



The St. James' Pilgrim

News for the Journey . . .

March 2020

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

St. James' Vestry Retreat: Leadership and Team Building

In February, I was blessed to spend a weekend with your vestry, the leadership body of St. James'. As we head into another exciting year for our parish, it was

important that we take time away to prepare to lead this congregation together.

It is also an important time to see where we have come, and what we are doing. Look at all we are doing:

- We are living into God's call to a Mental Health Ministry.
- We are enhancing our Children's Formation Program.
- We have planned a rich array of offerings to connect us to God during the holy and reflective season of Lent.
- We are planning a "Seasons of Creation" series after Easter.
- We are expanding our mission and outreach.
- We are planning to update and expand our building so we are best equipped to continue doing God's work.

In summary, we are living into our mission and our vision: *bringing people together to be transformed by and to proclaim Christ's love through worship, spiritual formation, and service so that St. James' may be a place where all are welcome, to feel God's love and share God's love.*

I cannot do this without a strong Vestry, and I am grateful for the time we spent together, praying, bonding, visioning and planning.

To find out more, I encourage you to put **March 15** on your calendar. On that day after the 10:30 a.m. worship service we will have our next **State of the Parish Address**. Join us!

In the meantime, I invite you to a holy Lent. And I ask that you continue to keep St. James' in your prayers, asking God's guidance so that we may continue to share God's love.

Blessings to you—

Rev. Meredith

Quarterly State of the Parish Address: Sunday, March 15



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

Ash Wednesday, St. James' Offers Ashes to Go!

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of a season of prayer, fasting, and repentance for Christians. This year, Rev. Meredith and a team of Lay Eucharistic Ministers offered Ashes to Go to the preschool families and to anyone travelling Seven Locks Road this year, in a surprisingly joyful event.



services. Another woman noted that her work schedule kept her from a service and was thankful to mark the start of Lent. Even a Fed Ex driver stopped in.

All were thankful and pleased to be able to mark Ash Wednesday when they thought they might not have the chance.

WUSA/Channel 9 stopped by to speak to Rev. Meredith and to film the team.

Ashes to Go are offered throughout the diocese, but this was St. James' first foray into the practice. Based on the warmth and gratitude we received in return, it will not be our last.

Holding signs for Ashes to Go, the team waved at the cars driving by on busy Seven Locks Road. We got beeps, waves, and thumbs up in return.

We prayed with and for a couple of dozen people driving and walking by St. James'. One mother had a sick child and couldn't get to

Are You Feeling Lucky?



White Elephant BINGO and Potluck Supper

Saturday, March 7, 5:30 p.m.
Fun for All Ages!

Please join us for a fun night of BINGO in the parish hall. We'll enjoy a potluck dinner together. Please bring a dish to share, according to the first letter of your last name (see below). Drinks will be provided by the church.

A - I Salad or side dish

J - S Main dish

T - Z Dessert

If you can, please bring an unwrapped **white elephant gift** that can be used as a BINGO prize.

What's a white elephant gift? Something new or like-new, perhaps an unused gift or household item that would be of better use in a new home. Funny or gag gifts are also welcome, of course!

If you have any questions, or want to help with this event or other social activities at St. James', please contact Dawn Iype or the parish office.

Newcomers' Lunch Sunday, March 8

Welcome to St. James'!



Meet our clergy and senior lay leaders, ask questions, and be welcomed to St. James'! Join us for lunch in the parish hall meeting room at noon.

Anyone who has been attending St. James' for less than a year and never attended a Newcomers event is invited.

Please contact the office with the number of attendees and ages of children, and let us know of any dietary needs, at 301-762-8040 or office@stjamespotomac.org.



Cold Weather Clothing Drive Thank you!

Thanks for all the donations to our Missions and Outreach Cold Weather Clothing Drive. Because of your generosity we were able to drop off about a dozen bags full of warm clothes, coats, hats, gloves, socks and boots to Interfaith Works.



Reflection from our Youth Director, Rachele Donnelly

Mission Trip Planning From a Type-A Control Freak

Raise your hand if you're a planner? It's OK, nobody's looking. *Oh*, you're reading this in a public place and don't want to look like a fool with your hand in the air??? Fair enough.

I am very much a planner. It offers a sense of calm and appeals to my organized, type-A personality. I make lists all the time...grocery lists, thank you card list, to-do (ask-Sean-to-do) lists and much more.

Like most, I have a very full schedule. In addition to serving our youth, I work...A LOT. Through preparation, I can mitigate surprises and maintain at least some control over most situations. I wasn't always a planner. As a teenager, I was a bit more of a free spirit. Clean room? Homework neatly filed in an organizer? On time? Not a chance!

Being an organized grown-up has a lot of perks. For example, I can typically find anything I'm looking for. My friends no longer refer to time in measurements of standard time or Rachele-time (which usually runs 15 to 30 minutes late). Best of all, I can manage a lot of responsibility. This comes in especially handy for our annual work camp mission trip.

For those unfamiliar, work camp is St. James's annual mission trip for teenagers. For more than 30 years, our teens have travelled around the country in service to others. The teens, ages 14 to 18, spend the week painting and completing various home repairs, with other teens from all over. Strangers at the beginning of the week, the youth form tight bonds with one another, along with the homeowners they serve. This year, I will lead a group of 17 to Imperial, Pennsylvania, located in Pittsburgh's suburbs.

The trip requires extensive planning to provide for the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of both the teenage and adult participants. Fortunately, I'm not alone. In addition to our incredible chaperones,

Rev. Meredith, Luther Rogers (my dad), Sean Stanfield and—new this year—Harley Venton, our group partners with Group Mission Trips. The support offered by these adults and the Group organization allows us to ensure everyone has an amazing experience.

Beyond coordinating our food, lodging and worship programs, Group provides extensive direction through a series of lists. Cue my happy face! The lists provide each youth, adult and church with the necessary information to prepare for their trip.

Packing lists dictate everything from which tools should be brought, to how many shirts each camper should have. Daily schedules and information on the area we will serve help us to plan fun activities. Pack too much of the wrong thing? You might not have room for something you'll end up needing. Fail to plan adequate entertainment? Make sure to pack some ear plugs. Believe me, you're going to hear about it.

As I continue to plan and organize our trip, I can't help but be thankful that our trip is only eight days. Reflecting on this season of Lent, I considered the 40 days Jesus spent withdrawn into the wilderness. He had no supplies. There were no instructions, no lists of what to do or how to succeed. There was no guide for what to expect, no packed bags, and no opportunities to research his new surroundings. During his time, he faced unbelievable challenges. Hungry and alone, he was strengthened by his unrelenting, never-ending trust in God. Despite all the things he didn't have, Jesus had exactly what he needed to survive: faith.

As is often the case, the months leading up to our trip will fly by. For our youth and adult participants, along with all travelers, while planning and packing for your journey, remember preparation is important, but faith is essential.

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done."

Philippians 4:6 NLV

Rachele

Pastoral Care - Prayer Ministry

by Carolyn Ragland

What does it mean when someone is praying for us? Praying for others is a staple of the St. James' community and there is plenty of it going on! If you want to be involved either through asking for prayers or praying with others, there is a place for you.

Everyone is familiar with the weekly prayer list at St. James' as one of the mainstays of our church community. There are a few ways to contribute or participate in this sacred activity that you should know about.

How do I submit my name or a loved one's name for prayer list in the weekly service bulletin? Contact the office via phone or email at office@stjamespotomac.org or contact Grace Lo by phone at 301-762-8040.

Who creates the weekly prayer list in the bulletin? Alice Morrison and Grace Lo make sure the list is accurate and up-to-date.

What is the St. James' Prayer Chain Group?

Several members of St. James' respond to prayer requests for parishioners, their families, and friends. They pray regularly for those on the parish prayer list in the Sunday bulletin. To request prayer, contact the parish office.

Is there another prayer list that is NOT included in the bulletin? Yes, it is a confidential prayer list. The clergy maintains this list amongst themselves and considers this information private and confidential. Send your requests to rector@stjamespotomac.org to contact Rev. Meredith directly.

Why is there a confidential prayer list?

Some prayer requests are handled selectively by the rector's office upon request. It's an acceptable church practice that not all prayer requests need to be shared with the rest of the congregation. It also encourages members to seek prayer support for matters they may not wish to discuss.

Wednesday Men's Prayer Breakfast and Bible Study

Calling all men of St. James', young and old, to join a group of men for prayer, breakfast and Bible Study on Wednesday mornings.

We start gathering between 6:30 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. to share fellowship while breakfast is being prepared. Breakfast is generally ready around 7:00 a.m. and we gather in the library to eat. After breakfast we spend time reading a chapter in the Bible and discuss the reading. Then we pray for one another and the St. James' family. We are usually done before 8:00 a.m.

Each Wednesday is unique. We encourage all men to join us to experience great fellowship and delicious breakfast.



Prison Ministry Update

Grateful thanks to you the people of St. James' for providing Christian materials to distribute at Montgomery County Detention Center on Seven Locks Road. Your generous contributions of \$930 in 2019 through the St. James' Mission and Outreach budget provided:

Complete Bibles: 222
Pocket Testaments: 100
Christian books: 79

100 percent of your donations went to provide God's Word and spread the Gospel. Thank you very much for remembering our brothers and sisters who are incarcerated one and a half miles down the road.

Many blessings await for volunteers to carry on this work.

Grace Huff
AKA "Ms. Grace," the lady handing out Bibles for 27 years

Churches of Seven Locks Road Annual Event

ECUMENICAL LENTEN Dinner, Study and Worship

"1, 2, 3...Not It!" Conversation, Call and Action

- March 4 Emmanuel Lutheran Church
7720 Bradley Blvd., Bethesda
- March 11 St. James' Episcopal Church
11815 Seven Locks Rd., Potomac
- March 18 Seven Locks Baptist Church
11845 Seven Locks Rd., Potomac
- March 25 Geneva Presbyterian Church
11931 Seven Locks Rd., Potomac
- April 1 Ecumenical Celebration
location TBD

**Devotional and Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
Program from 7:00 to 8:15 p.m.**

Holy Week and Easter Services

- ✧ **Palm Sunday, April 5**
8:00 and 10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Parish Brunch at noon
Bells, procession with palms, and a dramatic reading of the Passion of Christ. Brunch hosted by St. James' Youth Group.
- ✧ **Maundy Thursday, April 9**
7:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist and foot washing in the church
- ✧ **Good Friday, April 10**
Vigil 12:00 to 3:00 p.m.
7:30 p.m. Good Friday Liturgy
- ✧ **Easter Sunday, April 12**
8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
10:30 a.m. Festival Holy Eucharist 12:00 noon Easter Egg Hunt

A glorious celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord!
Brass music and choir at 10:30.
Children's Easter egg hunt follows on the church back lawn.

4 Sundays in Easter!

- April 19**
- April 26**
- May 3**
- May 10**

St. James' Celebrates Seasons of Creation!

Beginning Sunday, April 19, St. James' will embark on a four-week Easter journey of creation care. Join us as we pray for and celebrate creation, and commit to a ministry of healing the Earth.

Worship: Readings and message on the theme of Creation

FaithTalk: Creation Care discussion at 9:15 a.m., parish hall meeting room

Fellowship: Activities and Learning Stations in the parish hall, 11:45 a.m.

Join us to explore what it means to live through environmental changes as people who follow the God of hope.

“Adventure In Kindness!” with St. James’ Sunday School—and YOU!

Join St. James’ as we go on several *Adventures in Kindness* this year with parishioners Sophia (fourth grade) and Carrie Fox (mom) who will soon release a children’s book of the same name.

- **Sunday March 22:**

Building Inter-generational Friendships

For all ages after the 10:30 service, parish hall

Inter-generational relationships build stronger community and provide a perfect opportunity for young and old to learn from one another.

Join us in the parish hall after the 10:30 service for this special cross-generational coffee and hot cocoa hour where we’ll get to know one another better, and encourage our youngest parishioners with their conversation skills.

- **Sunday, April 26: Celebrating Springtime**

For all ages after the 10:30 service, outside

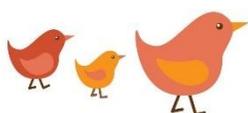
Native plants and flowers provide important nectar, pollen, and seeds that serve as food for native butterflies, insects, birds and animals. As part of our “Seasons of Creation” series, bring the entire family for this special planting activity at St. James’.

- **Sunday, May 3: For the Love of Reading**

At Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.

There’s nothing better than getting lost in a great book, except maybe sharing that book with a friend. During this Sunday School lesson, we’ll share the love of reading with one another by organizing a kids’ book swap. Children should bring 1-5 books in new or gently used condition if they wish to participate.

For more details or to get involved in any of these activities, contact Carrie Fox at carrie@mission.partners.



Youth Group Calendar

- 3/8 **Pretzel-Making!** St. James’ parish hall, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; bring \$3 for dinner.
- 3/15, 22 **Youth Group**, location TBD, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; bring \$3 for dinner.
- 3/29 **Peeps Dioramas**, St. James’ parish hall, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; bring \$3 for dinner.
- 4/5 **Palm Sunday Brunch** hosted by Youth after the 10:30 service, parish hall (no evening youth group)
- 4/12 **Happy Easter!** No Youth group.
- 4/19 **Monster Mini Golf**, 9116 Gaither Rd, Gaithersburg; Time TBD.
- 4/26 **Youth Group**, location TBD, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; bring \$3 for dinner.

Womankind 2020: March 20-21 Richmond, Virginia

Once again St. James’ is invited to attend the biennial Womankind conference in Richmond, Virginia. The theme this year is “Fearless.” The program includes keynote presentations, workshops and worship. A number of women from St. James’ are attending. For more information, see www.womankindrichmond.com. Please contact Rev. Meredith if you are interested in registering for this event, at rector@stjamespotomac.org.

Safeguarding God’s Children Training

This training is required for anyone working or volunteering with children at church.

Visit www.edow.org to sign up. Upcoming training dates and locations (at Episcopal churches):

- March 19, Thursday, 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.
St. Columba’s, Washington, D.C.
- April 18, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
St. Andrew’s, College Park
- April 25, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Ascension, Gaithersburg

Vestry Meeting Highlights—February 2 and 16, 2020

By Barry Thompson, Sr. Warden

Vestry Retreat, February 2, 2020

The vestry met on the second day of its retreat at the Diocese of Maryland's Claggett Center, Adamstown, MD.

The spiritual retreat on the first day, with the theme "Leading with Joy and Strength," was led by the Reverend Kathy Guin, Spiritual Director, National Cathedral and Virginia Theological Seminary.

Rev. Meredith opened the vestry meeting with "What did we hear or learn?" Vestry members spoke of parish structure, the need for patience, and the need to be "present." St. James' is in a "good place," with participation leading to a vision. We need to be intentional in our practices, to listen and reflect, and to involve more parishioners in what we do. Rev. Meredith spoke of the need to periodically reconsider our "why" and our "so that ...".

For the benefit of the new members, the treasurer took the attendees through the documents usually reviewed at vestry meetings, explaining how funds are sourced, handled, posted, and allocated according to the annual budget.

The rector distributed vestry handbooks to new members and updates to continuing members. She spoke of expectations for a vestry member and urged each to "model Jesus" as spiritual and business leaders of the church. She provided updates on the Building Visioning Plan, the Mental Health and Wellness initiative and formation of affinity groups within the congregation, the new "Adventures in Kindness" program for children's Christian formation, Lenten reflections, and the "Seasons of Creation" program on four Sundays after Easter.

St. James' has joy and warmth and is moving beyond the constant budget deficits that sapped our enthusiasm in the past. Lots is going on, and volunteers have created new energy on so many places. "Be not afraid," she urged. "God has good things for us."

The senior warden presented a summary of his actions in responding to the executrix of the estate of Josephine Shepard upon notification and receipt of the bequest of \$1 million. The vestry voted to officially accept the bequest. A copy of the warden's actions and the vestry acceptance have been appended to the minutes.

Meeting of February 16, 2020

The vestry held an abbreviated meeting, because of the large interval between the scheduled meetings of February 2 and March 17.

Lindsay Ragheb opened with a narrative of a co-worker whose infant required and received a heart transplant, appropriate to this Valentine's Day and illustrative of God's miracles.

The treasurer reported adjustments to the operating fund for 2019 and in the area of facilities to cover the increased cost of HVAC work.

Rev. Meredith announced an increased emphasis on spirituality at vestry meetings and the planned quarterly meetings, starting next month, at which the vestry will examine God's plan for us and how better to meet our vision. Commissions then will report on the other three meetings in each quarter.

Lenten reflections on "When God ministered to you in the 'wilderness'" still are sought. Vestry members, as well as parishioners in general, are encouraged to email their reflections to the rector, as soon as possible.

The senior warden reported that contact had been made with four "church-experienced" architects for the Building Visioning Initiative. He also reported that pledging units (2019) that have not pledged for the current year have been contacted.

The junior warden reported on the success of his recent teleconference with members of the Facilities Commission. He plans to make this a monthly event to encourage communication.

Dates to remember

March 7: Potluck and Bingo

March 8: Newcomers Lunch

March 15: Quarterly State of the Parish meeting,
Noon, parish hall

March 4, 11, 18, 25 and April 1: Ecumenical
Lenten Dinners (Seven Locks churches in
rotation)

March 17: Vestry meeting

March 22: Sunday School Intergenerational
event "Adventures in Kindness"

Update on Building Visioning

Earlier in February, four architectural firms (who have experience with churches) were contacted to submit conceptual proposals for the renovation/enhancement and possible expansion project for our buildings. A fifth firm was added when the owner of one declined for health reasons.

A team from Intec Group of Virginia visited with the church leadership on 19 February and toured the church, parish hall, and grounds. Their proposal will be received shortly. Repeated attempts have been, and will be, made with the other firms, seeking at least several competitive proposals.

Book Club, March 22: *The Snow Gypsy*

The author of *The Snow Gypsy*, Lindsay Jayne Ashford, is the first woman to graduate from Queen's College, Cambridge, in its 550 year history. Beginning her writing career with a contemporary mystery series, she then branched into historical mysteries.

This novel follows the stories of two women and how their lives unfold and intersect, beginning at the end of WWII. With insight into war-ravaged London, the Spanish Civil War, southern Spain, Provence, flamenco dancing, and gypsy culture, the book intertwines the stories of these women: one determined to uncover the past, the other equally determined to escape it.

The Book Club is open to everyone, and all opinions are welcome. Feel free to come, fourth Sunday evenings at 6:45 p.m. in the parish hall, either the meeting room or the library to these group-led discussions.

The next few books are as follows: April 26, *I Love You Hard*, by Abby Maslin; May 24, *A Spark of Light*, by Jodi Picot; June 28, *The Devil in the White City*, by Erik Larson. No book on the recent suggestion list has been eliminated and suggestions are always welcome.

Spice Up Your Life! (in the parish hall) Lunch & Learn, April 7

The Rockville Giant Foods In-Store Nutritionist and Dietician, Thu Huynh, will indeed spice up lives with her presentation on Tuesday, April 7, IN THE PARISH HALL (note temporary change of location). Thu was with the group a year or so ago with a very informative program on reading the new food labels.

All are welcome to join the group for lunch (reservation made with Sarah Padgett, please) for only \$10.00, followed by this engaging presenter's hints—complete with tastings—on using herbs and spices to add fragrance and nutrition to your food. Learn health benefits of common culinary spices. A community service offered by Giant, these nutrition seminars have always been fun and informative as well as a great opportunity to ask questions. Hope to see you there!

Starting with social time at 11:30, lunch is served at noon. The program begins shortly after 12:30 p.m., concluding at about 1:30. If transportation is a problem, please notify the office, who will notify willing drivers.

Our Sincerest Thanks!

The youth wish to extend their heartfelt thanks to all who joined us for Shrove Tuesday pancake supper. The evening was a delicious success, raising \$830 for the upcoming mission trip, and delighting diners with a variety of pancakes and sausages.

Joining our team of talented teenage chefs, Mr. Sampson Annan made his famous banana pancakes, while Mrs. Joyce Graf delighted our gluten-intolerant guests with their very own gluten-free option. Mr. Harley Venton provided musical entertainment, while parents chatted and youngsters decorated Mardi Gras cookies.





LET IT GO – AND SPREAD THE JOY!
St. James' Community Spring Sale
Saturday, April 4

Please join us as we...

RECYCLE two or three truckloads of usable items donated by loving members of our community,

PROVIDE these items to members of the community at very affordable prices,

WELCOME a crowd from outside St. James' to meet us and see how friendly we are, and at the same time,

EARN some welcome extra dollars for the parish from all that stuff.

Setup Days: April 2-3

We will begin the setup on Thursday afternoon, April 2, continuing through Friday, April 3. The sale itself will be one day only, on Saturday, April 4.

Volunteers Wanted!

We need help on all three days. SSL hours will be available for students.

Donations

At this time space in our shed is limited. We can accept some donations of non-bulky items on Sunday, March 29, either before or after the 10:30 service, but if possible we ask that you bring them either Thursday afternoon or Friday morning, April 2-3, before the sale.

Questions?

Please contact Tracy Lively or Sampson Annan through the church office, office@stjamespotomac.org or 301-762-8040.



News from St. James' Children's School

Classroom Spotlight: Music

By Liz Porter

One of the reasons I love teaching music is it affords a wonderful platform for kids to learn through play. We work on life skills: confidently saying our names, reinforcing numbers and shapes, recognizing patterns, encouraging analytical strategies as we identify different musical styles.

We also experience the musical palettes of various composers, learn the basics of wind and string instruments, practice staying on beat and discover how to participate in an ensemble.

As March comes rushing in, the winter songs of hibernating and snowy days are bundled up and we prepare to dive into spring songs of a world waking up to flowers blooming and birds chattering.

Spring songs breathe fresh air into memories of the gray dreary cold. They also remind me that Easter is here to celebrate Jesus Christ's resurrection and God's love for all of his children. Happy Spring!



Calendar of Events

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

Thursdays 10:00 a.m. Rector's Bible Study

Mar. 7, Sa: Parish BINGO and Potluck Supper

Mar. 8, Su: Newcomers' Welcome Lunch

Mar. 15, Su: State of the Parish Address

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

Mar. 22, Su: "Adventure in Kindness" Inter-generational Conversation; Book Club Discussion; Youth Group

Mar. 24, Tu: Submission deadline for April 2 *Pilgrim*

Mar. 11, W: Ecumenical Supper at St. James'

Mar. 18, W: Ecumenical Supper, Seven Locks Baptist

Mar. 20-21: WomanKind 2020, Richmond, VA

Mar. 25, W: Ecumenical Supper, Geneva Presbyterian

Mar. 29, Su: Youth Group Peeps Dioramas

April 1, W: Ecumenical Celebration, location TBA; visit to Manor Care Nursing Home

Apr. 2-3, Th-F: Community Sale setup

Apr. 4, Sa: St. James' Spring Community Sale

Apr. 5, Su: Palm Sunday; brunch at noon

Apr. 7, Tu: Lunch & Learn (in parish hall)



