



The St. James' Pilgrim

News for the Journey . . .

June 2019



St. James' Episcopal Church • 11815 Seven Locks Road, Potomac, MD 20854-3340 • 301-762-8040 • www.stjamespotomac.org



Reflection from our Assistant Rector, The Rev. James S. Isaacs

Update on Mental Health Ministries

From February to April, we had a ten-part series by people with different areas of expertise presenting on mental health issues from their perspective. There

was impressive attendance at each of these, and for those who attended, we gained a clearer sense of the ministry landscape to which we are being called, and we dispelled myths while gaining accurate information.

Throughout Lent, "Reflections on God from the Wilderness," written by people in the parish, were emailed out to members of the St. James' community. Within the church, many were profoundly moved by the vulnerable sharing from so many in the congregation about experiences they had, or supported loved ones through, of mental illness. We gained a sense of the pervasive nature of these issues, and stigma and isolation were reduced within our midst.

Many from the congregation joined the NAMI walk to raise awareness and funds for the Montgomery County chapter of the National Alliance of Mental Illness. In total, we raised \$1470 and had a good time together one morning at Cabin John Regional Park.

We plan to offer a training at the church for Mental Health First Aid, to increase the ability of people in the parish to be able to appropriately respond to people in the midst of a mental health crisis until professional help can be accessed. Which brings us to where we are now.

I asked, at the announcements on Sunday and at the FaithTalk series on mental health issues, for people to indicate their willingness to make a commitment to devote extra time and energy to helping lead the Mental Health Ministries at St. James' over the next year. I contacted those who indicated an interest, and thirteen confirmed that they wanted to be leaders over the next year of the ministry (beyond just supporting the activities through participation).

Those thirteen people (in addition to the clergy) are:

Sampson Annan
Karen Clough
Lisa Goodkind
Anselm Hennis
Jeanne Lehning
Alice Morrison
Holly Mulderig
Maria Isabel Roldós
Sandy Soundararajan
Cheryl Stafford
Alex Trouteaud
Ann Venton
Harley Venton

The group has already met once, with the agenda mostly being starting to get to know each other and to start forming into a cohesive group. The group will continue to meet monthly, and it will be out of these meetings that the group will focus on where and to what God may be leading us as we move forward with the Mental Health Ministries at St. James'.

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Reflection from our Junior Warden, Sarah Hnatov

Summer Plans

Ahh, summer! It is a time for late evenings, cookouts, and lounging by the pool. Some have recently graduated and their accomplishments certainly are impressive. Others are advancing to new grade levels after completing months of hard work, mastering new concepts and fulfilling all requirements. And once school is out, schedules will be relaxed and the lazy days of summer will be upon us.

Whether you are among those tied to the school calendar or not, summer is a great time to step back and reflect on your life, beliefs, and relationships. We are about half-way through the year. Perhaps like me, you made some New Year's resolutions as we embarked on 2019. So how are those coming along? Do you remember what you vowed to do, not do, or overcome? Have you taken steps to accomplish the goals you hoped to realize over the next year?

As we head into summer, let's also take some time to slow down, change up our routines, and reflect. Whether done while walking, running, sitting in a chair, or writing, try to set aside time each day to look inward and be present to the

thoughts that arise. Explore; challenge yourself to experience something new and as you do, talk to those you meet. Engage in learning by reading, worshiping, creating, or helping little ones to explore the world around them. Reach out and give to others. Not only does it feel good to give, there so many benefits that you receive from giving. Giving provides opportunities to meet and share expertise, learn new skills, and understand and develop empathy for others. Plus volunteering also can actually make you healthier! Studies have shown that volunteering makes people feel physically healthier and lowers stress.

And finally, this summer as you travel afar and enjoy time at home, listen. In what way(s) might the Holy Spirit be nagging at you to make some changes? What steps might you take to deepen your faith, and either reset or reaffirm your purpose, place, and plan in life? Take a break. Give it some thought. A healthy restart tends to be intentional so let's use the summer ahead of us to clarify, create plans, and then get started making it happen now—before things get busy again.

I hope you enjoy the rewards of a summer well spent. Let us pray that God's Spirit would prepare the way.

Sarah

Update on Mental Health Ministries continued from page 1

If you have insights that might be helpful to the group, please share them. However, what we are most appreciative of is your prayers for continued discernment of God's guidance.

Any one of us could probably come up with some good ideas of what the congregation *should* do. We are trying not to fall into the temptation of hearing where God is calling us, and then responding, "OK, we've heard you, God. We'll take it from here." Instead, we are trying to continue to be at least as prayerful as we were originally in discerning God's call in this direction as we listen for where we are being called to go next. We might not always hear accurately, but that is what our

hope is: to focus less on good ideas that we come up with ourselves about what we should do, and more on what God is calling us to do.

There will be additional things that everyone in the congregation can participate in to further support the Mental Health Ministries at St. James'. Each month, in the *Pilgrim*, I hope to include further updates on how the work of the Mental Health Ministries group is moving forward and upcoming ways that you can join in doing what God is calling us all to do and to be.

In Christ,
James

The Abrahamic Faiths Are Praying Together

In case you are wondering, that's us, along with our brothers and sisters in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Here I share some highlights of our ongoing, loving relationship with the Islamic Community Center of Potomac (ICCP).

Representatives of the ICCP approached St. James' several years ago, looking for a place to meet for education, a Boy Scout meeting, and a potluck meal on Friday evening. The Vestry approved then-rector Cindy Baskin's proposal. As senior warden at the time I agreed to serve as liaison and attend the initial meetings. I and several others who were interested received the warmest of welcomes from the group. We attended several of the weekly meetings in our parish hall.

We were especially honored to be invited to a dinner during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, prayer, and charity. That invitation

evolved into an annual event welcoming members of many local congregations.

The ICCP is now ensconced in a beautiful and functional headquarters on River Road. This year several of us attended a Ramadan evening at the invitation of the ICCP. We began with prayers and talks by Imam Tarif and several other clergy, including the Reverends Meredith Heffner and James Isaacs. At the moment of sundown we were invited to break our fast—which for the Muslims began before sunrise—with water and dates. Additional prayers were followed by a tasty buffet prepared by the ICCP congregation.

As has now happened many times before, I went home full, happy, and impressed by the commitment required by the Muslim faith. I hope more of our flock will consider responding to the ICCP invitation in our shared future.

Mary Miers

Interfaith Gathering in Support of Those Killed in Sri Lanka

"Send us into the world in peace, with strength and courage to love." That was the outstanding Christian message of LOVE that Rev. James Isaacs was spreading and offering to the congregation of Muslims and other faiths, gathered in PEACE to mourn the Sri Lanka Easter victims on May 6 at 5:30 p.m.

The beautiful ceremony took place in the Islamic Community Center of Potomac, not very far geographically from St. James'. The food spread was impressive—and the welcome could not have been warmer—even without shoes!

In our time of "global" thinking, in these moments when Faith brotherhood needs to be strengthened, especially when churches and mosques and other places of worship are being attacked by terrorists, let us Christians of St. James' not lose opportunities when we can be loving brothers and sisters in mourning.

Claude Williams van Bellinghen

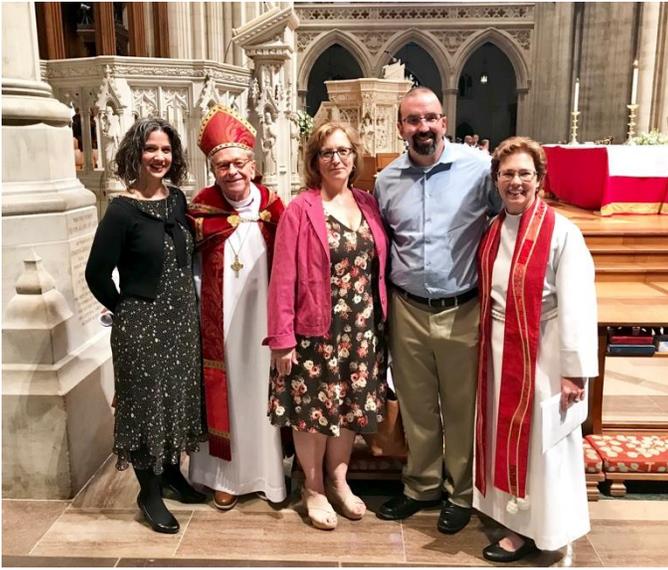
EfM is Coming to St. James'!

Education for Ministry (EfM) is a program for Christian formation through theological education and reflection offered by the Beecken Center of the School of Theology at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. We explore the *who, what, when, where, and how* of the Bible, Christian history, and theology, to possibly discern the *WHY*, and what it means for us today.

EfM is a four-year curriculum in which learners enroll one year at a time. We acknowledge everyone wherever they are along their spiritual journey. We will meet Wednesday mornings September 4 to June 3, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, in the parish hall meeting room. Cheryl Stafford is the mentor.

The cost is \$375 per year and includes books and study materials. If you are interested, please speak to Cheryl Stafford. All denominations welcome and encouraged! Registrations needed no later than August 1, but sooner is better. More information is at www.efm.sewanee.edu.

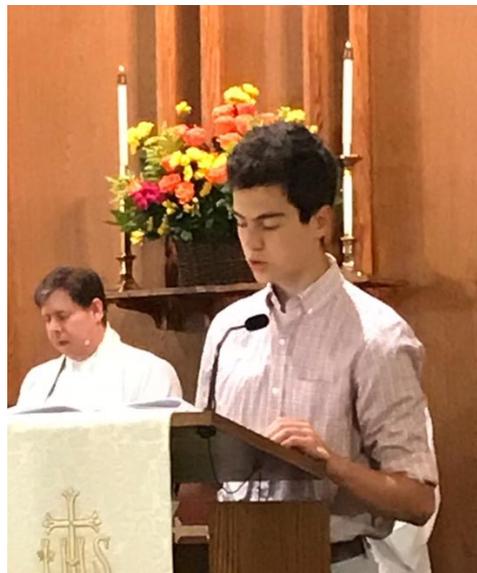
Confirmation at the Cathedral, May 11, and Youth Sunday at St. James', May 12



Finding a Kindness Rock at the Womens' Retreat At the Claggett Retreat Center, May 4



On Palm Sunday, St. James' youth painted and dispersed rocks with messages of kindness, to be dropped where they might cheer or inspire others. One rock was found at the St. James' Women's Retreat on May 4, at the Claggett Retreat Center.



Update: Bon Samaritain Parish and School, L'Acul, Haiti

The main engagement of our parish with our sister parish in Haiti has been through consistent prayer and financial support of the Bon Samaritain Parish school.

The school provides education for upwards of 300 students from primary school through our equivalent of high school. A key component of each student's educational day is the provision for a hearty lunch, often the children's one reliable meal of the day. Along with an array of other Episcopal parish partners here in the U.S., St. James's yearly financial support ensures that teaching staff salaries are reliably met so that students are nourished both educationally and nutritionally.

Our Mission and Outreach Commission has, for several years, consistently allocated \$5,000 from its overall budget for this endeavor. Accordingly, in May, we effected a successful international wire transfer of \$5,000 to the Bon Samaritain Parish account in Haiti for the continuance of this wonderful mission. Further, out of the Commission's discretionary "other" budget line we were able to bring Père Wildaine to visit with us last February.

Additionally, our parish held a special fundraising effort in August of 2018 to provide \$10,000 for the construction of a Bon Samaritain Parish rectory. This relieved the parish of the yearly expense of providing priests with rental housing and will effectively have paid for itself within the year.

We, along with our Episcopal partners, were disappointed, if not dismayed, that shortly after our brother Père Wildaine had taken up residence in the rectory, he was suspended, having been caught up in internal strife within the Diocese of Haiti. Happily, and remarkably, Père Wildaine remained the calm in the eye of that storm. He and his mother found housing with extended family in the L'Acul area and, while he is not allowed to officiate as a priest or function as the administrator of the school, he confers regularly with his Senior Warden and Vestry to maintain the regular running of the school. He also has reached

out to brother priests to meet his parishioners' sacramental needs until the matter of his suspension is properly adjudicated.

Finally, as you know, my wife Ann and I were privileged to be the first St. James' missionaries to visit Bon Samaritain in person in February of 2018. It was an amazing and revelatory trip. To witness Père Wildaine's fourteen-hour days ministering to his parishioners—as well as to the community at large—was humbling and awe-inspiring. To enjoy the fellowship and hospitality of our sisters and brothers at Bon Samaritain Parish was a joy beyond measure.

While organized mission trips may be in our parish's future, I would encourage individuals and small groups to go, as Ann and I did, just to experience and familiarize yourselves with the enduring, joyful, warmhearted faith we share with our Episcopalian sisters and brothers there. There's nothing like it.

Harley Venton

Pentecost Day Sunday, June 9!



Join us for our celebration with many voices and languages on the day that is sometimes called the Birthday of the Church. We will also celebrate a Baptism at the 10:30 service.

Quarterly State of the Parish Address Sunday, June 16



Mark your calendar for our quarterly "Christ, Communication, and Coffee" with Rev. Meredith after the 10:30 service in the parish hall.

Book Club, June 23: *The Great Alone*

In Kristin Hannah's book, *The Great Alone*, a Vietnam vet and former prisoner of war, returned from the war in the 1970s, abruptly decides that he, his wife, Cora, and their daughter, Leni, will move to Alaska and live off the grid.

Who moves to Alaska? In what way do the seasons and the landscape itself move the story along? Leni has to deal with her parents' tumultuous relationship at the same time she is coming of age. To quote one review, "In this portrait of human frailty and resilience, Kristin Hannah reveals the indomitable character of the modern American pioneer and the spirit of a vanishing Alaska—a place of incomparable beauty and danger."

All are welcome at 6:45 p.m., Sunday, June 23, to join the discussion. With the parish hall ramp repair in progress at that time, another location will soon be announced. Check the weekly bulletin and/or News and Notes email for more information.

The book selected for July 28 is *Educated*, by Tara Westover. The author was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Utah, she was taught to be prepared for the end of the world. Hospitals were forbidden; herbalism taught by her mother was the accepted treatment for any malady or injury. The book covers her journey through eventually getting her doctorate and coming to terms with her family situation. Explore the complex relationships in this family by joining the discussion. All are welcome.

Summer Tai Chi at St. James' Begins Monday, June 17

Join us Monday evenings 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the undercroft. It's low impact and helpful for balance. Just copy the movements of the leader, Douglas Pratt, M.D. There is no charge, but any donations will help with St. James' utilities. The class is broken into three identical 15-minute segments; come for some or all.

Lunch & Learn on Summer Break

Lunch & Learn will be on summer break until Tuesday, September 3, when the group will share the annual pork BBQ with sides, dessert, and drinks for lunch, followed by White Elephant Bingo. Start saving "treasures" to bring as prizes. Look for information about making reservations in the next *Pilgrim*. Visitors, friends, especially newcomers, are always welcome, and the per person charge remains only \$10.00—a delicious bargain. The meeting time and place will be 11:30 a.m. in the undercroft.

Many thanks to Barry Thompson, who ably presented "Clara Barton and the Missing Soldiers' Office" as a last-minute substitute in May when the scheduled speaker was unable to come. As usual, thanks also to those who help with cleanup and table breakdown at the conclusion of meetings. The steering committee is ever appreciative. Until September...

Ordination of our Intern, Todd Thomas National Cathedral, Saturday, June 15

We have a list of people who would appreciate rides. If you are going and plan to drive, please contact the parish office. Those wishing to carpool can meet at St. James' before heading to the Cathedral. Here's our invitation:

*By the Grace of God and the people consenting
The Right Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde
Bishop of Washington
will ordain to the Sacred Order of Deacons
in Christ's One Holy Catholic
and Apostolic Church*

Larry Todd Thomas

*on Saturday, June 15, 2019 ~ 10:00 a.m.
at the Washington National Cathedral
Washington, District of Columbia*



*Your prayers and presence are requested
Reception to follow in Walker Court*

St. James' Community Spring Sale

May 18, 2019 marked the date of this year's St. James' Community Spring Sale. The theme of the event was "Letting Go and Spreading Joy."

By establishing this as our goal, we were hoping to accomplish several things. First, we wanted to encourage committee members to let go of the old way of hosting a week-long set up and two-day sale.

Next, we wanted to encourage parishioners to let go of those material possessions that were no longer bringing them joy, and donate their treasures, time, and talent to join in the fellowship of the committee.

And finally, the purpose of the spreading joy portion of the narrative was to highlight the joy in giving, and not maximizing profit. Our purpose is outreach and love for others. This was important to remember when we doubted whether our goals were attainable. Through God's love all things are possible.

Overall the sale was a huge success for many reasons! We accomplished our goal of setup and sale in three days—a feat that would have been

impossible without the generous help and dedication of the committee volunteers. It brought out the next generation of rummage sale volunteers who believed the prior format was too time- and labor-intensive for their busy schedules and encouraged brainstorming and collaboration with those who ran the St. James' Rummage Sales in previous years.

A special thanks to the St. James' Youth Group and leadership for providing refreshments for sale to the day's deal seekers. The community sale also benefited the community by offering low cost, gently used merchandise at an affordable resale price. A second special thanks to all who donated items.

The committee members were happy to report the sale generated over \$3000 in revenue for St. James' Episcopal Church—not bad for a one-day sale! But more importantly, it provided an opportunity for the greater community to experience the joy at St. James' and to build fellowship among parishioners from across generations.

News from St. James' Children's School

Classroom Spotlight: Spanish Class

By Vanessa Davila

Buenos Dias! Cómo Estás? Good morning! How are you? The Spanish program at St. James' Children's School is doing great. We have completed our first year and are on to our second year. We have also expanded the program to include our Toddler classroom once a week during our school year.

I am very pleased with how the program is going. We just finished our lesson last month on animals and currently this month we are working on "La Familia," which means "Family." I personally love the lesson this month since it makes it very easy to involve our parents with our Spanish studies. Teaching children the names of their family members in Spanish helps the

children practice the language at home, as these are very quick and easy words that the children can use to identify all family members at home.

A great example of this would be the two words "Mamá" and "Papá," which mean "Mom" and "Dad." "Abuela" means "Grandmother" and "Abuelo" means "Grandfather." Studies have shown that if language is supported at home the language will stick with the children. By using words that are familiar and used at home often, the children will begin their adventure into bilingualism.

Hasta Luego!
(See you soon!)

St. James' Children's School at Childcare Conference



Last month, twenty-one (!) staff members attended the Maryland State Child Care Association's Conference by the Sea in Ocean City. This year's theme was "In It to Win It!" Our staff attended a variety of classes and keynote addresses.

One outstanding keynote address was given by Steve Spangler, science teacher, award-winning toy designer and frequent guest on The Ellen Show. His engaging science demonstrations helped inspire the teachers to discover how to create educational experiences that make learning fun.

By attending the conference, staff was able to fulfill their annual training requirements. It was a wonderful weekend of learning, team-building and networking with others in the childcare profession.

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

Happy Father's Day!

To all the dads, grandpas, uncles, brothers, godfathers, step-dads, and anyone who has been like a father to a child: Happy Father's Day. May your day be filled with lots of love, joy, and happiness.



From the St. James' Youth Group

Calendar of Events

Sundays at 9:15 a.m.: FaithTalk
adult spiritual formation

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

Wednesdays at 6:30 a.m.: Men's
Prayer Breakfast

June 9: Day of Pentecost;
Baptism at 10:30 service

June 15: Ordination of Todd
Thomas as Deacon

June 16: Commissioning of Work
Campers at 10:30 service;
State of the Parish Address
after service

June 17: Work on Parish Hall
ramp begins;
Monday Tai Chi classes begin
at St. James'

June 19: Visit to Potomac Valley
Nursing Home

June 22-29: Youth Work Camp in
Scranton, PA

June 23: Book Club, *The Great
Alone*

June 24: Tai Chi at St. James'

June 30: Work Campers sharing
after 10:30 service

July 2: Tai Chi at St. James'

July 3: Visit to Manor Care
Nursing Home

July 4: Independence Day, office
closed