



The St. James' Pilgrim

News for the Journey . . . December 2019

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



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

A Christmas Letter - November 21, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters
in Christ,

I'm writing this to you today, exactly one week before Thanksgiving. It somehow feels right to be composing my Advent message at this time. I say this because I've already planned our Advent Faith Talk, purchased the Thursday Morning Advent Bible Study, and composed the program for our Advent Quiet Day (all of which are described in detail in this edition of *The Pilgrim*.) As we enter the season of Advent, I've already done a lot of preparing!

I love preparing for Christmas. I love the anticipation of this season. When I was a child I was so sad when Advent was over, Christmas had come, and the excitement and anticipation of Jesus' birth was gone. I would disappear when my parents took down the Christmas tree, riding my bike around the neighborhood in sadness, until I was sure no signs of Christmas remained in our house. I couldn't bear to see it all go away, as if the

season of anticipation meant nothing, and all the fun was finished.

Today, of course, things are different – perhaps partly because I'm the one taking down the Christmas decorations—and partly because I'm the one doing a lot of the preparing—but mostly because I better understand what we are waiting for—the birth of Jesus, our Savior. This gift from God brings more than joyful anticipation. This gift brings the promise and hope for redemption, joy, and peace. Our Advent waiting is just as exciting as it was in my youth, but now it doesn't end at Christmas. I carry the spirit of the season with me, and welcome Jesus into my life every day.

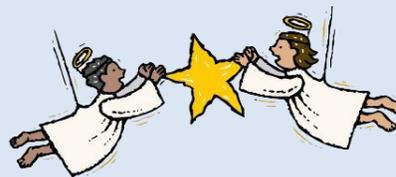
My prayer this season is that we each find time to prepare—to make ready our hearts and minds—so that we live out the season of Advent in joyful anticipation, preparing for Jesus. May you and those you love be blessed with Jesus' presence in your lives, this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

Faithfully yours,

Rev. Meredith

The Christmas Pageant is Coming! Angel Gabriel Needed

Children ages three and up are invited to participate in the Christmas pageant during our 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. There are plenty of costumes for all. We need someone to play Gabriel. If your child is interested in a specific part, contact Lindsay Ragheb, Lindsay.ragheb@gmail.com by Wednesday, December 11.



Advent is Here! Read about Advent programs and Christmas services at St. James'—page 3.



Reflection from our Junior Warden, Sarah Hnatov

The Gift of Time

This holiday season you will be busy, no doubt. Like me, perhaps you will be trying to find the perfect gift for each person you love dearly and for the many others who fill your life with joy all year long. If so, may I suggest the gift of time.

Recently, I have been thinking about just that. This year rather than shopping for items on everyone's list of wishes, I am seeking to spend time with those I love by sharing experiences and time together. Not even the best, newest, most sought-after toys will have the lasting value of time spent with you—baking cookies, playing a favorite game, or walking around the block together. Likewise, making time for dinner with friends or even a quick chat over coffee brings pleasure to those meet. "We have to do this again soon," spoken as you depart lets you know that it was worth the time you spent getting together. For some who are alone, struggling, or aging, perhaps the gift of time is even more important. So, this year, please join me in giving more of that gift—the gift of your time.

Likewise, I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank you for the many gifts already given to me. Over the past four years, it

has been my honor and pleasure to serve as Junior Warden for St. James'; and the four years prior, on the Vestry. Now, as my time in that role grows short, I would like to sincerely thank you. In short, I appreciate you placing your trust in me to serve as a leader in our parish and community, your willingness to collaborate and share ideas with me, and your unwavering support as we worked together in carrying out many important projects on behalf of St. James'.

I did not fully understand the journey as I began; not unlike others before me and those who will follow, no doubt. However, I can say confidently that the time spent serving was a gift that you gave to me. I am sure that I received more from the experience than I gave. I certainly gave it my all and it did require time, but I have learned so much from the experience, built strong and lasting relationships with people I might not even know otherwise, and grown in my own faith. I truly enjoyed it and want to thank you for providing me the opportunity to serve in these roles.

You know that is the funny thing about giving of your time—you often get from the experience even more than you give. This holiday season I hope you will join me in giving to others the gift of your time. Merry Christmas!

Cub Scouts at St. James'

By Barry Thompson

Cub Scout Pack 1306 held its Paper Airplane Construction and Competition Night on November 18 with two dozen Scouts participating.

Den Leader John Lehning conducted the construction of the airplanes which were then used to compete for distance, accuracy in hitting specific targets, best time aloft, and other challenges. One plane traversed the entire length of the parish hall, from front arch to a landing in the "tree" in the niche across the large room.

Assisted by some 15 adults, the enthusiastic Scouts (and the parents) had a splendid evening (and learned something about lift, drag, and the vagaries of flight)!





Advent and Christmas 2019 at St. James'

As we enter this season of anticipation and holy waiting, there are many ways to experience Advent here at St. James'.

Advent FaithTalk: "Anything is Possible" *Sundays 9:15 a.m., parish hall meeting room*

We are anticipating Jesus' birth using the series, "The Wonder of Christmas: Once you Believe, Anything is Possible." Gathering in the parish hall or meeting room, come explore elements of the Christmas story. Rediscover the wonder of Christmas, found in the love of Christ and made real when that love is shared with others.

Advent Thursday Morning Bible Study *10:00 to 11:30 a.m., parish hall meeting room*

Our Thursday Morning Bible Study is diving into the biblical texts surrounding the story of Jesus' birth. We're exploring how the Gospel narratives connect to the Old Testament and first-century Jewish culture, using *Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent*, by Vanderbilt scholar Amy-Jill Levine.

Advent Quiet Time, Saturday, December 7 *9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., church*

Step out of the rush of the holiday season to focus on the meaning of Christmas. We will spend the morning in the sanctuary, connecting to the Advent season in ways that are both spiritual and interactive. Using six different prayer stations we will be inspired to go deeper into the meaning of the season as we prepare ourselves for Jesus' birth in our lives.

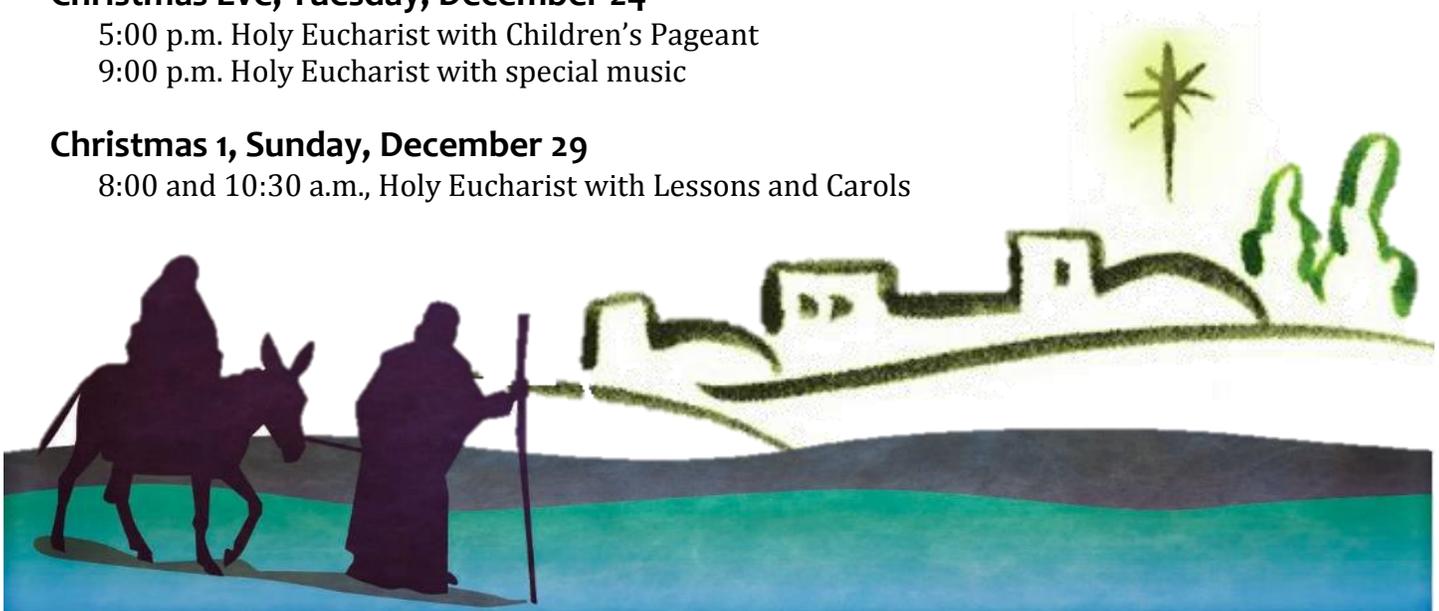
Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 24

5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with Children's Pageant

9:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with special music

Christmas 1, Sunday, December 29

8:00 and 10:30 a.m., Holy Eucharist with Lessons and Carols



Potomac Area Interfaith Communities Thanksgiving - November 20, 2019

By Kirsten Hall

At St. Raphael Catholic Church on Dunster Road, the pews were filled with members of thirteen different faith communities. Attendants wore turbans, kippahs, saris, and other traditional attire. As for Episcopalians, it seemed we instinctively wore red and black.

This was our fourth year to gather as friends, hearing and singing one another's faith songs. The children's interfaith "pop-up" choir had only a brief rehearsal time before the service, but a great performance.

After praying together in all our different ways with thanksgiving, the service concluded with a showcase of Care of Creation activities. Stations offered information on saving water and energy, reducing our carbon footprint, and more, including the chance to draw a handprint on a parachute that will travel throughout the year to different faith communities.

Among the many prayers we shared, the "Garden Meditation" was the one that brought unexpected joy. As the humor crept in, the laughter was unifying. We print it with permission at right. You may wish to consider the many vegetables you have known (and been) over the years.

Participating congregations

Congregation Har Shalom
 Islamic Community Center of Potomac
 St. Raphael Catholic Church
 Potomac Presbyterian Church
 Saints Peter & Paul Antiochian Orthodox Church
 St. James Episcopal Church
 Baha'i Community of Potomac
 B'nai Tzedek Congregation
 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,
 Potomac + Bethesda Wards
 Krishna Temple, Potomac
 St. Francis Episcopal Church
 Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
 German Lutheran Church of Washington DC

Garden Meditation

Let us give thanks for a bounty of people.

For children who are our second planting, and though they grow like weeds and the wind too soon blows them away, may they forgive us our cultivation and fondly remember where their roots are.

We give thanks.

Let us give thanks for generous friends, with hearts and smiles as bright as their blossoms.

We give thanks.

Let us give thanks for feisty friends, as tart as apples.

We give thanks.

Let us give thanks for continuous friends, who, like scallions and cucumbers, keep reminding us that we've had them.

We give thanks.

Let us give thanks for crotchety friends, sour as rhubarb and as indestructible.

We give thanks.

Let us give thanks for handsome friends, who are as gorgeous as eggplants and as elegant as a row of corn, and the others, as plain as potatoes and so good for you.

We give thanks.

Let us give thanks for funny friends, who are as silly as Brussels sprouts and as amusing as Jerusalem artichokes.

We give thanks.

Let us give thanks for serious friends, as unpretentious as cabbages, as subtle as summer squash, as persistent as parsley, as delightful as dill, as endless as zucchini and who, like parsnips, can be counted on to see you through the winter.

We give thanks.

Let us give thanks for old friends, nodding like sunflowers in the evening time, and young friends coming on as fast as radishes.

We give thanks.

Let us give thanks for loving friends, who wind around us like tendrils and hold us, despite our blights, wilts and withering, and finally, for those friends now gone, like gardens past that have been harvested, but who fed us in their times that we might have life thereafter.

For all these we give thanks.

Text by Rev. Max Coors, adapted by Rev. Abhijanamanchi of Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church, Bethesda, Maryland.

Scenes from Potomac Area Interfaith Thanksgiving, November 20



Above: Leaders of the participating faith communities.

At left: Rev. Mark Michael of St. Francis, Potomac and Rev. Meredith Heffner of St. James' led a litany of thanksgiving.

Below left: The interfaith children's choir singing "All Things Bright and Beautiful" and wearing the new PAIC tee-shirts.

Below and above right: Get out your markers—the Interfaith Creation Care parachute will become more colorful as it travels.



Vestry Highlights: Meeting of November 19, 2019

By Barry Thompson, Sr. Warden

In her reflection, Joyce Nohowel spoke of how we need “to just let go” and accept life as it is. God is in control. Resistance, or the inability to accept today, only invites frustration and tension.

The treasurer noted that figures available were preliminary, with corrections to be made when received. Currently, the deficit for the year is \$45,524. Pledges continue to be somewhat behind. The Josephine Shepard bequest, of \$1 million (matching that of her sister), has been received and was added to the Mary Shepard account, which is largely invested in Treasury bills. The treasurer’s report was accepted.

Sandy Soundararajan presented the proposed **2020 budget** totaling \$853,334 with the projected deficit of \$45,524. After discussion, the Vestry unanimously approved the budget.

Commission reports

Communications: Dawn Iype requested that parishioners notify the office of outdated or incorrect information on the church website. A meeting has been scheduled with a Facebook “expert” to review church format and postings. Input from parishioners—photos, observations about ways other churches communicate, constructive comments—is needed.

Membership/Fellowship: The Halloween FunFest was a great success. Comments from parishioners are welcome, as planning has started for next year. The next Newcomers’ Lunch (early 2020) is to be announced shortly. Vestry members again were invited to be greeters on Sunday mornings.

Administration: Joyce Nohowel graciously has consented to continue as commission chairperson although she will be rotating off the vestry next month.

Clergy and Warden Reports

Reverend Meredith Heffner encouraged members to bring to her attention their reflections on the vision discussed at the recent Annual Parish Meeting. At St. James’, we come together to feel and share God’s love; this meshes with our mission. We are moving ahead with the retaining of an architect to assess current uses of our

buildings, to discover ways that we may improve operations and activities, and to obtain an estimate of projected costs so that we can ascertain how much of our vision we can undertake. Monies set aside in the Building Depreciation Fund will be used to hire the architect, from among three competing firms. Reverend Meredith noted that 91 pledges, totaling \$390,000 have been received for 2020.

Reverend James Isaacs announced that the leadership of the Mental Health/Mental Wellness Initiative was working to clarify its purpose and to define “next steps.” He also reported that the Missions and Outreach Commission is re-examining past commitments and possibly will be redirecting funds to some new activities.

Senior Warden (Barry Thompson): The Facilities Commission will be chaired by the incoming Junior Warden, Ken Van Valkenburgh (who is coordinating efforts with the current chairperson, Isabelle Schuessler and members of the commission). Security cameras, inside and outside, are being explored by St. James’ Children’s School. Privacy issues attendant to cameras outside (including view fields of cameras at the synagogue next door) will be discussed with the Chief Operating Officer of the diocese.

No update is available concerning the flooding damage to our neighbor Scotland AME Zion Church. The recent Cub Scout Pack 1306 paper airplane construction and contest was a rousing success. Père Wildaine has not returned yet as Priest-in-Charge at Bon Samaritain Parish, L’Acul. The warden requested consideration, by Finance, Personnel, and Administration Commissions, of the hiring of a part-time sexton on weekdays for general clean-up and minor repairs.

Dates to Remember

December 7 - Advent Quiet Day, 9:30 a.m. – noon
 December 8 - Celebration of Newton Lewis’ 20th Anniversary at St. James’
 December 15 - Todd Thomas’ Ordination to the Priesthood, 4:00 p.m. *AT ST. JAMES’*
 December 17 - next Vestry meeting
 December 24 - Christmas Eve services at 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. only



**You're Invited to Rev. Todd Thomas's
Ordination! Sunday, December 15
4:00 p.m. at St. James'**

On December 15, our deacon Todd Thomas will be ordained to the priesthood at 4:00 p.m. at St. James' (invitation below).

RSVP to the St. James' office if you plan to attend. We hope to see you there!

To contribute to a stole or "purse" for Todd, please make checks to St. James' with "Todd's Ordination" in the memo line.



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 Priests
in Christ's One Holy Catholic
and Apostolic Church
Larry Todd Thomas
on Sunday, December 15, 2019
4:00 p.m.
at St. James' Church
11815 Seven Locks Road
Potomac, Maryland
Your prayers and presence are requested
Reception to follow in the parish hall
If attending, RSVP to St. James' at
office@stjamespotomac.org
or 301-762-8040

All This On Sunday, December 8!

**Celebrate 20 Musical Years with
Newton Lewis!**

On Sunday, December 8 we'll honor our Music Director, Newton Lewis, on his 20th anniversary at St James'!

To contribute to a "purse" for Newton, please make checks to St. James' with "Newton's 20th" on the memo line.

Reception food invited! Please tell the parish office if you can bring finger foods to Newton's December 8 reception in the parish hall.

**Sunday School Sandwiches for
Shepherd's Table**

Sunday School students and volunteers of all ages are invited at 10:30 a.m. in the parish hall to make sandwiches for Shepherd's Table in Silver Spring. Contributions toward the cost of sandwich-making supplies are welcome.

**Poinsettia Sale in
the Parish Hall**

Gorgeous healthy plants that make great gifts will be sold in the parish hall after services.



**Youth Group Holiday Party and White
Elephant Gift Exchange**

We'll meet up with our neighbors at St. Francis Episcopal Church, Potomac, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Bring a wrapped gift valued at up to \$10 for the gift exchange.

No Youth Group December 15, 22, or 29
Come to Rev. Todd's ordination on Sunday, December 15, and then have a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy new year!



Remember our fallen U.S. veterans.
Honor those who serve.
Teach our children the value of freedom.

The youth of St. James', St. Francis, and Christ Church invite you to join them for a special, intergenerational ceremony. All ages are welcome!

**Saturday, December 14, 2019
US Soldiers' & Airmen's Home National Cemetery
Washington, DC 20011**

We will gather in the parish hall meeting room at 10 a.m. to enjoy some breakfast treats before heading out. We'll travel to US Soldiers' & Airmen's Home National Cemetery in Washington, DC. (Near Washington Hospital Center/Children's Hospital). **Volunteers can also meet at the cemetery at 11:30 a.m.** Beginning at noon, we will honor our fallen soldiers, laying wreaths on their graves, and speaking their names. Event takes place rain or shine. Drivers needed. Please RSVP to ensure we have enough transportation.

**Please consider sponsoring a soldier's wreath:
1 Wreath (\$15), 2 Wreaths (\$30), 5 Wreaths (\$75).**

**To sponsor a wreath or RSVP to volunteer, contact Rachele Donnelly or the office.
Payment can be made to St. James' Episcopal Church, Attn: Youth Group-WAA**

Alternative Christmas Gifts

By John Combs

I find it frustrating each year to try to come up with gift ideas for my family and my friends because I really have very little idea what they want or need. In recent years we resolved this dilemma by getting our family and many of our friends "Alternative Christmas Gifts"—gifts to charities made in honor of the friend or relative.

Sometimes we give to a cause we support (such as St. James’!), and sometimes we choose an organization our friend or relative is interested in. Either way, many charities have gift forms readily available, making it easy to designate a gift in someone’s honor. They’ll even send notice of the gift to the recipient, along with a general description of how the gift will be used.

It is rewarding to share the spirit of the Christmas Season with people who are less fortunate; a charitable gift can help insure this occurs.

I hope you find the use of such alternative gifts as a positive way to make the season less stressful and more rewarding.

St. James’ Children’s School Christmas Show!

Wednesday, December 11, 4:30 p.m.

The show begins in the church sanctuary. Reception follows in the parish hall, including a visit with Santa for children of all ages.



Greening of the Church! December 22

The Flower Guild invites you to stay after the 10:30 service on Sunday, December 22, to begin the greening. There will be ladder work if you’re comfortable with it, and other prep work if you’re not. As always, we will happily share some of our “divine secrets” of floral arranging. Happier checking candle batteries or decorating evergreen swags? All these things and more await! We’ll gather again the morning of Christmas Eve, for the final details. Bring your gloves and join us! Contact Mary Miers.

Christmas Flower and Music Donations

You’re invited to make a contribution to our music and flower funds to remember or honor a loved one this Christmas. Undesignated gifts will be divided between flowers and music, or you may designate your gift for either fund on the memo line of your check. Please print your message legibly on the envelope, use the form here, or send an email to office@stjamespotomac.org.

Dedications are due by Monday, December 16.

For: Music Flowers Both

Your name: _____ Phone or Email: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Relationship of person(s) to you: _____





Sharing our Christmas Blessings with the Bishop Walker School

Pick up Gift Tags Sunday, December 8

Gifts are Due to the Parish Hall Sunday, December 15

Once again we are fortunate enough to have the opportunity to share the joy of Christmas with the boys of the Bishop Walker School (BWS). There are 83 boys enrolled in the lower and upper primary schools (K- 5). As our parish has done for the past several years, we want to share our love with every one of them.

This year the gifting is a little different, so that all boys will feel equally loved. In the past, some parents were not able to provide gifts for other family members, which weighed on some of the boys. So this year, we will help spread Christmas joy among the boys and their families.

The BWS has requested we purchase a \$40 Amazon gift card for each boy's family, along with one gift for the student. The school has provided a selection of age-appropriate toys, by grade (see next page).

It is important to the school's objectives that we provide one gift per student and only select the gift from the list they provide. Similarly, they want all families to receive the same amount on the Amazon gift card. The boys will complete their own service project right before the holiday break, and our gifts should not overshadow their perception that "it is more blessed to give than receive (Acts 34)."

How to participate in giving to the boys at the Bishop Walker School

- **Get a boy's name:** Contact Wendy Hicks for a list of boys still needing gifts (WDHicks22@verizon.net) or pick up a gift tag at church on Sunday, December 8.
- **Get a gift and gift card:** View the class toy list on the next page. Please buy one toy from the list for each boy's gift tag you pick up, and a \$40 Amazon gift card.
- **Wrap them up!** Please return the wrapped gift and the \$40 Amazon gift card by Sunday, December 15. The boys also appreciate receiving a card along with the gift (put the Amazon card inside, or use a gift card box).
- **If you'd like to help deliver the gifts** to the school on **Friday, December 20** (at BWS at 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.), and join in the Christmas merriment, please contact the office (office@stjamespotomac.org) or Wendy Hicks.

If you would like to do more, please visit the following BWS web pages:

www.bishopwalkerschool.org/giving/support_our_wish_list

www.bishopwalkerschool.org/giving/make_a_gift/OnlineGiving

Bishop Walker School Class Toy List

Kindergarten:

- [Play-Doh Wheels Firetruck Toy](#), \$14.94
- [Thomas & Friends Fisher-Price Super Cruiser](#), \$34.84
- [Hot Wheels ID Rodger Dodger](#), \$6.99

First Grade:

- [Simon Game](#), \$13.39
- [Hasbro Gaming Bop It! Micro Series Game](#), \$9.89
- [LEGO Technic Police Pursuit 42091 Building Kit, 2019](#), \$15.99

Second Grade:

- [Led Gloves for Kids Light Up Gloves with 5 Colors 6 Modes, Colorful Flashing Finger, Best Gifts for Boys or Girls Age 6-7](#), \$12.99
- [Rubiks Magic Cube Electronic Music Cube Kids Puzzle Game](#), \$19.99
- [Klutz Lego Gadgets Science & Activity Kit](#), \$14.99

Third Grade:

- [Bakugan Battle Arena Game Board](#), \$17.46
- [Klutz Lego Chain Reactions Science & Building Kit, Age 8](#), \$16.62
- [Walkie Talkies for Kids 22 Channels 2 Way Radio Toy with Backlit LCD Flashlight, 3 Miles Range for Outside, Camping, Hiking](#), \$19.54

Fourth Grade:

- [Pokemon Electronic and Interactive My Partner Pikachu](#), \$17.99
- [Flying Toys Drones for Kids Mini Drones Hand Controlled Flying Ball Drone Toys with 2 Speed and LED Light for Kids](#), \$18.69
- [GlowCity Light Up Basketball-Uses Two High Bright LED's \(Official Size and Weight\)](#), \$24.93

Fifth Grade:

- [Crayola Arctic Color Chemistry Set](#), \$24.99
- [National Geographic Mega Slime Kit and Putty Lab](#), \$29.99
- [Snap Circuits Beginner Electronics Exploration Kit | Over 20 STEM Projects](#), \$19.12

And one \$40 Amazon gift card for each family.



Year-end Giving and Stock Donations

For 2019 tax credit, contributions to St. James' must be received by the parish office or postmarked no later than December 31. To make a stock contribution, send a message to office@stjamespotomac.org, so we can provide instructions for completing the transaction.

Do We Have Your Pledge?

A huge thank you all families and individuals who have sent in their 2020 pledges. If you haven't completed yours, it's not too late! Every pledge counts, large or small. Pledge forms are in the narthex and you can also pledge on our website, www.stjamespotomac.org, under Ways to Give.



Shopping Online this Holiday? AmazonSmile and Giant Grocery Gift Cards Benefit St. James'!

As the holidays approach and you prepare to do your online gift shopping, don't forget that if you shop using **AmazonSmile**, Amazon will make a donation to St. James'! Sign up once and you'll never have to think about it again—it's automatic and costs you nothing.

At the St. James' Amazon Smile page (<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-0854201>) log in to your Amazon account as usual. Any eligible purchases you make will automatically earn a donation for St. James'. Bookmark the Amazon Smile page as your go-to for Amazon shopping.

Your Grocery Shopping Can Help Too!

Buy Giant grocery gift cards in several denominations on Sundays in the parish hall and weekdays in the parish office. A \$100 gift card from Giant earns St. James' \$5. Use some cards for your family's shopping or donate cards to those in need.

Christmas Ornament Sale

By Jo Ann Thompson

The ornament sale on November 17 went very well. It was fun watching folks carefully choose which ones they wanted most. Some children spent a fair amount of time deciding if they wanted two 50-cent ornaments or one for one dollar, with the money they'd been given. Then there are a couple of young adults' trees that will have new and pretty additions to them. We heard a fair amount of "we used to have one of those." Many found a beautiful addition to their collection.

I also think that the woman whose lovely and quite extensive ornament collection most of these items came from would be pleased to know the pleasure these things will bring their new owners. We took the remainders to my friend in our neighborhood who advised me on pricing, and who basically runs the St. Peter's auctions in Poolesville.

Counting the money three times and taking back my change—accounting isn't my strength—we have \$177. I'd call that a success! Thanks, shoppers, for your help in several ways.

Sunday Prayer Desk Ministry



Prayer is an act of worship that glorifies God and reinforces our need for Him. In addition to corporate prayers during the Sunday Worship services, St. James' offers a Prayer Desk as one of our most visible means of assisting spiritual growth and attending to special prayer needs of members. The Prayer Desk is located in the Chapel area and members of the Prayer Team are available to pray with people for their special needs.

The Prayer Team members believe in the Power of Prayer. We believe that when we pray together, the Lord opens doors—and hearts—in ways we never could have imagined. As we read Psalm 32:6, "*Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.*"

The Prayer Team invites you to join us in this ministry. Members are assigned only one Sunday per month. Brief training will be provided. If you are interested please contact the office, 301-762-8040 or any of the clergy and team members: The Rev. Meredith Heffner; rector@stjamespotomac.org, Sampson Annan, and Mary Miers.

Lunch and the 1950s Housing Boom: Lunch & Learn, January 7

In the 1950s, in one decade, the number of single-family homes in Montgomery County almost doubled. Why? And where were these homes built? What was their style, and who were the developers and architects? Learn these answers and the role of the National-Capital Park and Planning Commission and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) in this response to the housing boom.

The speaker, Bob Bachman, whose area of specialization is American suburbanization, received his MA in American Studies from George Washington University. Long active in Montgomery History, he has held many positions there and is currently chair of the Mary Kay Harper Center for Suburban Steering Committee. This dynamic speaker will have a PowerPoint presentation sure to spark memories and discussion.

Beginning at 11:30 a.m. in the undercroft, lunch will be served buffet-style at noon. Reservations need to be made with Sarah Padgett for the \$10.00 per-person complete lunch. The program time is 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., and if one wishes to only attend the program, no reservation is needed. Any person of any age is welcome, and if there is a transportation issue, please contact the office—we'll get you there!

As always, the Steering Committee continues to appreciate the help given by attendees in clearing up and returning the room to "normal," as the turnaround time for a regular rental is somewhat limited. Thank you!



At a recent Lunch & Learn, Lynn Isackson, retired occupational therapist, is shown teaching some of the attendees one of many exercises aimed at maintaining balance and reducing the incidence of falls. Now—can they sustain this without holding on to something?!

Book Club, January 26

All This I Will Give to You, by Spanish author Dolores Redondo, is the book up for discussion Sunday, January 26, 6:45-8:15 p.m. in the parish hall. Nominated for several major awards and already translated into thirty-five languages, this book's title came from Satan's offer to Jesus in the wilderness.

The main character, Manuel, an author, has just been notified that his husband, Alvaro, has been killed in a car accident in Galicia. That's not where he was expected to be—the first of several surprises for Manuel. Mysterious details begin to add up. Alvaro is from a titled family. Manuel inherits, and family objects.

Why did Alvaro keep this background from him? Enter a chain-smoking retired cop, an

amiable priest, an "Ethel Barrymore-type evil matriarch," and a sad stray dog, along with family secrets finally exposed. If this sounds like an entertaining discussion to you (any of you!), please join the casual, group-led dissection of this prize-winning crime mystery.

The book for February 23 is *The Island of Sea Women*, by Lisa See. The multi-generational story is set in Jeju, an island off the coast of present-day South Korea. For generations, the haenyeo have been a matriarchal phenomenon of women, free-diving for sea life. The book is described as "an enthralling cultural anthropology highlighting the haenyeo... and an engrossing history of violently tumultuous twentieth-century Korea." All are welcome, as are suggestions for future choices.

News from St. James' Children's School

Classroom Spotlight: The Pre-Kindergarten Class

By Sonia Schwartz

In our class we have a special magical word that we want to use to describe our classroom. From the very first day of class we use this word every day. The word is KINDNESS. We encourage friends to choose kindness and do deeds of kindness. Throughout November, we have been working on our latest kindness project that we are launching this December. The class has been busy making Christmas Kindness Rocks.



This Kindness Rock Project is a social activity focused on spreading positivity throughout neighborhoods. It requires you to paint rocks in bright colors, and then write nice messages on them. Once you paint the rocks, leave them in easy-to-find places in your neighborhood for other people to find.

Our Pre-K class has a pile of painted expressions to warm someone's heart for Christmas and will hide them soon. The children thoughtfully came up with the sentiments themselves and they are beaming with joy to share them. We hope you find one! ... and remember to spread kindness this holiday season. You may just brighten someone's day!

1 John 3:18 – *“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”*

Save the Date for the St. James' Children's School Christmas Show!

Wednesday, December 11, 4:30 p.m.

The show begins in the church sanctuary. Reception follows in the parish hall, including a visit with Santa for children of all ages.



Bringing the Eucharist to Our Church Family

We are seeking Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEVs) to help deliver the Eucharist to our home-bound or hospitalized parishioners, in support of our clergy. This is a meaningful way to minister to those who are unable to join us for worship on Sundays, reminding them that they are part of the Body of Christ and members of our St. James' family.



If you are currently serving as a Lay Eucharistic Minister (LEM), no further training is necessary. If you feel called to serve as a LEV and are not a LEM, training will be scheduled. Please contact Rev. Meredith with any questions, or sign up through the church office, office@stjamespotomac.org.

Calendar of Events

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

Thursdays 10:00 am. Rector's Bible Study

Dec. 7, SA: Advent Quiet Time

Dec. 8, SU: Newton Lewis' 20th Anniversary; Poinsettia Sale in parish hall; Sunday School sandwiches for Shepard's Table; Bishop Walker School gift tags

Dec. 11, W: SJCS Christmas Show

Dec. 14, SA: Wreaths Across America with the St. James' Youth Group

Dec. 15, SU: Ordination of the Rev. Todd Thomas

Dec. 18, W: Visit to Potomac Valley Nursing Home

Dec. 22: SA: Greening of the Church