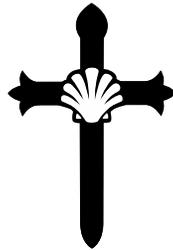




We've Come this Far by Faith

Annual Report 2021

A Celebration of Mission and Ministry at St. James' 2021



**St. James' Episcopal Church
Parish Annual Meeting
November 14, 2021**

The St. James' mission is to bring people together to be transformed by and to proclaim Christ's love through worship, spiritual formation, and service.

The St. James' vision is to be a place where all are welcome, to feel God's love and share God's love.

St. James' Parish Annual Meeting

November 14, 2021

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Clergy and Staff

Rector	The Rev. Meredith T. Heffner, rector@stjamespotomac.org
Assistant Rector	The Rev. James S. Isaacs, james@stjamespotomac.org
VTS Seminarian	Iva Staats, iva@stjamespotomac.org
Director of Music Ministry and Parish Rentals	Newton Lewis, newton@stjamespotomac.org
Sunday School.....	sundayschool@stjamespotomac.org
Youth Director	Rachele Donnelly, rachele@stjamespotomac.org
St. James' Children's School Director.....	Astrid Crookshank, preschool@stjamespotomac.org
Parish Administrator	Grace Lo, office@stjamespotomac.org
Communications Asst.	Kirsten Hall, kirsten@stjamespotomac.org
Sunday Sexton.....	Jerome Childress, office@stjamespotomac.org

Wardens, Vestry, and Diocesan Delegates of 2021

Senior Warden.....	Lori Minasian
Junior Warden	Ken Van Valkenburgh
Vestry members	Chris Coleman, Anselm Hennis, Doug Holy, Andrew Huck, Dawn Iype, Brad McCullough, Bill Murphy, Trish Powell, Lindsay Ragheb, Carolyn Ragland, Kara Smigel
Vestry Officers	Tracy Lively, Treasurer; Parke Brown, Asst. Treasurer, Sheryl Cooper, Secretary; Scott Zimmerman, Registrar
Diocesan Delegates	Sarah Hnatov and Barry Thompson, Delegates; John Combs and Mary Miers, Alternates

ANNUAL REPORT

Rector's Reflection

The Rev. Meredith T. Heffner

November, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For the last year we have continued to travel through the uncharted territory of a global pandemic. The journey has affected all of us—and it has certainly not been easy. Yet, God has sustained us. It is our faith that has brought us this far, and our faith that will carry us through.

In order to slow the spread of the virus and protect the vulnerable in our community, our worship and ministries were either put on hold, or took shapes that were very different from what we knew as “normal operations.” Now, over a year later, we are hopeful, as we gradually regather in person—that the virus will wane—and things will become more “normal.”

As you'll see in our Treasurer's Report, we have been truly blessed. As in 2020, we have not had to dip into our reserves, and once again, the year may end more positively than expected.

As far as our ministries, I rejoice in the many ways we continued to live our faith this year, despite COVID. Detailed information can be found in this report, but to high light a few:

- After six months of recorded worship, we began the process of physically regathering, offering hybrid in-person and live-streamed worship. Our Worship Commission leapt into action, pivoting as necessary, to help provide meaningful worship experiences.
- We connected through Zoom gatherings, conference calls, and rector's reflections.
- We continued our spiritual formation with our Sunday morning Faith Talks; our Thursday morning bible studies; children's monthly Compassion Camp; and Youth Group activities. In September, weekly outdoor Sunday School began.
- Our Mental Health Ministry continued with weekly Zoom “Stronger Together” gatherings, offering a safe and welcoming place for people who have struggled with mental health issues through the past year.
- Our Racial Justice Committee spent six months working together through the “Sacred Ground” series, and recently discerned a call to develop relationships to heal divisions and create connections within our community.
- Our Care for Creation Commission has engaged with the issue of caring for our changing planet, and offer ways we can, as individuals and as a parish, make a difference.
- Due to COVID, the Mission and Outreach Commission was not able to pursue its plans to offer more hands-on and in-person outreach opportunities. They adapted by offering opportunities for parishioners to respond to a curated list of needs in the community. These include: The Bishop Walker School; Episcopal Relief and Development; Interfaith Works; Manna Food Center; and other local organizations.
- Our largest mission, St. James' Children's School, continued to thrive, providing quality preschool and childcare to first responders and others in our community.

- The Pastoral Care Team stayed in touch with the home bound.
- Our Men's breakfast Group and Book Club met regularly.
- The membership and fellowship commissions hosted our Halloween Trunk or Treat event as well as the Women's Fire Pit Night.
- Throughout all this, we've managed our parish operations. The Executive Committee and Finance Commission kept an eye on our financial situation. The Facilities Commission worked to keep up buildings and grounds. And the Building Initiative Committee recently reconvened to review our building priorities.
- One of the most significant additions to our operations has been technological, as we upgraded our audiovisual and sound systems in order to offer live streamed worship.

Continuing in faith—we look ahead:

- In just a few weeks, Advent begins, and we look forward to welcoming Jesus at Christmas.
- We will be called to engage in our various ministries: Our Racial Justice Committee will be inviting members to be part of their next initiative, and our Mental Health Ministry will be offering new ways to support and educate parishioners about mental health. We also look forward to more opportunities to share God's love through in-person mission and outreach.
- We'll continue our path of discipleship through our Sunday School, Confirmation Classes, FaithTalks, bible studies, and Youth Group. And connections will be fostered and nurtured through our coffee hours, membership initiatives, pastoral care and fellowship.
- And eventually we will fully regather—together in our buildings—for worship, mission, and community.

A year ago, I asked you to prepare to come out of the pandemic, hearing God's call in new and different ways. I reminded you that when we come through the wilderness, we don't know what life will hold. That can be frightening. Yet this year—we remember that just as God has brought us this far by faith, God will carry us through this transition—and continue to call us to share God's love in our warm and joyous ways.

In the meantime, I am grateful to God, and to each of you. As we move forward, I encourage you to keep the faith. For we are God's beloved—St. James'—called out of our joy and warmth to be God's people at this time.

May God bless you, and may God bless St. James'.

Rev. Meredith

A SNAPSHOT OF THE YEAR

Worship, Special Services, Events and Activities

Sunday worship average attendance

120 online before June 6, 2021

145 hybrid worship since June 6, 2021

Special services and programs

- Interfaith Potomac Area Interfaith Community (PAIC) Zoom service
- Thanksgiving Zoom gathering
- Online Advent Devotional
- Advent Lessons and Carols
- Christmas Services and virtual Pageant with crèche photos
- Lenten services and events by Zoom:
 - Shrove Tuesday Bingo Night
 - Lent Madness: The Sainly Smackdown
 - Lenten Word Clouds showing how we've felt, changed, and who has ministered to us.
 - Seven Locks Rd. Lenten Ecumenical Series, "At the Edge of the Promised Land"
 - Lenten Reflections, "Angels Among Us"
 - Ash Wednesday
- Holy Week and Easter:
 - Online Holy Week devotional
 - Palm Sunday
 - Maundy Thursday
 - Good Friday Service and Devotional
 - Easter Sunday, with video of parishioners' photo reflections of Alleluia and Joy
- Seasons of Creation Services
- Pentecost, with "Peace be With You" video in the languages of St. James'
- Feast of Saint James with Holy Communion and parish picnic
- Feast of St. Francis with Blessing of the Animals
- All Saints Day Remembrance worship with photo slide show



Rev. Meredith T. Heffner, Rector
and Rev. James S. Isaacs, Asst. Rector



Christmas Pageant Video



Easter worship video



Feast of Saint James parish picnic

Youth Group Activities

- Gingerbread house-making on Zoom
- High school graduate reflections
- Youth Group meet and greet
- Bonfire at Butler's Orchard
- Pizza and games in the parish hall
- Dine-out fundraisers
- Ice Skating
- Confirmation Preparation



Parish Ministries

Care for Creation

- Planted native plants in the memorial garden and removed non-native plants from church grounds
- Provided six weekly FaithTalks on creation care topics: regenerative agriculture, healthy soil, climate change mitigation, native plants, and the Episcopal Climate Footprint tool
- Presented Pollinator Week activities
- Established Care for Creation web page on the St. James' website



Youth at Butler's Orchard

Communication

- Posted services and events on Facebook (534 followers)
- Posted worship videos on YouTube and Vimeo (112 YouTube subscribers)
- Offered Weekly Rector's Reflection emails
- Shared Musical Moment videos/Newton's Pick of the Week on Vimeo



Facilities

- Maintained our buildings
- Tended our grounds, including the Memorial Garden
- Sponsored our Spring Parish Grounds Clean-up Day in May



Parish grounds clean-up day

Fellowship

- Advent “Trimming the Trunk” Drive-Through
- Welcome Back Sundays September 19 and 26
- Trunk or Treat Drive Through
- Women’s Fire Pit Night
- Men’s Breakfast and Bible Study (weekly)
- Book Discussions by Zoom
 - *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek*, by Kim Michele Richardson
 - *The Overstory* by Richard Powers
 - *Love in the Time of Cholera*, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
 - *One Man’s Meat*, by E. B. White
 - *The Book of Longings*, by Sue Monk Kidd
 - *Miss Benson’s Beetle*, by Rachel Joyce
 - *The Exiles*, by Christina Baker Kline
 - *Secret History of Home Economics*, by Danielle Dreilinger
 - *The Widows of Malabar Hill*, by Sujata Massey



Trimming the Trunk Advent drive-through

Mental Health Ministry

- Supported members of the parish through 50 “Stronger Together” weekly zoom discussions
- Participated in Mental Health First Aid Training online
- Encouraged participation in the “Anything Goes” NAMI walk



“Anything Goes” NAMI Walk

Mission and Outreach Initiatives

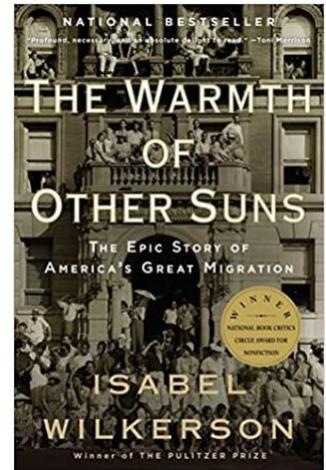
- Bishop Walker School Juneteenth giving campaign
- Episcopal Relief and Development disaster relief and refugee assistance
- Haiti earthquake relief fund donations
- Weekly Manna Food Center collections
- Holiday collections of Giant and Walmart gift cards for Bishop Walker School students
- Collections for Interfaith Works:
 - Cold weather clothing drive
 - Cleaning Supplies
 - Emergency Shelters supplies
 - Backpack and school supply drive



Girl Scout cleaning supplies, Manna Food



- Support of outreach organizations: Episcopal Relief and Development, The Bishop Walker School, American Red Cross, Greater DC Diaper Bank, Manna Food Center, Treehouse for Kids, and local hospitals.
- Celebrate Ability after school program
- Cub Scout Pack 1306



Racial Justice Committee

- Created congregational word cloud of reflections on racism
- Led FaithTalk series on *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson
- Participated in the Sacred Ground series exploring the history of structural racism in the US
- Discerned a call to focus on two initiatives: Engaging Relationships, and sponsoring a second session of Sacred Ground (work to continue in 2022)



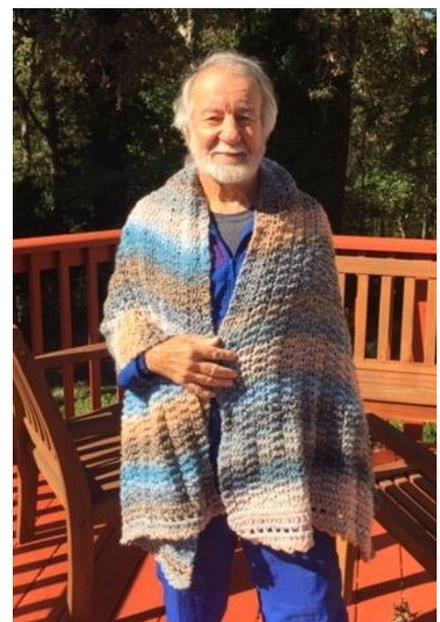
Staff of St. James' Children's School

St. James' Children's School

- Signed a new Covenant with the Church reflecting the current relationship with St. James', as a mission of the Church
- Provided preschool education and childcare for 147 Students enrolled throughout the year, and 74-96 enrolled per day
- Offered a School Age program in the parish hall through the summer, supporting families with older siblings in elementary school.
- As of September 2021, served only Infants to Pre-K within the seven classes.

Pastoral Care

- Connected to parishioners through phone calls and emails
- Provided meals for the homebound
- Gave over 20 prayer shawls and baptismal blankets, stitched many more
- Knit hats for Interfaith Works on behalf of St. James'
- Sewed and donated 230 face masks on behalf of St. James'
- Offered monthly prayer vigil conference calls and weekly Rector's open conference calls during lockdown.



ST. JAMES' PARISH MINISTRY LEADERS AND GROUPS 2021

St. James' continues its mission and ministries thanks to the work of many parishioners. Thank you to all who give of time, talent, and treasure for St. James'. Though we tried to include everyone in the list below, we apologize for those whose names or ministries were accidentally omitted. To get involved, more information is available by contacting the parish office at office@stjamespotomac.org or 301-762-8040.

Administration Commission and Nominating Committee. The commission is responsible for these projects:

- Annually assembling a nominating committee to recruit parish members to run for the vestry and for diocesan delegate and alternate positions.
- Identifying personnel matters that need vestry approval.
- Updating the personnel manual.
- Ensuring that recommendations are in line with the parish by-laws.

Commission members: Joyce Nohowel, Chair; Trish Powell, Vestry liaison; Rev. Meredith Heffner, Rector; Jennifer Nordin; Grace Lo, Parish Administrator

Nominating Committee: Linda Ellis (Chair), Dawn Iype, Donna Judkins, Tom Roegner, and Sean Stanfield

Care for Creation (formerly Earth Stewardship) This group of interested parishioners explores ways to be better stewards of the Earth, "our island home." They sponsor volunteer activities, maintain the church's rain garden, and work to identify ways to make our church more "green." Next plans include a site visit to a local regenerative agriculture farm and a gleaning effort at a local farm.

Mission statement: We believe that our world is sacred, having been created by God, through Christ and in Christ. We are therefore committed to promoting respectful care for God's creation and in particular to work against climate change and on behalf of climate justice.

Group members: John Combs (Chair), Doug Holy (Vestry Liaison), Donna Judkins, Jeanne Lehning, Susan Olson, Marta Vogel.

Webpage: stjamespotomac.org/parish-ministries/care-for-creation.

Children's School: A mission of the Church, The St. James' Children's School offers childcare and preschool education to children from the ages of six weeks to six years. In addition to general readiness, Bible curricula, and enriching school activities, there is a chapel service for older children, music classes, Spanish, dance, gymnastics, karate, piano, and soccer classes. *Director:* Astrid Crookshank. Website: stjameschildrensschool.com.

Christian Education and Formation: This commission includes Thursday Bible Study, Sunday Faith Talks, Ecumenical Lenten series, and Children's Education. Children's formation occurs through Sunday School, Children's Chapel, and other special events. Nursery care is also provided. Middle and high school students receive further fellowship and education through our Youth Group and participation in our annual mission trip.

Sunday School: St. James' Sunday school began in person in September and meets 11:00 a.m. during worship. Portions of the program are recorded and sent to children at home, along with downloadable family activities. Children preschool age through grade five are invited to participate, and older children (and adults!) are invited to volunteer. Contact sundayschool@stjamespotomac.org.

Children's Ministries: Lindsay Ragheb, Vestry Liaison; The Rev. Meredith Heffner

Youth Group: St. James' youth participate in games, lock-ins, service projects, discussions, and a summer work camp mission trip. 2021 is ending the year with 6-8 high school and 8-10 middle school youth. Fundraising has been put on hold due to COVID, but they look forward to a modified Virginia mission trip in the summer of 2022.

Youth Director: Rachele Donnelly, rachele@stjamespotomac.org

Adult Ministries: The Rev. Meredith Heffner, Ann Venton

Communications Commission: This commission promotes timely transmission of information through a variety of media. The commission works to make more sophisticated use of digital communication, social networking, video recording and live-streaming of worship. They also manage our website and produce welcoming materials that explain our ministries, encourage participation, and invite members to share their talents. If you have an interest or experience in video, graphic design, social media, web design, marketing, or journalism, come share your talents with us!

Commission members: Chris Coleman, Vestry Liaison; Dawn Iype, Kirsten Hall, Sean Stanfield; assisted by Kara Smigel. Contact kirsten@stjamespotomac.org.

Facilities Commission: This commission oversees maintenance and work on the parish hall, the church building and grounds, and the Memorial Garden. Occasional work days are held for painting, cleaning, and garden care. Anyone may adopt a section of the property for ongoing care or volunteer for other one-time or ongoing property maintenance responsibilities. If you have expertise to share with us on issues like electrical or plumbing, are handy with tools, or love gardening, we would love to hear from you!

Commission members: Ken Van Valkenburgh, Jr. Warden and Chair; Ed Ellis, Andrew Huck Vestry liaison; Grace Lo, Parish Administrator; Isabelle Schuessler; Sean Stanfield, Len Whistler; Jeanne Lehning, Memorial Garden care.

Fellowship and Commission: This commission helps coordinate parish activities, including lunches and dinners, which promote fellowship among our members. Some ongoing fellowship groups are the Men's Prayer Breakfast, and Book Club. Fellowship Commission also helps coordinate and oversee Sunday morning coffee hours and plans special receptions. They also plan movie nights, Trunk or Treats, Women's Night, St. James Day Picnic, Newcomers Lunch, and create welcome bags for newcomers. Lunch and Learn took a break in 2021 due to COVID, but hopes to resume when it's safe to do so.

Commission members: Dawn Iype and Kara Smigel, Co-Chairs; and many others.

Book Club: Linda Ellis (taking over for Jo Ann Thompson, who moved)

Lunch and Learn (inactive in 2021): Sarah Padgett, Deb Talley, and Len Whistler

Men's Prayer Breakfast: Sampson Annan and Doug Holy

Finance Commission: This commission is responsible for assisting with the overall financial management of the parish. The commission, working closely with the treasurer of St. James', reviews revenue and expenses of the church and oversees banking, audit, record keeping, bonding, insurance, and other financial requirements in accordance diocesan requirements. Responsibilities include:

- Assisting with the Annual stewardship campaign
- Coordinating the process of preparing the Operating budget, along with the vestry and other commission chairs
- Monitoring fundraising activities such as the Food Certificate Ministry
- Counting all financial contributions and other monies coming into St. James', with the assistance of a dedicated group of Tellers

Commission members: Rev. Meredith Heffner; Tracy Lively, Treasurer; Parke Brown, Asst. Treasurer; Lori Minasian, Sr. Warden; Ken Van Valkenburgh, Jr. Warden; Bill Murphy, Vestry Liaison; and Sandy Soundararajan, Chair.

Rentals: Newton Lewis

Tellers: Jane Lorenz Chair; Beverly Bartolomeo; Elaine Buschor; George Dick; Pat East; Alice Morrison; Maureen Schiavone.

Membership Commission: The Membership Commission works with the rector to coordinate parish programs that strengthen and build the membership of this church and the commitment of its members in supporting its ministry and mission. The commission welcomes newcomers, encourages membership at St. James', and maintains a welcome table.

Commission members: Dawn Iype, Chair; Kara Smigel, Vestry Liaison; Yemi Agboola, Carolyn Dick, Joyce Graf, Sarah Hnatov, Katherine Weaver, The Rev. Meredith T. Heffner.

Mental Health Ministries:

This commission plans programs to support and educate parishioners about mental health in order to reduce stigma, provide resources, and better understand how to care for one another in times of mental illness and stress. One current ministry is the "Stronger Together" group led by Alex Trouteaud. The group meets Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m. by Zoom to discuss mental health topics.

Mental Health Leaders Group: James Isaacs, Chair; Anselm Hennis, Vestry Liaison; Sampson Annan; Lisa Goodkind; Kirsten Hall; Jeanne Lehning; Sandy Soundararajan; Alex Trouteaud.

Mission and Outreach Commission: The Mission and Outreach (M&O) Commission helps coordinate parish programs for volunteer service and oversees the distribution of St. James' funds to benevolences outside the parish. It also supports our Mental Health Ministries, Good News Jail and Prison Ministry, Shepherd's Table, Samaritan Ministries, Manna Food Center, Interfaith Works, and the Bishop Walker School.

Due to COVID, the M&O Commission was not able to pursue its plans to offer more hands on and in-person outreach opportunities. Also, due to financial worries during the pandemic, we held back on sending funds to various mission projects and organizations. The commission adapted by offering opportunities for parishioner to respond to a curated list of needs in the community.

Commission members: The Rev. James Isaacs, Chair; Brad McCullough, Vestry Liaison, Anselm Hennis, Grace Huff, Jack Linehan, Alice Morrison, Harley Venton, Bill Wallace.

Music Ministries: During our cautious re-opening from COVID, the *St. James' Singers* (choir) has become the *St. James' Chamber Singers*, meeting only on Sunday mornings as able and providing choral anthems and leading the responses in the liturgy. They sing music from a variety of traditions. *St. James' Ringers* (bell choir) has been rehearsing on Saturdays before worship, with careful social distancing. The Ringers play two or three times a quarter as a group and additionally in small groups to augment music at some services. Singers and instrumentalists are occasionally brought in to enhance our music.

Director of Music ministries: Newton Lewis, newton@stjamespotomac.org

Pastoral Care Commission: St. James' is blessed with a loving and caring community that provides care to its members during times of need or crisis. Pastoral counseling and spiritual care have always been the responsibility of the parish clergy. Carolyn Ragland is the Vestry liaison, with Elaine Buschor co-leading. Lay ministries include:

Food Ministry: Donations of homemade meals are appreciated and called for as needed. Please contact the office if you would like to be notified of a parishioner's need for meals.

Greeting Cards and Grief Support: Ann Pararas and Jean Da Costa

Lay Eucharistic Visitors: Visitors visit and administer communion to parishioners who are unable to attend services. During COVID, volunteers deliver home communion kits safely to those who request them.

Nursing Home Ministry (inactive in 2021): Marge Combs, Jeanne Lehning, Deb Talley

Phone Call Chain: Volunteers assist the pastor in maintaining phone and email contact with members who want regular conversation and companionship.

Prayer Shawls: Kirsten Hall, coordinator; prolific stitchers: Carol Barrick, Beverly Bartolomeo, Elaine Buschor, Deborah Talley, Mindy Van Valkenburgh, and others.

Racial Justice Committee: This group, in response to a call for a racial justice initiative, is working to develop the vision and response of the St. James' community, to create a fair and just society, and to heal divisions, so that we may live in justice and peace.

Recently, the Racial Justice Committee discerned a call to focus on two initiatives: engaging relationships and sponsoring another session of Sacred Ground within the congregation. We look forward to the congregations' participation as we move forward with next steps to work on racial justice issues within St. James and the broader community.

Commission members: Rev. Meredith Heffner, Rev. James Isaacs; Brad McCullough, Vestry liaison; Sampson Annan; Heather Hennis; Wendy Hicks; Doug Holy; Beda Jean-Francois; Tracy Lively; Susan Olson; Trish Powell; Susan Schuck; Linda and Ed Ellis; and Katherine Weaver, Chair.

Worship Commission: This commission plans and prepares for all worship services and coordinates those who support and assist in worship. This includes musicians, ushers, flower guild, altar guild, lectors, intercessors, acolytes, our Sunday Morning Prayer Team, and Lay Eucharistic Ministers. Many of these ministries were put on hold or adjusted during 2021 as we adapted to COVID. To participate, contact John Eisold through the church office, office@stjamespotomac.org.

Commission members: The Rev. Meredith T. Heffner; John Eisold, Chair; Lori Minasian, Vestry Liaison; Sampson Annan; Kirsten Hall, Communications; Sam and Jane Ireland; Jeanne Lehning; Newton Lewis, Music Director; Amy Metcalf; Maureen Murphy; Kris Smithberger.

Acolytes and Candle Lighters: Rev. Meredith (contact rector@stjamespotomac.org!)

Altar Guild: Sam and Jane Ireland, Chairs. This team of men and women work behind the scenes to prepare for and clean up after Sunday worship and special services.

Flower Guild: Maureen Murphy, Chair. Guild members purchase, arrange, and distribute flowers for worship services. They respond to requests for special arrangements and assist with baptisms, funerals, weddings, and other special services.

Lectors and Intercessors: Kirsten Hall, coordinator. Lectors read portions of the scriptures and lead the intercessory prayers during worship.

Lay Eucharistic Ministers: Rector trains and Kirsten Hall coordinates. In non-COVID times, LEMs serve the chalice and sometimes bread at the altar during communion.

Music Ministries: Newton Lewis (see Music Ministries, above)

Prayer Team: Sampson Annan. In non-COVID time, prayer team members offer prayers individually for anyone who comes to the kneelers during communion.

Special Liturgies: Jeanne Lehning. This ministry aims to deepen our worship with meaningful liturgies, music, and ways to mark special days.

Ushers: Amy Metcalf. Ushers greet parishioners, guide them to seats and communion, and respond to emergencies during the worship service. They keep a headcount and monitor the facilities, clean up the pews after worship, and ensure that the building is secured.

Video Recording and Live Stream Worship: Dawn Iype, Kirsten Hall, Tom Roegner, Kara Smigel. See Communications, above.



St. James' Episcopal Church

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