either the library or the meeting room, the group disbands about 8:15.

Calling all Knitters and Crocheters!

The demand for prayer shawls exceeds supply. We have LOTS of yarn for making shawls for those in need of comfort and prayer. Pick up some yarn and a pattern (or use your own) in the narthex, or stop by the church office.

Do You Need a Ride to Church?

Call the church office and we'll help you find someone in your neighborhood to give you a ride. If you know someone who needs a ride, please tell them to contact the office for transportation help: 301-762-8040.

Lunch & Learn, April 2: Mental Health Issues in Later Life

Continuing the current quest for promoting wellness and emotional health, the April 2 meeting of Lunch & Learn will hear from Stephanie Svec, Program Director for the Senior Services of the Affiliated Santé Group. The aspect of her work pertinent to the group that day will be the effort to address the mental health needs of the aging population of Montgomery County. A county-funded grant enables counseling and prevention and early intervention services for county residents. Her presentation is entitled, "Mental Health Issues in Later Life."

To make a reservation for the \$10.00 per person lunch, please contact Sarah Padgett. Social time begins at 11:30 a.m., lunch is served at noon, and the program runs from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Meeting in the undercroft, this casual gathering is always ready to welcome YOU. And if you have time for only the program, feel free to join the group at 12:30.

YOUTH: Bishop Chane Scholarship Application Deadline is March 30

The Diocesan Board of the Episcopal Church Women invite graduating high school seniors to apply for the Bishop John Bryson Chane Scholarship for Social Justice. This scholarship for social justice is awarded to one high school senior in each region of the Diocese of Washington (Charles, Montgomery, St. Mary's, and Prince George's counties and the District of Columbia). The application and the eligibility criteria may be downloaded from the ECW website: ecw.edow@gmail.com. The deadline for applications is March 30, 2019.

The scholarship was established to honor the eighth bishop of Washington, the Right Reverend John Bryson Chane, for his tireless efforts and support of social justice issues in this Diocese and throughout the Anglican Communion. If you have any questions about this scholarship, please email ecw.edow@gmail.com or call and leave a message at 202-537-6530.

News from St. James' Children's School

Classroom Spotlight: the Pre-Kindergarten Class

By Sonia Schwartz



Pre-K Class Cares about Pets

In the Pre-K class each year when we do our "Pet Study," one of our goals is to help children develop a sense of compassion and an understanding about animals and how to respect them. This is an important topic to teach children at an early age.

Each year we also schedule a visit from the Montgomery County Humane Society (MCHS) and decide on a service project. One year we collected needed cleaning supplies. Last year we collected towels and blankets and this year we made a dog bed. MCHS takes cats and dogs out of overcrowded public shelters and gives them the tender loving care, and new homes they so desperately need and deserve. All of their work to rescue, care for and adopt out homeless animals is funded by donations. (Contact MCHS at (240) 252-2555 for more info.)

They were happy to receive our donation of a homemade dog bed created by the Pre-K Class 2019.

SJCS Fundraiser and Book Sale

Gregorio's Dine Out for SJCS, March 18: Gregorio's in Cabin John will give SJCS 5% of ALL sales from 4:00 p.m. to closing. Proceeds support teachers attending the May Conference.

Scholastic Book Fair March 18-22: Shop in the school lobby for spring and Easter books for the family. Thank you for supporting reading in every classroom!

Calendar of Events

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

Sundays at 10:30 a.m.: Sunday School, childcare

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

March 13: Ecumenical Dinner and Study, Emmanuel Lutheran Church

March 14: Samaritan Ministry Next Step Breakfast

March 17: Quarterly State of the Parish address

March 18: Gregorio's Dine Out fundraiser for St. James' Children's School

March 20: Ecumenical Dinner/Study at St. James'

March 18-22: St. James' Children's School Scholastic Book Fair

March 23: Men's Fellowship, March Madness!

March 24: Confirmation classes begin; Book Club

March 26: Newsletter submissions deadline

March 27: Ecumenical Dinner and Study, Seven Locks Baptist Church

April 2: Lunch & Learn, Mental Health presentation

April 3: Ecumenical Dinner/ Study, Geneva Presbyterian Church

April 10: Ecumenical Dinner and Study, Scotland AME Zion Church

Winter Weather?

Call the office
or check our website.

St. James' follows
MCPS guidelines for
weather-related office
closures or delays.