



The St. James' Pilgrim

News for the Journey . . .

May 2019

St. James' Episcopal Church

11815 Seven Locks Road, Potomac, MD 20854-3340

www.stjamespotomac.org



A Letter of Thanks from our Rector, The Rev. Meredith T. Heffner

Dear Brothers and Sisters
in Christ,

My heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to our Lenten reflections this year, sharing experiences of God in the Wilderness. Some of you wrote beautiful pieces of

time spent in nature. Others used “wilderness” as a metaphor for experiences with mental health issues. From every angle, each reflection was precious and meaningful—and revealed that we each have wilderness experiences. They also confirmed that the area of mental wellness is important at St. James’ and in our world today—

and that God is surely calling us towards a mental health ministry.

Thank you to all who wrote and all who responded. It takes a lot to be vulnerable and share such personal stories. Each reflection was sacred and profound, and reminded me that no matter what our wilderness looks like, God is with us, walking us through, and giving us hope.

May God continue to remind us of God’s presence in the wilderness so that we may each know in our hearts and in our lives the good news of Easter joy, and the hope of new life.

Many blessings my friends,

Rev. Meredith



Thoughts from our Seminarian, Mary Margaret Winn

It has been a true blessing to be at St. James’ for these last nine months. I have been beautifully welcomed into this parish and would like to express my gratitude to everyone who makes St. James’ the joyful place that

it is. It has been a unique opportunity to participate in adult formation, preach the Good News, and worship in fellowship while learning about the history and personality of this neighborhood and community. My final Sunday of the semester will be May 5, but I will be back in the office full-time after Memorial Day.

Part of the model that the seminary has used for contextual ministry is that many seminarians are only at their field education sites on Sundays

and therefore do not get a fuller understanding of the ongoing life of the parish. In order to gain further experience in this area, Rev. Meredith has generously agreed to supervise an eight-week summer intensive during which I will continue working and worshipping at St. James’ 40 hours per week. I will be present at more of the “behind-the-scenes” operations, attend meetings, learn from our clergy and staff, and continue to practice the craft of preaching in this supportive place. I also hope to complete a couple of projects over the summer which will (again, hopefully) give back to St. James’ some of the generous support that you have given to me.

It has been such an important gift to be formed by this community and I look forward to continuing that formation into the summer months. Happy Easter to all!

Mary Margaret



An Open Letter About Our Youth

From our Youth Director, Rachele Donnelly

Dear current, past and future parents of teenagers,

Thanks for all you (do/have done/will do) to invest in the life of your teenager(s). Your job

(is/was/will be) complex and not always rewarded with gratitude. Your position includes that of an Uber driver, coach, tutor, cheerleader, guidance counselor, therapist, urgent-care-doctor, broken-heart-mender, room-cleaner, chef and life coach...all wrapped up in one! Time and money are scarce resources when it comes to teens and families. Being overscheduled and overworked is the new norm and is no longer just for adults.

With all the busyness and exhaustion that comes with parenting a teen, it's easy to let youth group attendance slide off the grid. It's tempting to think, "My kid's just too busy for a night of hanging out with other teenagers, playing some goofy games and hearing another Bible lesson." Perhaps it's not about their to do list, but rather that they have no interest in participating in youth group, meeting new kids or they feel like they will be the odd-man out, not knowing anyone in the group.

Believe me when I say, I understand the temptation. My son Christian is 20 now, but I still remember the pressure and exhaustion associated with preparing him for the next chapter in life. I remember the groans. In full transparency, I also remember thinking that if I did make him attend youth group, my plans of being in pajamas, drinking a glass of wine by 8:00 p.m., were out of the picture. Nevertheless, we decided that youth group attendance was a priority. Through regular attendance and participation in the annual work camp mission trip, I observed, and continue to see, just how important youth ministry has been in Christian's overall spiritual development.

If you're newer to the church, you might be saying to yourself, "well of course youth group was important to her, she's the youth director!" This is true, but it wasn't always. My family and I

first came to St. James' 15 years ago, when my son was six. Despite me spending the next five years teaching Sunday school, Christian was far more interested in his Pokémon cards and playing his Nintendo DS hand-held video game, than he ever was in attending children's programs.

Additionally, Christian (like his mother) had a great affection for sleeping in on the weekends. Unfortunately, a 10:30 a.m. church start time was simply not conducive with sleeping until noon!

When Christian entered the sixth grade, he began to participate in youth group activities. This was not by choice. Admittedly, I never had to drag Christian into the parish hall or bribe him to attend, but I did have to endure a lot of complaining about how he could be at home, relaxing after a long week of school. There were also silent car rides to church and lots of eye rolls. Of course, these were all things I experienced on the way TO youth group. The ride home was a different story. Magically, the 8:30 p.m. pick-up was full of excitement. There was discussion of games, pizza and friends. There was joy and contentment from a sometimes irritable teen. Over time, Christian began to accept his Sunday night fate, and complain less. Did this happen about the time he discovered girls weren't yucky? Sure.

I signed Christian up for work camp the first year he was eligible. Honestly, the idea of a child-free week for me, coupled with the promise of 30 SSL hours for him, was all I needed to write the check. He was less than excited. With no cell phone, Christian was unable to call home and clue us in on how he was doing.

I will never forget his reaction when he arrived back from his first camp. Beaming, he announced he could not wait to go again the following year. To say I was surprised would have been an understatement. As a typical teenager, Christian had expressed spiritual doubts. He could be irritable and apathetic. I was fully expecting to hear all about how awful I was for having sent

him. Instead, I learned about relationships he made with new friends, both from St. James' and from other youth groups around the country. Eagerly, he described the resident he served, the work he did on her home, God-sightings, and more. As is still the case, youth group went on summer hiatus following the trip. The following September, Christian attended youth group every week. I can't say he attended church with the same devotion.

With Christian's blessing, I took on the role of youth director during his junior year of high school. He still didn't attend church as often as I would have liked. He still had questions and doubts. At times, he still exhibited all the unpleasantness of your typical teenager. He also continued to attend youth group and work camp.

"I'm not sure if I believe in God." Some of you reading this have never heard your child say that out loud. Those of you who have, know just how heartbreaking the eight little words are. "Have I failed as a parent? Have I failed as a Christian? Is it too late for my son or daughter?" First and foremost, it's never too late. Period. With that said, it may be time to put in work.

Re-prioritizing schedules and dealing with eye-rolling teens who "don't want to go to youth group" is part of the job. Why? Because youth group provides something that parents and school can't offer, a safe place to be vulnerable, and honest, without judgment. Youth group teaches young people to recognize something greater than them. It inspires a genuine desire to serve others and a compassion towards their fellow man. It reminds them that no matter where they go in life, or what they do, God will always love them and they will always have a place at St. James'.

Christian is about to wrap up his third year of college. That's three years with no youth group participation and two years without work camp. So how has youth group impacted Christian's journey? Well let's see, a few months ago he started looking up Episcopal churches near his school and attended service. He recently announced a desire to work in a non-profit following graduation, because he wanted to help others. He regularly travels across town, from his

school, Robert Morris University to The University of Pittsburgh to get dinner with youth group alum and good friend, Nick Tondravi. When he comes home for break, he can't wait to catch up with his friends and recant tales of work camp shenanigans.

So what does all this have to do with you and your past, present or future teens? Life is busy. After their education, these young adults will begin their careers. They will start families. They will reflect fondly on memories from work camp. They will show compassion to a stranger in need because they will remember how great it felt to serve others. They will think of silly games, like Trash Can, and God-sightings, far more than they will remember what homework they did on the third Sunday in March, eleven years before. They will want their own kids to experience the same.

Moms and dads, whether your children are six or sixty, you should know that you are doing an amazing job. The fact that you are reading this article tells me that you recognize the importance of having a relationship with Jesus. It also tells me that you care, not just for your own children, or your grandkids, but for all kids, of all ages, and so I need to ask for your help.

Don't worry, you won't need to join a committee. Please pray for our youth, those who prepare to attend the 2019 Work Camp Mission trip, those who don't attend church, those who don't know if they believe in God. Pray for children you have never met. Pray for future generations.

If you have a teenager, talk to them about youth group. Encourage them to attend. Friends are always welcome. They don't need to go to St. James'. They don't need to come every week to be included. No matter where they are in their walk with Christ, our goal is to walk with them, at a pace they feel comfortable with.

Truthfully, we don't have all the answers, but we do have tacos and pizza and isn't that pretty awesome on its own?





Thoughts from our Children's School Director, Astrid Crookshank

Early Childhood Education: Making a Big Impact for our Smallest Students

Early Childhood Education has changed so much in the 25 years since St. James' Children's Center first opened in 1993 with just nine infants. In those early years we were licensed as a child care center for infants and toddlers. We quickly grew with our children and soon became an independent school, adding Nursery and Preschool and officially becoming St. James' Children's School in 1998. At that time, Preschool and Child Care were managed by separate government departments with programs for children under two seen as "daycare" and those for children over two years old could be licensed as "school" with an approved curriculum.

Over the past 10 years there has been a growing recognition of the importance of high quality Early Childhood Education, in particular for the very young children zero to three years old. Research shows that the brain's neural network expands exponentially in the first three years, and this rapid growth creates the foundation for all future learning, behavior and health. Additional research shows that the best way to build these neural connections is through continuous interactive communication and care between adult and child. At a recent conference I heard this process summed up perfectly by the phrase, "Brains are built, not born."

So how do we help build these wonderful brains? At St. James', our teachers know that we teach our youngest children by interacting with them. This means they will be on the floor talking and playing with babies and toddlers, playing kitchen or acting out finger plays, getting messy with art projects and reading, reading, reading! Each classroom contains imaginative play materials to encourage role playing and social interaction, manipulatives to encourage fine motor and cognitive development, and plenty of blocks, trains and cars for construction, planning

and experimenting. The teachers plan the day with a variety of experiences to create opportunities for cognitive, social and emotional experiences.

To make sure that we offer the best experiences for our children, our teachers keep up to date on early childhood best practices by attending continued training and seminars. The first weekend in May more than half of our teachers will attend the three-day MSCCA (Maryland State Child Care Association) Conference in Ocean City. This year our speakers include Steven Spangler, a STEM educator and TV personality who focuses on making learning experiences fun, Rae Pica, an educational consultant for the importance of movement in education, and Lilian Hubler, a sign language educator and the founder of Time to Sign, Inc.



St. James' teachers on stage with children's musician Vincent Nunes, MSCCA Conference May 2018

Some of the many classes our teachers will be attending include "Active Games for Active Children," "Wire Children's Brains for Cooperation, Kindness and Helpfulness," "Tech Innovation and Developmental Domains," "Sensory Sensitivities," and "Building Resiliency in Young Children." Most of them will return with over 18 hours of training, but most importantly, they come back with renewed energy and enthusiasm for the impact they can make on our children every day. Some of our

conference attendees will share their favorite lessons and "take home" ideas with our families at our next Parent Meeting on May 21. All are welcome to join us for these presentations in our Pre-K room at 5:00 p.m. We love to share new ways we will educate, grow and play with the children of St. James'!

Astrid

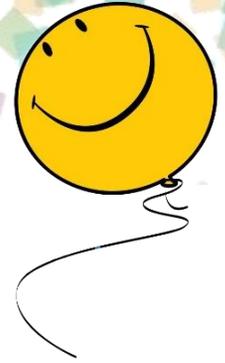
Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.

—Mr. Fred Rogers

Humor Sunday is Back! May 5

Join us at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. for Sunday worship and our annual celebration of "Humor Sunday," an old Easter custom begun by the early Greek Christians. We'll observe this day like the saints, "with joy and laughter!"

Many American churches are resurrecting this old Easter custom, "Bright Sunday" or "Holy Humor Sunday." For centuries in all Christian faith traditions, the weeks following Easter Sunday were observed by the faithful as "days of joy and laughter" with parties and picnics to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.



Youth Group Silent Auction Sunday, May 5

Please join us after the 10:30 service in the parish hall to explore the many great items available at the youth silent auction. Bid on meals, events and other fabulous offerings.

Donations of new goods and/or gift cards are greatly appreciated and tax-deductible. All money raised benefits our youth mission trip to Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Confirmation, Saturday, May 11 10:00 a.m. at the National Cathedral



On May 11 four members of our congregation will be confirmed, expressing their commitment to Christ, and receiving strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by the bishop.

Please keep our Confirmands in your prayers, join them at the service if you can, and join us in wishing them many blessings on their continued walk with Christ:

Kara Smigel
Sean Stanfield
Teresa Thomas
Lucas Wansong You

The next series of confirmation classes will be offered in the fall, in preparation for the bishop's visit to St. James' in November.

St. James' at Shepherd's Table Wednesday, May 29

It's our turn again! Come for the 4:30 or 6:30 p.m. shifts to help serve this community meal to those in need. Shepherd's Table is a well-run service located at 8106 Georgia Ave, Silver Spring, MD. You don't have to know what to do—the folks in charge are excellent at delegating tasks to newbies.

You must register online to participate because we are given a limited number of volunteer slots. Find instructions for using Shepherd's Table's online sign-up system on our website, stjamespotomac.org/missions-and-outreach.

You may also contact Mary Miers for more information.





St. James' Community Spring Sale

Saturday, May 18

We Need Your Donations!

Donations Accepted on Sundays Now Through May 12

Also: Thursday, May 16, 4:00 to 9:00 p.m.

and Friday, May 17, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

- **Donations** are accepted on Sundays at the shed in the back parking lot between services. Just drive up and we'll help you unload! Pricing stickers and recommended pricing information will be available in the parish hall on Sundays for those interested in pricing their items prior to drop off. We'll also take donations Thursday May 16 at the parish hall 4:00-9:00 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
- **Things we need:**
 - Household goods, appliances, tools
 - Toys, games, sports equipment
 - Children's clothes—but not adult clothing
 - Dishes, decorations, utensils, glassware
 - Books, CDs, DVDs
- **Volunteers** are needed to sort, price, and cashier:
 - Thursday, May 16, 4:00 to 9:00 p.m.
 - Friday, May 17, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
 - Saturday, May 18, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- **For more information**, please contact Ann Nayback-Beebe or the parish office, office@stjamespotomac.org.

Sale is Saturday, May 18:

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Join us in "Letting Go and Spreading Joy"



Vestry Meeting Highlights

Meeting of April 23, 2019

The vestry met with the rector presiding. All members and officers were present, save one. Dawn Iype offered the opening reflection on “grace, freely given and underserved.” “Grace is when God’s fullness overcomes our brokenness. God is too good to let your sins define you.” Prayers for those in our community and families with medical challenges were offered by the rector.

The treasurer reported that St. James’ remains “in the black” for the year.

Reverend Meredith welcomed Carolyn Dick to the vestry. Carolyn will complete the term of Harley Venton who resigned for personal/professional reasons. Reverend Meredith also announced that Patrick O’Hare has agreed to serve out the term of James Beebe, who will be moving this summer. She thanked all who submitted the highly impactful Lenten reflections, solicited feedback on the services of Easter Week, and summarized the proposals of the three capital campaign consultants.

James Isaacs reviewed the Lenten reflections and spoke of how these submissions confirmed that God seems to be calling St. James’ to a mission in the area of mental health and wellness. Many vestry members spoke of their responses to reading the reflections, and there was considerable discussion of how best to build on the reflections as we develop a possible mission at St. James’. Feedback on the just-completed FaithTalk series indicates that leaders for such a mission are emerging. James will work with this group of called and committed individuals to explore next steps. As Reverend Meredith added, we want to move forward but proceed in a studied and deliberate manner. There may be a mental health “first aid” training in the fall, James announced.

Commission reports

Facilities (Ken VanValkenburgh): Work on grounds, crack sealing and restriping in parking lots, and parish hall kitchen improvements continue. Of immediate concern are the repair/replacement of the PH HVAC, repainting of the PH exterior, and replacement of the entrance ramp to the PH. The latter will commence June 17 and

preclude use of the building for three weeks. The Commission is exploring options and bids for the HVAC and painting (each entailing significant outlays of money and coordination with Finance).

The vestry asked the Facilities Commission to plan expenditure of allocated funds, rather than holding funds for contingencies.

Finance (Sandy Soundararajan): In addition to the coordination with Facilities, Finance is reviewing the covenant with the St. James’ Children’s School and updating policies for the Commission.

Stewardship (James Isaacs): Although a traditional fall stewardship campaign will occur, the concept of year-round stewardship was re-emphasized; and summer activities may be developed.

Worship (Lori Minasian): Reorganization/expanded membership of the altar guild was noted. A need for additional acolytes persists.

Junior Warden: Sarah Hnatov reported that a “Safeguarding God’s Children” course will be offered 9 May.

Senior Warden: Barry Thompson mentioned that the Friends of Cabin John Creek was cooperating with St. James’ and Beth Shalom Congregation and Talmud Torah in forming a steering committee to work with the Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake to explore area-wide environmental activities. Interested parties are sought.

A consultant for RainScapes (Montgomery County) has evaluated the standing water problem on the side of the parish hall and will make recommendations for solving the matter in an environmentally friendly way. Possible rebates and/ or grants may be available to help St. James’ with the project.

Dates to remember

May 4 - Women’s Retreat
 May 5 - Humor Sunday
 May 11 - Adult Confirmation at National Cathedral
 May 16 - IFTAAR Dinner at ICCP
 May 18 - Spring Community sale (setup May 17)
 May 19 - Youth Sunday

Barry Thompson, Senior Warden

March Madness for Charity

The Men of St. James' gathered in March for their first annual March Madness Celebration. Part of the preparation included an opportunity to complete an NCAA March Madness Bracket, in which participants could predict who would win each game—all the way to the final round (much like *Lent Madness*, but with college basketball teams instead of heavenly saints...).

The fee to play was \$10, with the winner designating which church ministry would receive the pot of prize money. As the event neared, participation was extended to the entire congregation (as in, *not just the men...*).

After a fun food-filled gathering, when all the brackets were complete, we waited for a few weeks for the games to play out.

And the winner was.... *Rev. Meredith*, having picked the University of Virginia to go all the way!!

When asked how she made her picks, Rev. Meredith said, "I picked a team if I'd ever lived in the state in which the school is located. If neither team met this criteria, or if both teams met this criteria, I used the Heffner Women's Bracket Rule (which garnered the Heffner daughters second place in a corporate competition two years in a row): go with the team whose colors you like best."

Rev. Meredith added that orange, a UVA color, "isn't a favorite, but I do live in Virginia, so UVA had to go all the way!"

When asked to comment, our Finance Chair, Sandy Soundararajan, said, "Obviously God was involved."

Rev. Meredith is grateful to all who participated and she looks forward to next year's rematch. She has designated all proceeds to go towards the Sunday School April Fundraiser.

"Go Hoo's!"

State of the Parish Address June 16

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



Invitation to the Ordination of our Intern, Todd Thomas

June 15, 10:00 a.m. at the National Cathedral

St. James' friends! It has been such a blessing to our family to find a home with you at St. James' while we finish this journey to my ordination to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church. Thank you. We've made friendships and begun relationships that we know will outlast this year and its internship. Coming up next month we will reach another milestone in our journey as I am ordained to the transitional diaconate at the National Cathedral. Please feel very invited and welcome to come share the event with us: June 15 at 10 a.m. at the National Cathedral. Thanks again for all your help and support.

With Peace,

Todd Thomas and family

Congratulations!



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

Joseph Hnatov ~ Ethan Nayback

Isaac Thomas ~ Maya Tondravi

Madison Yoest

Mother's
DAY



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

From the St. James' Youth Group

Lunch & Learn May and June Events

Tuesday, May 7, in the undercroft, Susan Rosenvold, will portray **Clara Barton**. Do you know the story behind Clara Barton's various "job changes?" What was discovered in the ceiling of a downtown building just a few years ago? Rosenvold will present both Clara Barton and the Washington of her day.

Social time begins at 11:30 a.m., lunch is served at noon, and the program time is 12:30 p.m. to approximately 1:30 p.m. For the program only, no reservation is needed. To reserve the \$10 buffet-style lunch, please contact Sarah Padgett. Bring a friend; come and enjoy this casual, welcoming group.

The program for **Tuesday, June 4** (same times, same place) will be a return of Ralph Buglass, this time with the program entitled, "Off-the-Beaten-Path in Montgomery County." This will be an illustrated presentation on the "Top 10" lesser-known spots in Montgomery County with historical importance, amazing natural beauty, or which are in some other way superlative. Learn about some famous residents' homes, houses designed by famous architects, spots with connections to events of national significance, oases of natural beauty, lesser-known museums, and relics of our past.

Historian Buglass has previously presented programs on Sugarloaf Mountain and one and two-room schoolhouses to the L & L group.

Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times, at FaithTalk

During May, those gathered for the Sunday Morning FaithTalk program are exploring Adam Hamilton's *Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times*. Using a video and discussion questions, our conversation will be facilitated by Ann Venton and members of the clergy. We will meet in the parish hall at 9:15 a.m. on Sundays through May.

Continuing our focus on mental wellness, this series explores how fear, anxiety, and worry permeate our lives today, and how this holds us back from the very pursuits that promise fulfillment and joy.

Drawing on recent research, inspiring real-life examples, and fresh biblical insight, Hamilton shows how to untangle the knots we feel about disappointing others, failure, financial insecurity, loneliness, insignificance, and aging. Then he helps readers understand and counter fears related to such outside perils as terrorism, death, and the apocalypse.

Writing with generosity and intelligence, Hamilton shows how believer and unbeliever alike can develop sustaining spiritual practices and embrace Jesus's recurring counsel: "Do not be afraid." For anyone struggling with fear or wondering how families and communities can thrive in troubled times, *Unafraid* offers an informed and inspiring message full of practical solutions. (*Amazon.com*)

Thursday Morning Book Study: *Revealed*

You are invited to join the Thursday Morning Bible Study as we begin our journey through the book *Revealed: What the Bible Can Teach You About Yourself*, by Angela Schaffner.

According to the Amazon.com review, "While weaving in her personal story of healing, Schaffner uses her professional background to expertly highlight themes of seeking simplicity, finding purpose, and navigating painful and emotional experiences."

"The author challenges readers to face the reality of their hearts and begin an inward journey of renewal, listening for God's voice in unlikely places—and through unlikely people. Readers will see themselves more clearly through the lens of scripture and ultimately experience deeper self-awareness and spiritual growth."

The Thursday morning study group meets in the parish hall meeting room, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Invitation to Share an Iftar Meal – RSVP by Monday, May 6

Meal and Prayer Thursday, May 16 with Islamic Community Center of Potomac

The Islamic holy month of Ramadan and fasting start on May 6 this year. Our neighbors at the Islamic Community Center of Potomac (ICCP) invite us to share an Iftaar (break of fast) and dinner with them in their beautiful indoor worship and outdoor eating space.

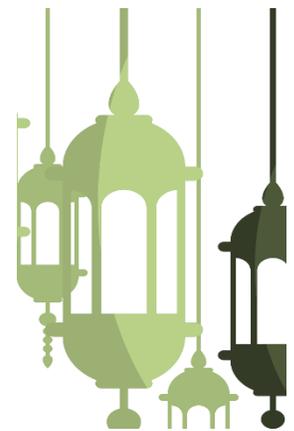
We MUST RSVP and give a count of how many are coming from St. James'. Please contact the parish office by **Monday, May 6**, office@stjamespotomac.org, if you plan to attend.

The program of the evening follows:

Venue	ICCP, 10601 River Rd, Potomac, MD 20854
6:30-7:00 p.m.	Arrival and Registration
7:00-7:30 p.m.	Welcome and Brief Comments by faith leaders
7:30-8:00 p.m.	Q&A
8:00-8:15 p.m.	Iftaar (break of fast)
8:15-8:25 p.m.	Maghrib Prayer led by the ICCP Imam
8:30-9:45 p.m.	Dinner and socializing at the Barn - the formal close of the program
10:00-11:15 p.m.	Isha prayer followed by Tarawih prayer - guests may optionally observe

Our relationship with the ICCP began when they used our space a few years ago while their building was being renovated. Our friendship continues to this day.

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



More Information About Ramadan (from ICCP)

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting ('Saum'). It lasts 29-30 days based on the lunar calendar. The start of Ramadan can change each year since the Lunar calendar is shorter than the Gregorian calendar by 10-11 days. Muslims are expected to abstain from all food and drinks, and conjugal relationships while observing fasts from dawn to dusk during Ramadan. But they can enjoy all meals and activities after 'iftaar' or break of fast at dusk. The following are exempt from fasting: children, the sick, the elderly, and women who are either pregnant or on their period.

Holy Quran says, "Oh you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may learn piety and righteousness" (2:183)

Observance of fasting is regarded as one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Scholars believe that the Quran was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during this month, making it particularly holy. The annual event is meant to help those observe to focus on prayer, purification, and charitable acts. Muslims believe that the physical ritual allows them to understand the suffering of others as well as increasing their closeness to God.

Ramadan in 2019 starts on May 6 and ends on June 3. The Eid al-Fitr (end of Ramadan fasting) celebration will be on June 4, which is the start of Shawwal, the next month in the Islamic calendar.

Teacher Appreciation and Youth Sunday May 19, 10:30 a.m.

Celebrating our Youth, Honoring our Graduates

Please join us for a very special youth Sunday. Youth will participate in a variety of roles throughout the 10:30 a.m. service.



We will honor our high school graduates and give thanks to your youth and Sunday School volunteers, teachers, and nursery caregivers.

Sunday School Celebrations

Sunday School Students are practicing to sing "Shine, Jesus, Shine" for the congregation on Teacher Appreciation and Youth Sunday, May 19.

We will have a graduation ceremony during our Sunday School Chapel for all the students who will be moving up to the next level of Sunday School classes on June 9.

Newcomers Gathering, May 19

An Invitation to our Newcomers

If you are new to St. James', we invite you to join us for lunch in the parish hall meeting room following the 10:30 a.m. service. You'll have an opportunity to meet other newcomers and chat with longstanding members of St. James'. Anyone who has been attending St. James' for less than a year and who has never attended a Newcomers event is welcome to join us. Vestry members are also encouraged to come.



Please RSVP to office@stjamespotomac.org or 301-762-8040 so we can get a head count for lunch. If you have any special dietary needs, please let us know. We'd also love to know if you will be bringing children (they are welcome!) so we can be sure to have kid-friendly food on hand.

Book Club May 26: *Hero of the Empire*

Join us Sunday May 26 at 6:45 p.m. in the parish hall library to discuss *Hero of the Empire: the Boer War, a Daring Escape, and the Making of Winston Churchill*. This is our third historical non-fiction book by Candace Millard for discussion!

He was just 24 years old, had just lost an election for a seat in Parliament, yet was sure that he would be prime minister of Great Britain someday. As one reviewer stated, the young Winston Churchill was "one of those fellows whose neon self-regard is downright unseemly until the very moment it is earned."

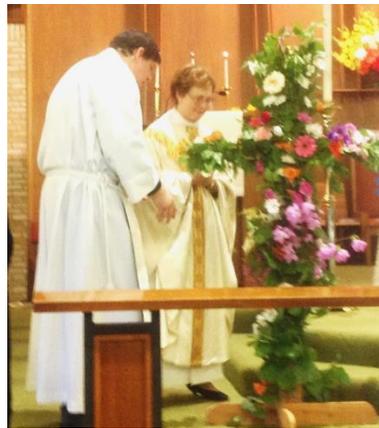
He landed in South Africa in 1899, determined to make a name for himself, to become outstanding and to do so as quickly as possible. Two weeks later, he was captured, put in prison, escaped, and then worked his way back to safety. Candace Millard wrote this story of Churchill's early years showing that the lessons Churchill took from the Boer War would profoundly affect 20th century history.

All are welcome to these group-led sharing of opinions and insights. Lasting about an hour and a half, Book Club meets on the fourth Sunday, and books are chosen by consensus of those present. The choice for June 23 is Kristin Hannah's *The Great Alone*.

Tai Chi at St. James' This Summer

June 17 will be the first Monday evening for summer tai chi at St James'. Join us Monday evenings beginning June 17, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m., in the undercroft. Simply drop in and copy what you see others doing. This is casual, easy, and no one is concerned about excellence of technique.

St. James' has hosted this summer activity for several years. The tai chi leader is again Douglas Pratt, M.D. This is a perfect chance to try tai chi. Low impact, known to be good exercise and helpful for balance. Feel free to drop in. There is no charge, but there's an opportunity to give a dollar or two if desired to cover the cost of St. James' utilities. Several St. James' members have taken part in this and will be happy to answer any questions.



Spring Photo Album!

Top row: Youth at the Palm Sunday Brunch and decorating “Kindness Rocks” on Palm Sunday. Middle row: left, youth and Kindness rocks; center, Rev. James Isaacs and Rev. Meredith Heffner on Easter Sunday; at right and below, St. James’ folks on the NAMI walk, Saturday, April 27.



Save the Date!

Parish Picnic, Sunday, June 2

“Bring Your Own” Picnic at Cabin John Regional Park

Let’s kick off the start of summer with a parish picnic! Please join us for a “bring your own” picnic after the 10:30 worship service on Sunday, June 2.

We have reserved the private picnic area at Cabin John Regional Park (7701 Tuckerman Lane in Bethesda). The property includes two covered shelters (with 40 picnic tables), four large charcoal grills, restrooms, a ballfield, horseshoe pits, a volleyball area, and a small playground.

- **Bring Some Fun!** Please bring sporting equipment, games like corn hole, musical instruments, or anything else you can think of for an afternoon of outdoor fun! But leave Fido at home; pets are not permitted in the private picnic area.
- **Bring Some Food!** As in previous years, food will not be catered or potluck. Instead, we encourage each member/family to pack their own picnic to enjoy—whether that’s sandwiches packed on ice waiting in your car, or a bucket of chicken picked up on your way. Don’t forget plates, napkins, and beverages!
- **A Note About Parking:** There is limited parking at the group site (just 34 spaces). We encourage you to carpool from the church if you can. If the lot near the private picnic area is full when you arrive, you can park across the road in the main Cabin John Park lot; please use caution crossing the street.

We can’t wait to see you there! Questions? Contact Dawn Iype , any member of the Membership Commission, or the parish office.



News from St. James' Children's School

Classroom Spotlight: Music

By Liz Porter

Music is so much fun! Who can resist joining in a scarf underwater parade as the children become fish and swim our way through Saint Saëns Carnival of the Animals "Aquarium"?



We love to introduce ourselves and claim our birthday month with some bold body percussion or learning to listen to a group's musical groove and play on beat with our drums and xylophones.

Here at St. James' Children's School, our two- to five-year-olds are expressing themselves through song and dance, being exposed to music of different cultures, a variety of musical instruments and moving as a team, and as individuals listen to how their parts fit into a whole. Music is an excellent way to reinforce language development and aids in retention of ideas; putting information to a melody is a great way to remember it. So the next time you see us dancing, singing, using our xylophones, shakers, scarves, drums or learning some corresponding sign language, please feel free to join!

Participation in music is and should be a wonderful experience. I have many musical memories...as a drum major, hours practicing my flute, various university orchestras and bands...but my most cherished musical moments are, by far, the times I spend in singing worship. During my ministry in Africa, I experienced God's love with others through music. As a music teacher at SJCS, this joy is shared and passed to the next generation. How awesome it is to be freshly reminded of God's holiness. God's kindness is astonishing. During this Easter time, we all enjoy taking a moment to lift our voices in celebration of God's love!

On May 29 at 4:30 p.m., our children will showcase their musical and artistic talents at our Spring Musical and Art Show. Everyone is welcome to join us for this annual event!

SJCS Spring Music and Art Show

Wednesday, May 29, 4:30 p.m.

Our children will showcase their musical and artistic talents in the St James' parish hall.

Calendar of Events

Sundays at 9:15 a.m.:

FaithTalk adult spiritual formation (childcare available)

Sundays at 10:30 a.m.:

Sunday School, childcare

Wednesdays at 6:30 a.m.:

Men's Prayer Breakfast

Thursdays at 10:00 a.m.:

Book study, *Revealed*

May 4-5: Women's Retreat, Claggett Center

May 5: Humor Sunday, Youth Group Silent Auction

May 7: Lunch & Learn, Clara Barton Presentation

May 11: Confirmation, National Cathedral

May 15: Visit to Potomac Valley Nursing Home

May 16: Iftaar Meal with ICCP; RSVP by May 6

May 16-17: Spring Community Sale Setup

May 18: Spring Community Sale

May 19: Youth Sunday and Teacher Recognition

May 26: Book Club discussion

May 29: Children's School Spring Musical; St. James' at Shepherd's Table

June 2: Parish Picnic, Cabin John Regional Park

June 4: Lunch & Learn, Top Ten in Montgomery County

June 5: Visit to Manor Care Nursing Home

June 15: Deaconate Ordination of Todd Thomas

June 17: Monday Tai Chi classes begin at St. James'